In an effort to promote teacher efficacy and the removal of oppressive pedagogical school structures that disproportionately affect students of color, educational researchers have called for teachers to employ culturally responsive pedagogies (Gay; Ladson-Billings; Nieto). Gay defines culturally responsive teaching as “using cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them” (29). Despite the assertion that these pedagogies are multidimensional in nature, they are rooted in the conceptualization of culture as solely race and ethnicity. This conceptualization ignores the complex intersectional nature of culture and promotes monolithic constructs. To realize the full potential of culturally responsive pedagogies, culture must be redefined to include total ways of being around race, class, age, ethnicity, citizenship, ability, and spirituality (De Gaetano, Williams, and Volk 1998).

Many Latina feminists seek to examine these total ways of being by challenging monolithic constructs of culture that fail to incorporate the nuanced lived experiences of Latina youth and children (Delgado Bernal, “Learning”; Nieto 2004). Changing demographics reveal the urgent need to address this challenge. Currently, Latinos account for 12.5 percent of the total U.S. population and are the fastest growing segment of the population (U.S. Census Bureau 2001). However, there is tremendous cultural variation among Latinos/as in the United States regarding national origin, socio-economic status, skin color, spirituality, age, and citizenship. For example, as subjects of the most enduring colony of the United States, Puerto Ricans experience a second-class citizen status whereby citizenship is connected to race/ethnicity and language in contested ways across a history of colonialism, occupation, and immigration (Wagenheim and Wagenheim; Walsh). In contrast, Dominicans in the United States negotiate the tenuous nature of shifting and contested immigration and naturalization laws (Pessar).

Given the unique, complex nature of culture for Latinos/as in the United States, it is imperative that conceptualizations of
culture include constructs of age. This call is particularly pronounced for Latinos/as, because 35 percent of all Latinos/as are under the age of eighteen (Census 2001). The inclusion of age necessitates privileging the discounted knowledges of youth and children so as to foster culturally responsive pedagogies. Yet, much of the research that focuses on culturally responsive pedagogies and cautions against monolithic constructions of culture focuses on the role of the teacher as a reflective practitioner and adult-centered ways of knowing. To value age as an aspect of culture we must seek to understand the ways young children and youth are defining their multifaceted conceptualizations of culture.

As culture is multifaceted and complex, the mere inclusion of age is not sufficient. Attending to spirituality as an aspect of culture is also significant because increasingly diverse spiritualities are being represented in public schools. Such diversity brings with it not only a variety of spiritualities, but also a range in the definitions of spirituality. Within this article, spiritualities have been conceptualized according to three connections. The first highlights the connection of people’s minds-spirits-bodies to (un)seen forces. The second demonstrates the connection of people’s minds-spirits-bodies to the other entities created by and/or related to those (un)seen forces. Finally, these connections are manifested through spiritual practices to manifest, sustain, and develop spiritualities by meditating, praying, chanting, exercising, reading, and writing to support their mind-body-spirit (Anzaldúa; Bridges 2001; Sams 1994). The specific enactment of these spiritual practices is manifested in the ways people connect to the (un)seen force of language through home(land) pedagogies.

Home(land) pedagogies are the lessons people learn and are taught as a result of the connections they have to their homeland of birth. These pedagogies also connect to the (un)seen forces of the homeland in which they presently reside, their native and current languages, and their families that may live in both home-lands and speak either and/or all of these languages. Home(land) pedagogies move from spiritual practices to specific critical spiritual practices that contest inequities and create more equitable living conditions (Cannon). Thus, home(land) pedagogies tantalize these Latinas to stop the violence acted on them as they negotiate their raced, classed, sexed, linguized, politicized, and spiritualized selves amid school structures that construct them as failures. This paper forefronts the spiritualities of Puerto Rican and Dominican children and youth to expand the definition of culture.

Consequently, this article focuses on the findings of two multicultural feminist critical researchers who research with, for, and about Puerto Rican and Dominican youth and children. Across the research, participants developed peer structures, challenged school pedagogies, and maintained relationships with teachers. In this article, we first trace the theoretical underpinnings for home(land) pedagogies as critical spiritual practices through an exploration of Latina feminists’ theorizing of educación, family pedagogies, la facultad, and lo cotidiano (Anzaldúa; Isasi-Díaz). Second, we present the stories of the researchers and their participants. Within these two presentations, we outline the ways that participants draw on home(land) pedagogies to: 1) actively critique, restructure, and fight against inequitable pedagogical school structures; 2) create means
of survival and identities of successful students; and 3) affirm and support their cultures and the cultures of other Latina/o children, in particular the Spanish language, in schools. Home(land) pedagogies, therefore, acknowledge connections to spiritualities but also to the subsequent action. Understanding the ways Latinas/os use home(land) pedagogies enables us to (re)vision the policies, pedagogies, methodologies, and structures that are, can, and should occur in educational institutions (Villenas and Dehyle).

Building the Foundation for Home(land) Pedagogies

Home(land) pedagogies emerge from the desire to theorize culture beyond race and ethnicity. Through our data we saw a need to make visible the ways in which spiritualities operate as aspects of culture and shape children’s/youth’s ways of being in school. Our definition of spirituality is informed by the work of Medina (who posits, “the spiritual redefined becomes that which moves us, tantalizes us, that which brings forth our energy, our power, our creativity” [193]). That which moves us is conceptualizing home(land) pedagogies as a critical spiritual practice—spiritual practices used to contest inequities and to create more equitable living conditions (Cannon; Isasi-Díaz). This theorizing presents the possibilities for conceptualizing a variety of spiritual practices with different purposes and functions. It is this notion of increasing the possibilities of understanding spiritualities and spiritual practices as aspects of culture that drives this article.

Home(land) pedagogies are spiritual practices rooted in centuries of Latina/o spiritualities that have been venues through which they make meaning and sense of their contexts, realities, and entities in which they come into contact (Gebra 1999; Gutierrez 2001). Home(land) pedagogies share four significant components that are woven throughout all the various interpretations of Latina/o spiritualities: personal relationship with (un)seen forces, visions of survival, accountability and responsibility to the Latina/o community, and social transformation of society (Medina). Home(land) pedagogies, like many Latina/o spiritual practices, are implemented as activist-oriented world-views and lifestyles that work against oppressive structures and contexts to engender equity for Latina/o communities (Isasi-Díaz).

Home(land) pedagogies are undergirded by the mujerista theologian Ada M. Isasi-Díaz’s assertions that Latina spiritualities are informed by and cannot be separated from daily-lived experiences. In theorizing home(land) pedagogies as a spiritual practice, we build on Isasi-Díaz’s concept of the (un)seen force of lo cotidiano. Lo cotidiano is the lived individual and collective experiences of daily struggle in Latina/o lives against social orders and is an integral component of Latina spiritualities. Lo cotidiano includes worldviews and daily actions that connect Latinas through speech, prayer, religious traditions and figures, community relations, and discriminatory practices. Lo cotidiano, like culture, is not static and evolves with Latinas/os’ evolving actions, sense of selves, roles, norms, and ways of understandings. Lo cotidiano is about survival. It is a fight of life or death. Isasi-Díaz contends, “Lo cotidiano points to the fact that how we Hispanic . . . women who struggle from the underside of history, constitute ourselves and our world is an ongoing process” (69).
In addition to using Isasi-Diaz’s theorizing about the ways in which spirituality and Latina identities intersect to conceptualize home(land) pedagogies, we also build on the work of Gloria Anzaldúa, who demonstrates the connection of Latinas/os to (un)seen forces. Anzaldúa contends that it is the (un)seen force of the spirit that sustains Latinas/os in struggling for survival and permits them the energy to challenge exclusionary practices. She asserts that working from Latina feminist critical frameworks entails seeing how Latinas/os develop a consciousness that critically reads inequities (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1984; The Latina Feminist Group). Anzaldúa has coined this sense of consciousness la facultad—an oppositional consciousness that enables one to fight as an individual and as a member of a collective against interlocking oppressions that often serve as borders to success. These borders are spiritual, physical, political, and ideological locations where one straddles contesting and intersecting cultures and identities that fracture the body-mind-spirit. Living and thriving on borders necessitates la facultad, which enables one:

- to see in surface phenomena the meaning of deeper realities, to see the deep structures below the surface . . . those who do not feel psychologically or physically safe in the world are more apt to develop this sense. Those who are pounced on the most have it the strongest—the females, the homosexuals of all races, the dark skinned, the outcast, the persecuted, the marginalized, the foreign. (Anzaldúa 60)

In both Anzaldúa’s work and our own, la facultad is an (un)seen force that relies on seeing and understanding connections and relationships among multiple entities. It is also an (un)seen force that permits one to read inequities and utilize agency to create more equitable realities.

However, the power and complexity ascribed to la facultad and lo cotidiano are often applied only to adults and ignore youth and children. Often a social construction of age limits the degree to which academic theorizing views children/youth as being able to connect to (un)seen forces with the intention of struggling against oppressions. In an effort to debunk this social construction of age and to assist others in seeing the ways Latina youth mothers and children employ spiritualities and spiritual practices to actively struggle for the creation of more equitable structures in schools, we theorized home(land) pedagogies. These spiritual practices demonstrate how Latina youth and children identify (un)seen forces, engage in collectives, assert their cultures, affirm positive student identities, and manifest knowledges to sustain themselves and others. Specifically, the Latina children and youth mothers represented in this paper engage home(land) pedagogies as spiritual practices for daily struggles of equity that battle marginalizing experiences and structural inequities within their schools.

To understand home(land) pedagogies one must acknowledge the (un)seen forces in which they are grounded and the ways in which the connection to those (un)seen forces and to the entities created by or related to those (un)seen forces require actions toward equity. Consequently, theorizing home(land) pedagogies entails us building a foundation within the Latina/o concept of educación as action. Valenzuela contends that
**educacion** is conceptually broader than its English language cognate. It refers to the family’s responsibility of inculcating in children a sense of moral, social, and personal responsibility and serves as the foundation for all other learning. Though inclusive of formal academic training, **educacion** additionally refers to the competence in the social world, wherein one respects the dignity and individuality of others. (23)

**Educacion** is action, a process of teaching and learning that extends beyond academic school-based knowledges. As a spiritual practice, **educacion** maintains relationships and connections among Latinas/os, and as a critical spiritual practice, **educacion** involves sustaining relationships that necessitate teaching and learning about discrimination, subjugation, and oppression. This process of producing and sharing knowledges is necessary for the well-being of entire communities and moves away from individual entities as the focal point.

Valenzuela’s work, along with the scholarship of Villenas and Moreno, helps us to theorize **educacion** as critical spiritual practices by attending to family/community pedagogies. Family/community pedagogies are the spiritual, raced, classed, ethnicized, and gendered lessons taught and learned from family members in people’s homes and communities. By engaging oral life histories with rural Latina mothers they highlight how these Latinas utilized **consejos** (advice) and **cuentos** (stories) to pass on lessons, impart information, and give guidance. These women use family pedagogies to fight oppressive patriarchal, racist, and economic structures in order to make meaning, survive, share resources, and engender future selves for themselves, their daughters, and future generations. With similar desires to utilize methodologies woven with the concept of **educacion**, Ruth Trinidad Galvan conducted an ethnography with rural Mexican women to illustrate how spirituality is sustained and developed in family and community pedagogies. She highlighted how these women drew on their spiritualities to theorize how power impacts their daily lives, fight for individual and collective selves, and affirm each other.

We incorporate the work of these Latina scholars to situate home(land) pedagogies as a critical spiritual practice that includes other critical spiritual practices of **educacion** and family/community pedagogies. We extend the theorizing of other Latina scholars to center the role of youth/children who also teach and pass on lessons. Theorizing home(land) pedagogies contests scholarship that centers adults as the people whose knowledges are inculcated into younger generations. Instead of conceptualizing Latina/o youth and children as passive recipients of lessons and focusing on adult-child dyads, we challenge these inequities and situate children and youth as knowing, spiritual individuals. Through home(land) pedagogies we focus on the spiritualities and spiritual practices that are enacted within child-child, youth mother-child, youth mother-adult, child-adult, child-youth mother, and youth mother-youth mother dyads.

It is within these dyads that Latinas connect to (un)seen forces of home(lands), language, Latina identities, communities, and future generations. It is also within these dyads that Latinas make conscious choices to name themselves as spiritual, despite what others around them desire.
Theorizing home(land) pedagogies contests the policies and pedagogies within most public schools that remind all who enter that spiritualities are neither sought nor welcomed or, if they are selectively requested, it is on a restricted basis. As Anzaldúa writes, “we’re supposed to forget that every cell in our bodies, every bone and bird and worm has spirit in it” (58).

Yet, it is the not forgetting of the spirit, the daily experience of being Latina, and the intersecting oppressions that spawn this paper. As cultural demographics continue to change, that which tantalizes us is acknowledging the ways in which some spiritualities are valued over others. That which moves us is contributing to teaching pedagogies that address spirituality by valuing Latina children/youth and upholding their knowledges and experiences. Thus, we identify intersecting cultures that compose home(land) pedagogies as critical spiritual practices and speak to the incompleteness of blanketed notions of culturally responsive pedagogies.

In the next sections, we present stories from two studies, bound together by multicultural feminist critical theories. These studies evidence the desire to extend culturally responsive pedagogies to include the voices of marginalized students, specifically Puerto Rican and Dominican children and youth mothers. Both studies identify how participants implement home(land) pedagogies for sustenance and strength by connecting to: 1) the (un)seen forces of their Latina identities, including their Spanish language; and 2) other Latinas with the intention of creating successful identities despite compounded deficit constructions.

Home(land) Pedagogies Reveal Elementary Classroom Inequities

In this section Nadjwa discusses how Pam, a first-grade immigrant bilingual Spanish and English-speaking Dominican female, evidences home(land) pedagogies. She illustrates that her home(land) pedagogies as critical spiritual practices are her connectedness to the (un)seen forces between herself and her home(land) that includes her family, Santo Domingo, and the Spanish language. That which moves Pam is the connectedness to her Dominican Spanish-speaking mother and being able to tell somebody something when they “want to know something in Spanish.” That which brings forth her energy is “communicating with my family” and “helping mom.” She remarked, “I only believe in my mom . . . because she is the truest and knows me the best. She always makes me feel like she is with me. . . . she does love me and takes care of me.” In Pam’s case there is no (un)seen force of God or angels. There is no commitment to, belief in, or lifestyle choice of religion. Instead, her spiritualities and spiritual practices are composed of a motivating connecting (un)seen force of her mother and, as you will see later, her Spanish language, Latina identity, and home(land).

Multicultural Feminist Critical Narrative Inquiry Context

Pam’s data arise from a larger multicultural feminist critical narrative inquiry with five Black and Latina/o children and their Black male teacher who all shared the same first-grade class in a New York City public elementary school. Within this
school, the Latina/o and Black lower- and working-class student populations are predominately Spanish and English-speaking. Together, the teacher, five children co-researchers, and I worked to collect and analyze data through numerous methods, including interviews, collaborative conversations, focus groups, artifact discoveries, and observations. Portions of the data were used to create more culturally responsive curricula. Collaborative conversations were created for the children, teacher, and researcher to discuss and plan classroom practices and curricula that would diversify literacies and spiritual practices (Hollingsworth).

The data analysis of this multicultural feminist critical narrative inquiry was based upon the constant comparative method, in which each component of data collection and analysis is used to inform each other (Marshall and Rossman). I engaged dialectical theory building, moving back and forth among data, theory, participants, and a community of researchers to draw relationships among concepts, codes, and patterns, to match examples, build from, and/or extend developing theories (Strauss and Corbin). Participants provided member checks during focus groups and elicitation interviews, and after stages of their chapters were written.

Home(land) Pedagogies and the Absence of Spanish in My Classroom

In this section I provide examples of how Pam utilizes home(land) pedagogies to see her school community as a structure that devalues Spanish and restricts her and others from being able to communicate in Spanish. As a result of her home(land) pedagogies, Pam engages actions that challenge these inequitable structures restricting what and how Latina Spanish-speaking children are supposed to know, teach, and learn. Her actions also affirm successful Latina student identities as a child who is interested in learning, who wants to engage positive communication with the teacher, and who wants to help her peers succeed. These actions challenge stereotypical notions of Latina/o children as those who are disinterested in learning, prospective school dropouts, and behavior problems, by resituating who gets to know, teach, and learn. As you read this section, listen carefully to the direct, purposeful, and passionate manner in which Pam speaks. Take time to think about the way she has conceptualized herself as a knowledge producer and agent. Allow her to be the guide and see the possibilities for children to teach us through the convictions of their words based on their experiences.

Pam’s home(land) pedagogies connect to the un(seen) force of Spanish to make it visible within her first-grade class. During one of our collaborative conversations Pam unexpectedly turned to Mr. Williams, her teacher, and began to speak.

Pam: Mr. Williams should learn Spanish.
Mr. Williams: You are right. I should learn Spanish. If I understood Spanish better, I would talk to Latino parents the same way I talk to African American parents.
Pam: Your not being able to speak Spanish is difficult. It means that you can’t communicate with my mother who only speaks Spanish.
Mr. Williams: You’re right. When your godfather is here because he speaks both Spanish and English, I talk to him. When your mother is here and
other people’s parents who only speak Spanish I use you or the other children to translate.
Pam: But if the teacher knew Spanish it would be better. What about all the kids like me and Shannette, Lizzette, Racquel, Mialisa, Javier, Destiny, Felix, and Destiny G. who speak Spanish? When you talk in English and not in Spanish it is hard for kids like me who don’t know a lot of English. I want Mr. Williams to talk in Spanish because that makes him talk more Spanish. When the kindergartners who talk in Spanish don’t know English he needs to show the class that he knows how to talk in Spanish.

Pam’s home(land) pedagogies critically read her classroom as inequitable due to the lack of affirmation of the Spanish language. As a child from a Spanish-speaking home that values the Spanish language, Pam has shaped and been shaped by the desire to have this valuing of Spanish in all realms of her life, including her classroom. Thus, after reading these inequities, Pam uses home(land) pedagogies as critical spiritual practices to fight for the visibility of Spanish within her classroom by holding Mr. Williams accountable for learning Spanish. She engages a connection to other children and demonstrates that her fight is not just for herself, but also for the collectives to which she belongs. Her home(land) pedagogies challenge the structures and authorities who have marginalized Spanish-speaking immigrants (Soto and Smrekar).

Pam’s home(land) pedagogies connect her to the (un)seen force of her Spanish-speaking practices and to the other Spanish-speaking immigrant children in her class. They begin from her position- alities as a Spanish-speaking immigrant who came to the United States in kindergarten with the desire to understand English and do well in school. Pam clearly understands that valuing Spanish is necessary for increased success for Spanish-speaking immigrant children (Macedo; Scribner, Reyes, and Scribner). Her words demonstrate the need for children to be supported by a teacher who speaks both Spanish and English. Her home(land) pedagogies connect her with other Latina/o children concerned for the present and future lives of Spanish-speaking students (Katz; Yowell).

But Pam also engages home(land) pedagogies that connect her to children who do not speak Spanish. She reads her classroom as inequitable for English-speaking children who do not currently have access to Spanish. She says, “Some people only talk in English. That means that you need to show them how to talk more in Spanish.” In using these words Pam challenges notions that young children are egocentric and only think of themselves or through their position- alities (Burman 1994). In struggling for English-speaking children, Pam demonstrates that she sees the value of children becoming bilingual and being introduced to the Spanish language. Her home(land) pedagogies not only challenge traditional constructs that situate children as unable to take multiple perspectives and to read structural inequities, they also challenge notions that children do not verbalize their thoughts concerning inequities (Ramsey). Many might assume that Pam’s position- ality as a female, a child, and a student would tilt the power dynamics in favor of the teacher, thus silencing Pam from speaking about the inequities that she has read (Gutierrez, Rymes, and Larson; Rockhill). Yet, Pam uses her home(land)
pedagogies to directly address Mr. Williams, critique his pedagogy, and offer him new ways of envisioning his relationship with his students.

During our collaborative conversation, Pam continues engaging in home(land) pedagogies that situate herself as the teacher and Mr. Williams as the learner. She says,

You got to read the book in Spanish. Or I could or like the people could help me like Shannette or Lizzette or those people who talk in Spanish they can show me how to read the book in Spanish. Or if you need help you can ask children who talk in Spanish.

In speaking these words Pam’s home(land) pedagogies illustrate her knowledge that she and other Spanish-speaking children in her class can be teachers and resources in each other’s learning processes. She offers the solution of collective teaching, by which she can help Mr. Williams, and those who are more Spanish-proficient than she can help her and Mr. Williams.

Pam’s home(land) pedagogies as critical spiritual practices connect her to children whom she believes have a right to put forth their perspectives on how they think their classroom should be managed. Her home(land) pedagogies demonstrate her capabilities of having opinions about classroom teaching practices. Moreover, Pam’s home(land) pedagogies do not allow her only to read her classroom as inequitable; instead, they demand that she act on these structures to create more equities. This manifests itself as engaging in dialogue with her teacher to provide him with pedagogies that would support Spanish-speaking children (Munoz). Repeatedly, Pam moves to action through home(land) pedagogies that make Spanish visible in her classroom.

For instance, Pam worked with Kevin, Mr. Williams, and myself to improve their classroom library by selecting Spanish and English bilingual print-based children’s literature that represented Spanish language and Latina/o culture. We choose these books from a selection of about two hundred books that I brought in from my multicultural children’s collection. We recognized the need to include fiction literature that portrayed the realities of Spanish-speaking children in order to highlight people’s needs to see themselves reflected in varied ways in the print texts that occupy their classrooms (Jones and Fuller). The selection of available books also provided opportunities to diversify and value native languages in print-based texts through nonfiction, biographies, poetry, magazines, and newspapers. After choosing the books Pam stated, “We need to make a library and put it where everybody cannot see it. Let’s do that for tomorrow with the new books and surprise everybody.” This creation of a temporary classroom library was a manifestation of all of our home(land) pedagogies to connect to all the Latina/o children in the class and to respond to the violence that was being done to Latina/o minds-spirits-bodies by the absence of a visible Latina/o culture.

Pam’s home(land) pedagogies as critical spiritual practices served as a significant catalyst that moved linguistic minority children’s knowledges to the center of theorizing. Her home(land) pedagogies also led to her teacher’s transformation of more culturally responsive pedagogies that made Latina/o identities more visible. It is significant to note that it was not until Pam used her agencies to talk directly to
Mr. Williams and highlight the inequities around the invisibility of Spanish that Mr. Williams visibly changed his classroom practices. He reported, “now during the morning meeting we say the days of the week in Spanish and English. We do the calendar in Spanish and English as well . . . some children have brought in salsa music.”

Mr. Williams’s incorporation of home(land) pedagogies demonstrated how

listening to students can help teachers develop curriculum that is respectful and affirming of their experiences. Rather than begin with the assumption that language minority students have nothing to bring to their education, a more helpful approach is to seek out their suggestions to build a curriculum that is grounded in those experiences. (Nieto, Language 170)

Pam’s home(land) pedagogies were the catalyst for Mr. Williams’s pedagogical shifts that began making Spanish visible in the classroom. Her home(land) pedagogies illustrated the power and knowledge of children to reflect upon and shape their learning processes and environments. Prior to Pam’s influence, the conversations in which Mr. Williams and I had engaged had only increased his awareness of the marginalization of Latina/o culture, including Spanish. Mr. Williams’s transformation demonstrated the possibility of educators, who connect to children by listening to children’s voices, to increase their awareness that children are able to identify supportive school structures. Such conceptions differ from perspectives that encourage educators to read Pam’s behavior as disrespectful, negative, disruptive, and/or problematic because she questioned Mr. Williams’s pedagogy and the school’s policies. Consequently, we assert a perspective that entails educators’ understanding that when children assert their home(land) pedagogies as critical spiritual practices they act as conscious and informed agents who seek to create means of survival and identities as successful students.

Revealing (Non)events of Culturally Responsive Teaching through Home(land) Pedagogies

In this section, Courtney discusses the ways Liyah, Shirley, Eliza, and Sandra, Puerto Rican and Dominican youth mothers, enact home(land) pedagogies as critical spiritual practices to reveal and negotiate policy (non)events. These policy (non)events surrounding culturally responsive pedagogies at Denver High School fail to support their student identities and mothering identities. Here, (non)events are the interaction between large-scale policy events and non-events (Marshall, “Dismantling”). Research cites policy events as large-scale policy initiatives. For example, policy mandates for teacher efficacy are codified in macropolitical certification requirements such as the “highly qualified” component of No Child Left Behind (Marshall, “Researching”; Natriello and Pallas). The criteria for “highly qualified,” however, is not necessary replicated across local contexts highlighting a non-event. Non-events comprise the ways these events are mediated by school officials at local levels. These mediations often reflect the positive and negative assumptions and beliefs of teachers and counselors that, in the case of culturally
responsive teaching, serve to privilege certain spiritual practices over others.

Home(land) pedagogies of Latina youth mothers reveal the policy (non)events, the complex, simultaneous interaction that exists between policy events and non-events, across school structures. Through home(land) pedagogies we see the ways that culturally responsive teaching, as prescribed through large-scale policy events, is often negatively implemented by school officials. These implementations generate a (non)event around distinct issues including the tensions between culturally responsive pedagogies and English-only policies in schools. Liyah, Sandra, Eliza, and Shirley demonstrate the ways that English-only policies serve to divest them of their home(land) pedagogies and structure failure for their student and mothering identities as opposed to success (Conchas). Liyah, Shirley, Eliza, and Sandra speak back to these negative identity constructions through home(land) pedagogies.

Feminist Critical Case Study Context

Liyah, Shirley, Eliza, and Sandra's stories emerged from a ten-month feminist critical case study. In an effort to view existing macropolitical investigations in tandem with proposed micropolitical inquiries, the researcher engaged with one Dominican and three Puerto Rican youth mother(s). Together they sought to identify the policy (non)events surrounding teenage pregnancy negotiated by Latina youth mothers at Denver High School—a large urban high school in the Northeast. Specifically, they worked together to identify (non)events operating across the pedagogical practices within academic guidance and counseling structures (Marshall, “Researching”; Pillow). Subsequent results drew on formal and informal individual interviews with youth participants, focus groups, interviews with school personnel, shadowing students in school contexts, and written documentation. Data collection and analysis were part of continuous, iterative, and recursive processes, relying on the constant comparative method, in which each component of data collection and analysis is used to inform the others (Marshall and Rossman). Data were transcribed verbatim and coded for themes surrounding policy (non)events.

Home(land) Pedagogies and the Absence of Spanish in LYFE

In this section, I provide examples of how Liyah, Eliza, Sandra, and Shirley experience (non)events surrounding de facto English-only policies across academic guidance and counseling structures. These structures include those within the Living for the Young Family through Education (LYFE) program and the on-site childcare center sponsored by LYFE. Across their narratives these Puerto Rican and Dominican youth mothers discuss the ways they draw on home(land) pedagogies to assert and affirm their connection to the (un)seen force of their Spanish language and their desire to maintain and support these connections for their children. Throughout interviews and focus groups, all four participants challenge the violence perpetuated on their minds-bodies-spirits and the spirits-minds-bodies of their children by de facto English-only policies within the interpersonal structures of academic guidance and counseling.

Interpersonal structures may be defined as the relationships developed between
and among school personnel, students, families, and communities. Positive student/teacher and student/counselor relationships are deemed central as interpersonal structures of support to academic success (Knight, Norton, Dixon, Bentley, and Chae; Whitford and Jones). These relationships can forge strong ties for youth who are seeking support for their academic identities and future success for their children. However, for Latina youth mothers at Denver, the degree to which these relationships are “positive” varies according to ways LYFE personnel and academic counselors construct these youths’ student and mothering identities. In particular, participants negotiate complex, oppressive de facto English-only pedagogical practices in their children’s care center that impact the ways LYFE officials construct their mothering identities. During an interview, Cindy, the director of the LYFE childcare center, and I discussed the use of Spanish in the childcare center:

Interviewer: I noticed that many of the paraprofessionals and some of the moms speak Spanish when they are in the room. Is there a policy on language?
Cindy: Everyone is supposed to speak English at all times, otherwise the children are behind and often develop speech delays. Luckily, we have early intervention so I can try and prevent these delays, but I often have moms who refuse. They don’t think that there is anything wrong with their child, but you know the child suffers because of their resentment of me. Some also refuse to speak to me and only speak in Spanish to the paraprofessionals.
Interviewer: Perhaps those moms feel a strong connection to their language.
Cindy: I understand. Really, I do. But the reality is that they and their children need English.

Here we see the ways youth mothers’ enact home(land) pedagogies to demonstrate the ways they are connected to the (un)seen forces of their children through the Spanish language. This enactment is evident in their action to speak Spanish to their children. Despite this enactment, Cindy privileges facility with standard English, thereby ignoring these youth mothers’ home(land) pedagogies. Although Spanish-speaking Latinas/os are the largest growing segment of the immigrant population and Latina/o children are changing the face of American public schools, especially in urban centers, schools are failing to create structures that respond to these demographic shifts. This lack of response reveals policy (non)events wherein oppressive school policies and pedagogical practices at local levels ignore students’ cultural connections to the (un)seen force of their language (Katz, “Teaching”; Nieto, “Fact”; Valenzuela).

Through the cooptation of English-only policies, schools ignore home(land) pedagogies, including a connection to the (un)seen force of the Spanish language from which students derive support for their multiple identities as students, Latinas, and in this case, mothers. As such, Latina/o students find themselves negotiating language barriers and inequitable practices in schools by maintaining strong connections to home(land) pedagogies and also enacting their agency to speak back to oppressive structures, including language inequities. Eliza often notes, “Ellos no dan un jode.” Eliza also unapologetically communicates with Spanish-
speaking moms and paraprofessionals of the childcare center in Spanish. For example, Eliza’s son, Mark, is often cared for by Eliza’s mother while she is at school. At home, Eliza’s family communicates in Spanish only. When Eliza does bring Mark to the center, the director of the center is rarely able to console him. When asked why she is unable to console Mark, Cindy notes, “Mark needs to be here every day if we are able to make him part of the center.” However, Rosie, a Dominican paraprofessional in the center, is able to console Mark by speaking and singing in Spanish to him. Rosie comments, “Maybe being here more often would help, but I think the biggest problem is he doesn’t understand what people are saying . . . that would make me sad.”

Although secondary academic structures at Denver provide bilingual instruction, the childcare center, like the larger school, seeks to promote students’ facility with the English spoken and written language through de facto policies. Yet, all four participants expressed a connection to their home(lands) through language. These connections to the (un)seen force of language provide sustenance and support as they negotiate (non)events and seek to actualize student and mothering identities as Spanish-speaking Latinas. For example, Liyah speaks only Spanish while at home with her mother, father, siblings, and daughter. Liyah’s own experiences of becoming bilingual complicate her negotiation of this (non)event as it relates to her daughter:

We moved here when I was eight from DR. I didn’t speak any English so when I went to school they put me in the special class. It was messed up . . . I felt really stupid—you know slow. I don’t want that for Angela but I am afraid that she won’t get her Spanish like she should. Sometimes, Rosie talks Spanish to them in the center, but I know Cindy don’t like that . . . she don’t think that Angela has speech problems. I mean, she used to ‘cause she wouldn’t talk at school that much, but one day she went to the doctor . . . while we were there, Angela wouldn’t shut up. That stopped Cindy from thinking that she needed help with her speech. I still worry though that her Spanish isn’t all that good.

Here, Liyah draws on home(land) pedagogies to challenge the medical discourse that constructs Angela as dis/abled and denies both mother and daughter a connection to their (un)seen force of the Spanish language.

Eliza and Sandra also demonstrate a strong connection to the (un)seen force of language. Both indicate that they choose to speak Spanish with their children at home. Eliza draws on home(land) pedagogies as critical spiritual practices to speak directly in Spanish with Rosie when she enters in the morning. As such, Eliza draws on her connectivity to the (un)seen force of her Spanish language through home(land) pedagogies to speak back to the center’s English-only policy. Through Eliza’s home(land) pedagogies, we see the ways school structures fail to be culturally responsive. However, through Rosie’s home(land) pedagogies, we see the ways school officials draw on students’ connections to their home(lands) to affirm their mothering identities. As mentioned, Rosie connects to Mark’s and Eliza’s home(land) pedagogies by exercising her connection to Spanish through dialogue and song with mother and son. Next, we outline how school officials draw on students’
home(land) pedagogies to support student identities.

**Home(land) Pedagogies and the Affirmation of Spanish-Speaking Identities**

Policy (non)events operating across pedagogical practices within the childcare center work to divest these Latina youth mothers of their connection to the Spanish language. However, there are a number of interpersonal structures of support at Denver that support these Latina youth mothers’ student identities as Spanish-speaking Latinas. For example, Eliza, Sandra, and Liyah all shared how Jesse, the student activities coordinator and head of ASPIRA at Denver, affirms their multiple identities as Latinas, Spanish-speaking, and students. As a Puerto Rican man, Jesse maintains a close connection with his home(land) pedagogies. In so doing, he speaks Spanish with students and works with them to create multicultural events, such as the annual Rainbow Show, grounded in this connection (Bentley). Consequently, Jesse maintains positive relationships with his students.

Teachers’ positive relationships with students are often cited as central structural supports to students’ success in schools (Conchas 2001). Although students such as Eliza experience negative relationships with school officials, they also experience positive relationships that are grounded in a connection to students’ home(land) pedagogies. For example, Jesse’s relationships with his Puerto Rican and Dominican students serve to support them as they negotiate policy (non)events surrounding oppressive pedagogical practices at Denver. Eliza tells how Jesse provides her with the cultural affirmation she needs:

Jesse . . . he is crazy. He sees me in the hallways and says, “¿Arriba qué es?” [What’s up?] I laugh and tell him “¿Qué piensa usted?” [What do you think?] He laughs and says “¡Usted llega a mejorar la clase entones!” [You better get to class then.] . . . he knows me I guess . . . so I go.

In this exchange Jesse draws on his home(land) connection to language that both he and Eliza share to encourage her to attend class. He also demonstrates an intimate knowledge of her actions and also recommendations for future action by stating, “¡Usted llega a mejorar la clase entones!” Jesse’s home(land) pedagogies are evidenced through his connection to the (un)seen forces of his students. Specifically, he maintains these connections through positive relationships with his students like Eliza by affirming their connection to their Spanish language. In many ways Jesse recognizes the dual frame of reference that Latina/o students hold in that their academic experiences are informed by their school identities but also their cultural identities as Latinas and Latinos (Valenzuela). For Eliza, her connection to the (un)seen forces of Puerto Rico and the Spanish language are central to her spiritual identities. Jesse seeks to tap into Eliza’s home(land) pedagogies to bridge her school and cultural worlds that lie outside of school.

**Implications**

In discussing the home(land) pedagogies of Latina youth mothers and children, we posited the need to see spiritualities as an integral aspect of culture. We also provided data that portrayed how Latina children and youth mothers draw on their knowledges and agencies to identify
oppressive structures and create more equitable school environments. Through our collaborations with our participants, we are even more aware of the ways in which their cultures supported them in speaking back to both oppressive structures and scholarship that situates them solely in deficit.

We assert that one of the greatest implications that arises from home(land) pedagogies is the need to redefine notions of culturally responsive pedagogies by developing what Gay and Kirkland have called professional critical consciousness. Thus, creating a professional critical consciousness around home(land) pedagogies calls for reflective spaces that assist in making visible spiritualities and spiritual practices in the schools around students' connections to their (un)seen forces. Such reflection involves critiquing and questioning current practices. This reflection also includes acknowledging children and youth as spiritual beings who shape and are shaped by the social, political, and cultural practices in their educational contexts. Educators might consider investigating their pedagogies to discover if, when, and how often they marginalize and ignore spiritual conversations. Educators might also develop ongoing opportunities to scrutinize if and when they affirm children's/youth's spiritualities and spiritual practices and/or privilege children/youth of particular spiritualities. In order to deepen their understandings, educators need to be aware of the fact that spiritual children and youth negotiate their home(land) pedagogies among the multiple and competing nature of their contexts.

These competing tensions shape the conscious decisions children and youth make concerning which spiritual practices they bring inside and leave outside school contexts. Further, Latinas/os are not the people whose spiritualities are tied to their (un)seen forces of language, culture, and home(lands). Thus, the silenced and marginalized spiritualities and spiritual practices sparked by these Latina youth mothers and children are relevant to spiritual children and youth in schools everywhere. This work urges that spiritualities be included in the conversations that inundate schools about best practices, academic content, and achievement.

In so doing, educators should find ways to reconceptualize Latina youth mothers and children as spiritual beings, knowledge producers, and educational collaborators who hold the potential to serve as indispensable resources for adults, youth, and children alike. In particular we highlight their age to challenge prevailing social constructions of age and chronological life stage progression that limit their abilities to participate in curricular processes and pedagogical discussions. We contend that the implications for if, when, and how these conversations are brought into schools are germane to all children and youth.

Developing a professional critical consciousness around home(land) pedagogies also requires that educators constantly remain aware of the rapidly expanding Latina/o school-aged population. Our work seeks to support and energize educators responding to restrictive agendas such as No Child Left Behind and Proposition 227 that perpetuate an oppressive language ideology and limit Spanish-speaking students' opportunities to learn through positive student/teacher relationships. Opportunities need to be created for educators to consider the majority of Latina/o children who are concentrated in public urban
schools, where people, like Mr. Williams and Cindy, teach from cultures that are not Latina/o and who, unlike Jesse and Rosie, do not speak Spanish. Educators might see this phenomenon not solely as a linguistic issue that requires all educators to simply become multi-lingual. Rather, raising professional critical consciousness urges educators to examine the complexities and tensions that exist in a consciousness that situates attending to language ideologies, complex communicative practices, and codes of conduct that intersect with promoting culturally responsive pedagogies.

Shifting worldviews and epistemologies to transform pedagogies necessitates seeing the significance of home(land) pedagogies and issues of equity extending beyond shared ethnicity, language, and citizenship of Latina/o and Spanish-speaking youth mothers and children. Augmenting a professional critical consciousness requires highlighting the changing demographics of this country, which include diverse immigrants and multi-lingual children. Spanish is not the only language and (un)seen force in this country that is made invisible. There are many children, including those who speak Twi, Urdu, Cantonese, and sign, who endure linguistic inequities by being forced to attend schools that marginalize their languages. Thus, in revitalizing our efforts from these Latina youth mothers and children, we seek to communicate with educators committed to equity who find themselves teaching with children and youth who are enacting these home(land) pedagogies.

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