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Centering Translanguaging in Critical Teacher Education: Cultivando Nuevos Conocimientos de Translenguaje en la Educación de Futuros Docentes

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Translanguaging Pedagogy as an Enactment of Authentic Cariño and an Antidote to Subtractive Schooling

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Abstract

This article explores translanguaging pedagogy through the lens of the politics of caring, subtractive schooling, and authentic cariño (composed of intellectual, familial, and critical cariño). We begin with a broad overview of translanguaging and situate it in the theoretical frameworks of the politics of caring, subtractive schooling, and authentic cariño. We ground our approach in the notion that educators must hold heteroglossic language ideologies. We draw upon examples from literacy instruction in bilingual and ESL fourth grade classrooms to argue that translanguaging pedagogy can be seen as an enactment of intellectual, familial, and critical cariño. We conclude with a call for teacher educators to consider enacting authentic cariño and translanguaging pedagogy in their university classrooms by making space for bi/multilingual pre-service teachers to use their full linguistic repertoires. In this way translanguaging pedagogy, politically aware authentic caring, and authentic cariño can be viewed as part of a broader program of preparing teachers to value authentic ways of bilingual languaging and biliteracy development.

Keywords: translanguaging, authentic cariño, subtractive schooling, elementary, literacy

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Translanguaging, defined as "the deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages," is a critical characteristic of bilingualism (Otheguy et al., 2015, p. 283). In addition, as a pedagogy, it has the potential to be an important part of educating bi/multilingual learners in bilingual and English dominant classrooms. However, both settings have not traditionally embraced translanguaging pedagogy and instead have focused on the development of monolingual proficiency. This monolingual approach to bilingualism, which emphasizes the separation of languages, is evidence of the colonial structure embedded within education and is an example of subtractive schooling because it devalues the rich translanguaging practices of bilinguals (Martínez & Martinez, 2020).

We begin with a review of the theories of translanguaging (Canagarajah, 2011; García & Wei, 2014), subtractive schooling, aesthetic and authentic care (Valenzuela, 1999), the politics of caring (Valenzuela, 2008), and authentic cariño (Curry, 2016, 2021). We recognize that the concept of authentic caring in "subtractive schooling" (Valenzuela, 1999) falls short by not considering in detail the potential of translanguaging pedagogy as part of this framework. We propose the enactment of translanguaging pedagogy as a force that counters pedagogical practices that police language and grounds translanguaging in a critical understanding of care. We give examples from a case study of Ms. Watson and Ms. Kamphaus, members of a fourth-grade team that took up translanguaging pedagogy in their literacy instruction and reflect on the impact this had on their Latina/o/x students. We conclude by offering implications for educators and researchers. Finally, this is a substantially revised draft of an earlier book chapter (Valenzuela et al., 2021) and we are grateful for the opportunity to continue to theorize translanguaging in the context of subtractive schooling, the politics of care, and authentic cariño.

Theoretical Discussion

Translanguaging

The term translanguaging has two primary meanings that we are focusing on. First, it can be used to describe a type of pedagogy. In terms of pedagogy, "translanguaging" originates from the Welsh term *trawsieithu*, which was first developed by Cen Williams (1994), a Welsh bilingual educator and advocate. Williams used it to describe pedagogical practices where teachers plan lessons that include the intentional switching of languages for different tasks. For example, in a literacy lesson, students might read in English and write in Welsh (Williams, 1994, as cited in Baker, 2011). Since its inception, a wide range of scholars (e.g., Canagarajah, 2011; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; García, 2009; García & Wei, 2014) have used translanguaging to consider "the complex language practices of plurilingual individuals and communities" and "the pedagogical approaches that use those complex practices" (García & Wei, 2014, p.20). Translanguaging pedagogy makes space for students to draw on their full linguistic repertoires in both bilingual and English dominant classrooms. In bilingual identities (García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017). In the case of English dominant classrooms, teachers can enact translanguaging pedagogy by strengthening relationships between schools and bi/multilingual students' families (Zapata & Laman, 2016). By its nature, translanguaging pedagogy is subversive to dominant monolingual linguistic ideologies and privileges the dynamic linguistic practices of students' communities. By valuing the full linguistic repertoires of all students, translanguaging pedagogy becomes part of a linguistically sustaining curriculum that challenges linguistic inequities.

Second, in terms of its role as a theory of bilingualism, in García and Wei's (2014) foundational book on translanguaging, they define it as, "the enaction of language practices that use different features that had previously moved independently constrained by different histories, but that now are experienced against each other in speakers' interactions as one *new* whole" (p.21). Translanguaging is both a way to think about language that challenges static definitions of "standard" language and highlights the active nature of "languaging." The emphasis is not on language, but rather on languaging, which is defined as "the simultaneous process of continuous becoming of ourselves and of our language practices, as we interact and make meaning in the world" (García & Wei, 2014 p.8).

Subtractive Schooling and the Politics of Caring

In this article we draw on findings from an ethnographic study at Seguín High School (pseudonym), which is in urban district in Texas. Seguín was composed of virtually all Mexican students and was generationally diverse. The teachers were predominantly non-Latinx. Based on her observations and interactions, Valenzuela (1999) contends that schools subtract value from the cultural capital that Mexican American students bring to school in two significant

ways. First, schools are actively engaged in the process of "de-Mexicanization," which deemphasizes and marginalizes students' languages, cultures, and community-based identities. This is significant since this systematic exclusion of our students' cultures, languages, and identities impacts both student engagement and student academic achievement. Second, a social effect of "de-Mexicanization" is that by assimilating or "whitewashing" U.S.-born, Mexican American youths' identities (Urrieta, 2016), schools impede the possibilities of connections forming between immigrant and U.S.-born, Mexican youth. In this way, youths are unable to access the social capital important to academic success that can potentially be found in these relationships (Coleman, 1988).

In addition to the process of "de-Mexicanization," there is a mismatch in how Mexican American students view education and how their teachers view it in that "teachers expect students to care about school in technical fashion before they care for them, while students expect teachers to care for them before they care about school" (Valenzuela, 2005, p.83). This type of caring is labeled as aesthetic caring, "whose essence lies in an attention to things and ideas...rather than centering students' learning around a moral ethic of caring that nurtures and values relationships" (Valenzuela, 1999, p.22). These factors combine to create school environments that are not supportive of the cultural and linguistic resources that Mexican and Mexican American students bring to school, fostering a sense of estrangement from the dominant culture embodied in a school curriculum that is itself chauvinistic, privileging the histories, stories, and experiences of the dominant Anglo group in U.S. society. This situation is exacerbated by the curricular impacts of educational policies such as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the shortage of Latina/o teachers in our public schools (Pulte, 2018; Quiocho & Rios, 2000). Authentic caring offers a contrast to aesthetic caring. Authentic caring, "emphasizes relations of reciprocity between teachers and students," (Valenzuela, 1999, p.61). In authentic caring, the students and teachers commit to a relationship that is built upon trust and vulnerability. Valenzuela (1999) further argues that authentic caring is necessary but not sufficient, rather, "conceptualizations of educational 'caring' must more explicitly challenge the notion that assimilation is a neutral process so that cultural and language affirming curricula may be set into motion" (p.25). Educators must leave behind color-blind curriculum and center discussions of race, difference, and power.

Finally, at the heart of this conversation about caring and schooling is our vision of what we mean by the term education. At first glance, one might assume that education y educación mean the same thing, however, educación is a more expansive term than education. Educación highlights:

the family's role 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, educación additionally refers to competence in the social world, wherein one respects the dignity and individuality of others. (Valenzuela, 1999, p.23)

Educación is a folk model of education that is values-based, rather than human capital-based. In centering values, educación promotes the idea that if a person does not know how to be human and treat people with respect and affection, then academic knowledge and skills are immaterial. The distinction between educación and education is lost when we are forced to speak in a monolingual English repertoire.

In a 2008 follow-up to Subtractive Schooling: U.S. Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring, Valenzuela builds on Bartolomé's (1994) understanding of political awareness to develop the idea of politically aware authentic caring. Politically aware, authentic caring signifies a "commitment to social justice in ways that represent the authentic, collective interests of the Mexican American community's historic struggle for equity, fairness and due process" (Valenzuela, 2008, p. 505). At Seguín High School, Valenzuela (1999) found that the youth born in the United States were "socially de-capitalized" by the teachers, administrators, and policies that resulted in the de-identification of their Spanish language and cultural connection to Mexico. In this case, the students who translanguaged were automatically seen as incompetent in the academic context and as semilingual (Escamilla, 2006; Rosa, 2016), alluding to the student's putative inabilities to speak either language "correctly." When we consider the colonial history of the Southwestern United States, and how the United States seized 40 percent of the Mexican lands in 1848 through the Treaty of Guadalupe de Hidalgo (San Miguel, 1998), we can begin to understand the origins and consider the potential of translanguaging pedagogies as a way to challenge dominant language ideologies in classrooms.

Translanguaging Pedagogy

Re-envisioning Care and Translanguaging

The work of educators who enact politically *aware, authentic caring,* is not complete if they do not honor, lift and systematically use their student's translanguaging skills as part of their teaching and learning. When this is not the case, educators participate in the erasure of the bilingual linguistic repertoires, histories, and skills of students born in the United States. When, in contrast, they bring translanguaging into the lesson in appreciative ways, like through *politically aware, authentic caring,* they also recognize the political and power dimensions that are an undeniable part of our work as educators. For this to happen, teachers must view the complex linguistic resources of students who translanguage as a valuable resource and as a right, not as a problem to be solved or fixed by erasing such an important aspect of their identities (Ruíz, 1984).

In this article, we build upon the idea of *politically aware, authentic caring* and advocate for translanguaging as an additive component that must be present in our classrooms. We use Curry's (2016, 2021) model of *authentic cariño*, to outline the ways that we can see translanguaging pedagogy as an enactment of *authentic cariño*. Curry (2016, 2021) builds upon Valenzuela (1999) and on Antrop-González and De Jesús (2006) conception of critical care, wherein "staff transcend the boundaries of traditional schooling and create social conditions and relationships that are more aligned with students' cultural orientations, and which overlap with extended family life" (p.421) and "students also supported each other's learning" (p.422). Curry intentionally uses *cariño* instead of care "to decenter Eurocentric maternal connotations of caring in favor of culturally and politically informed forms of care" (Curry, 2021, p.16). For her, the tilde-carrying "ñ" communicates an appreciation and warmth that is missing from the English word "care." Within *authentic cariño*, Curry calls out the importance of familial cariño, intellectual cariño, and critical cariño.

Familial cariño is built on a foundation of "reciprocity, trust, and connectedness between and among students and teachers" and ideally fosters connections with students' families (Curry, 2016, p. 892). Educators who exhibit intellectual cariño "care about students' intellectual development, aiming to foster their habits of mind and engagement with big ideas" and encourage them to "expand their perspectives in ways that enhance their capacity to make meaning and change" (Curry, 2016, p.892). Critical cariño, like the idea of "critical care" by Antrop-González and De Jesús (2006), "refers to caring undertaken with historical and political

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consciousness of students' communities and a desire to interrupt inequity," with a focus on "explicit attention to cultures of power with an aim toward helping students master dominant discourses while still valuing and sustaining their home cultures" (Curry, 2016, p.892). Taken together these three elements build upon and extend Valenzuela's earlier conceptions of care and directly connect with the goals of translanguaging pedagogy. In the next section, we provide concrete examples of how translanguaging pedagogy was an enactment of *authentic cariño* in fourth grade bilingual and English dominant classrooms and was a central part of individual and collective efforts to enact an additive schooling experience for Mexican Americans and other minoritized groups of students.

Classroom Examples

The first author engaged in a case study on how a fourth-grade team at Molina Elementary School (pseudonym) took up translanguaging pedagogy in literacy instruction and the impact this had on their students. In particular, she focused on the ways that translanguaging functioned as a linguistic practice and a pedagogy in one of the bilingual and one of the ESL classrooms. She visited two fourth grade classrooms at Molina for 16 weeks. She observed the literacy block for approximately three times per week and stayed for about one to two hours per visit. She also attended grade team meetings, interviewed the teachers and students, and collected pictures of student work.

Molina has similar student demographics to Seguin High School, the site where the subtractive schooling and authentic care framework was developed. Both schools are in urban school districts in Texas. Like Seguín, Molina's student body is predominantly Mexican with a mix of immigrant and U.S. born students. However, Molina's student body is more diverse in that it has Central American, Caribbean, Black, Middle Eastern, and white students. In addition, in contrast to Seguín, the teachers at Molina are about an equal balance of Latinx and white teachers. Finally, at Molina there are strong examples of the educators practicing *authentic cariño* that are often enacted through translanguaging pedagogy.

We will highlight two examples of such teachers. Ms. Watson, one of the one-way dual language teachers, and Ms. Kamphaus, one of the ESL teachers. Ms. Watson, who was in her fifth year of teaching, identifies as a White woman and is a sequential English/Spanish bilingual who learned English from birth and Spanish in childhood (Genesee et al., 2004). The 18 students in Ms. Watson's classroom were simultaneous bilinguals and were predominantly Mexican, of varying generational statuses in the United States. We use the term Mexican to broadly refer to students that had a connection to Mexico. There was also a minority of students from Guatemala, El Salvador, and Cuba. Ms. Kamphaus, who was in her tenth year of teaching, identifies as a White woman and is a monolingual English speaker who is learning Spanish. Six of the 16 students in Ms. Kamphaus's class were designated as English Language Learners (ELLs) by the school district. They were predominantly Mexican; the exception was a student from Afghanistan. The remaining students were predominantly Mexican, with the exception being one bi-racial, White and Nigerian, student. It is important to note that Ms. Watson and Ms. Kamphaus were both mentor teachers for pre-service teachers from the university that this researcher was affiliated with. The pre-service teachers were in their classroom for two full days per week.

Each of the teachers were committed to creating classroom communities that honor students' linguistic repertoires and support them to develop biliteracy. We use Curry's (2016, 2021) model of *authentic cariño*, to outline the ways that at Molina we can see translanguaging as an enactment of *authentic cariño* in terms of familial cariño, intellectual cariño, and critical cariño. We will describe how each of the elements of *authentic cariño* were present across their classrooms.

Intellectual cariño

Explicitly encouraging translingual writing. At Molina, translanguaging was integral to the teachers' enactment of intellectual cariño. For example, Ms. Watson was committed to teaching her students literacy in English and Spanish each day and made changes to her schedule to reach this goal. In their school district, a common model was to alternate the language of instruction for literacy based on the week or day. In her second year at Molina Ms. Watson and the other dual language teacher on her team negotiated with their principal and district supervisor to pilot a new schedule where they taught an English literacy block in the morning and a Spanish literacy block in the afternoon. The teachers proposed that giving students the opportunity to use both languages each day was integral to their biliteracy development. Within each literacy block, the teachers modeled translanguaging and the students were able to draw on their full linguistic repertoire. For example, in the literacy mini-lessons, the teachers

implemented the preview-view-review instructional model (Gómez et al., 2005) by strategically utilizing Spanish and English for different parts of the lesson. At the beginning of the lesson the teacher shared the instructional goal and then continued to teach in English, and at the end reviewed the instructional goal in Spanish. In a middle of the year reflection, both teachers expressed that they saw an increase in students' developing biliteracy in comparison to the previous year when students were not given the opportunity to use both languages each day. In this way, the teachers showed a commitment to holding their students to the high standard of developing biliteracy and enacting intellectual cariño.

One way that Ms. Kamphaus's enacted intellectual cariño was when she engaged her students in an analysis of translingual writing. In her writing lessons, she often encouraged her students to read with an eye for the writer's craft. In one unit they were writing poems for their families, many of whom were bilingual. Ms. Kamphaus chose to highlight translingual writing as a craft move. In this lesson, they read Ode to La Tortilla, a poem by Gary Soto, a Mexican American poet. Soto translanguages to authentically capture the bilingual experience of making tortillas with his mamá. Ms. Kamphaus encouraged her students to think about the audience of their poem and imagine if such purposeful bilingualism was a tool they would like to take up. In this example, Ms. Kamphaus encourages her students to engage in higher order thinking through a metalinguistic analysis of how authors use translanguaging. She shows that she is committed to developing her students' biliteracy by giving them the opportunity to authentically use their full linguistic repertoires.

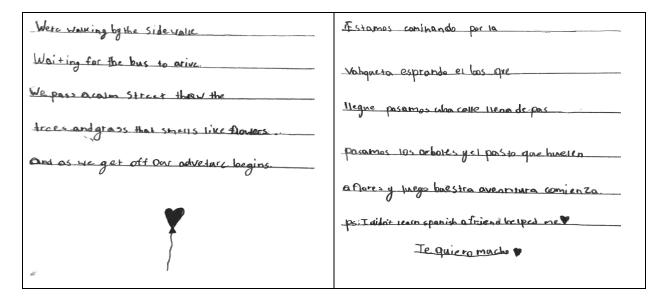
Familial cariño

Writing partnerships. At Molina, familial cariño is at the heart of the community ethos around language practices. Ms. Watson's classroom was a mix of immigrant and U.S.-born students who had a variety of home language practices. For the students to feel comfortable speaking, reading, and writing in English and Spanish, they also needed to feel supported by each other. These linguistically flexible students demonstrated familial cariño when they showed grace for each other's language practices. For example, when students were in peer writing partnerships and they found linguistic errors in each other's writing, instead of focusing on their mistakes, they asked questions about the students' meaning in their writing. The cooperation in the writing pairs was often seen in the partnerships that were composed of students born in the United States and immigrant students. This theme of intergenerational cooperation between the Latina/o students is contrary to what is seen in subtractive schooling contexts where there is often a lack of cooperation between different Latina/o groups that stems from school practices that serve to divide students (e.g., Valenzuela, 1999). Translanguaging pedagogy is crucial to developing a community that enacts familial cariño and is supportive of each other's linguistic practices.

In Ms. Kamphaus's classroom formal and informal writing partnerships were also a common occurrence. In the unit described in the previous section, students supported each other in writing translingually for their bilingual families. The extent that the monolingual Ms. Kamphaus could help them was through providing translingual mentor texts and students with experience in bilingual education filled in the gaps in what she could do. For example, some of the students who had not learned how to write in Spanish in school felt uncomfortable with representing their oral Spanish in writing and more experienced students helped them write their poems into Spanish for their families. In Figure 1, we can see an example of a student who trusted their peer to support their insecurities in writing in Spanish. They worked together to produce a writing product that honored their family's full linguistic repertoires. Familial cariño is at the core of this combination of student trust and making connections with students' families.

Figure I

Natalie's poem for her bilingual family that she wrote for in Spanish with the help of a peer who had more experience writing in Spanish.



Critical cariño

Challenging conceptions of "standard" language. At Molina, critical cariño was evident in how the teachers honored the students' linguistic practices and did not require their language to fit a strict definition of standard language. For example, if Ms. Watson was speaking to a student in English and in their response, they translanguaged, she did not prompt the student to respond in English. By demonstrating linguistic flexibility, she challenged traditional notions of acceptable language practices. In an interview with Ms. Watson, she explained that she believed that each child has a unique linguistic repertoire that is shaped by their communities. Her perspectives on language and Latinx communities are heavily shaped by the three years she spent teaching and living in a Mexican American community on the U.S.-Texas border and her relationship with her bilingual Mexican American community she viewed Spanish and English as discrete languages, however, now she realizes, "that's not how it works." She embraces translanguaging pedagogy because it allows students to be their "authentic selves." By not forcing her students to fit into monolingual conceptions of language, she provided her students with an opportunity to be vulnerable and to develop their full linguistic repertoires.

In Ms. Kamphaus's classroom she enacted critical cariño through both guiding her students to examine their own linguistic repertoires and interrogate the idea of "standard English" (Wiley & Lukes, 1996). First, the students completed a language autobiography where they reflected on how they language in terms of understanding, speaking, reading, and writing. There was a special emphasis on who they were communicating with, the purpose of the communication, and their bi/multilingual language goals. The students shared their language autobiographies in class, learned about the language diversity within their classroom, and how they could support each other to reach their goals. Next, Ms. Kamphaus built on this shared understanding of the language diversity in their classroom and fostered a classroom discussion that challenged the idea of "standard English" and reframed its place in the classroom. Drawing from a critical translingual perspective (Zapata, 2020), Ms. Kamphaus confronted the pervading deficit perspectives that linguistically and racially minoritized students often encounter. She encouraged her students to use their full linguistic repertoires, including multiple Englishes, Spanish, and Pashto. Through challenging conceptions of "standard" language, Ms. Watson and Ms. Kamphaus enacted critical cariño that reflected both interrupting traditional systems of

linguistic power and preparing students for dominant discourses while honoring their communities.

Conclusion

It is no coincidence that *authentic cariño* was enacted in similar ways across the dual language and ESL classrooms. The teachers were a part of a close grade team that engaged in a "translanguaging community" (Salmerón & Kamphaus, 2021). Their highly collaborative community was an essential aspect of how they enacted *authentic cariño* across their classrooms. They are an example of how educators who work with our bi/multilingual children can subvert subtractive schooling and enact *authentic cariño* through translanguaging pedagogy that honors students' full linguistic repertoires. Translanguaging pedagogy is an antidote to subtractive schooling in two ways. First, by welcoming students' full linguistic repertoires, it sustains their authentic home and community language practices. Second, by encouraging students to use their full linguistic repertoires, it fosters connections between bi/multilingual students. In this way, translanguaging pedagogy is a critical way for teachers to challenge subtractive schooling.

In addition, the ideological underpinnings of translanguaging are an integral part of politically aware, authentic caring. The language ideologies conveyed by teachers have a lasting impact on the ways not only that our students experience schooling, but also on their bi/multilingual identities. Translanguaging pedagogy opens a space for teachers to make their heteroglossic language ideologies clear by valuing students' full linguistic repertoires. As we look back to the classroom examples above, we see how enacting this type of care might require for teachers and schools to restructure the ways in which they enact language instruction akin to the teachers at Molina. This could mean advocating for translanguaging pedagogy at a school or district level and calling into question traditional notions of language separation in bilingual and ESL classrooms. This advocacy work embodies the commitment to social justice that is a fundamental element of politically aware, authentic caring.

As we look forward, there are many lingering questions. First, we are encouraged to think about what translanguaging pedagogy, as a part of a model of politically aware authentic caring, represents for the assessment of bilingual Latina/o/x students. As the stakes of standard assessments rise and with the reality that students are often required to take standardized tests in English, what do these pressures mean for teachers that promote and utilize translanguaging pedagogy? In addition, as more districts across the nation begin to develop Two Way Dual Language programs, bi/multilingual teachers are challenged to support the language development of more diverse groups of children who bring varying degrees and registers of both Spanish and English. Keeping a framework of *politically aware authentic caring* and *authentic cariño* at the forefront, how do teachers honor and continue to develop the linguistic repertoires of those students who have been historically marginalized? Through direct conversations that name and challenge monoglossic language ideologies there is the potential to develop heteroglossic language ideologies that normalize bilingualism and honor students' full linguistic repertoires.

One important part of this conversation is the role of teachers of color. While Ms. Watson and Ms. Kamphaus are allies for bi/multilingual students because they do not have first-hand experience with the prejudices that many Latina/o/x people face, they cannot engage in these types of discussions on a personal level in the way that a Latina/o/x teacher might be able to. There is a national shortage of teachers of color (Valenzuela, 2017) and a growing body of research points to the benefit of Grow Your Own educator programs that develop and recruit teachers of color to teach in the communities that they are from (Fenwick, 2001; Gist, et al., 2019; Skinner et al., 2011; Valenzuela, 2016, 2017). We challenge researchers to take up this work of exploring and documenting the critical work that both teachers of color and white teachers do in this area.

Finally, similarly to how elementary students must be able to translanguage to express their full selves, we must translanguage to express ourselves. As three bilingual Latinas writing this piece, we understand that meaning often cannot be directly translated and there are meanings that are missed when we are forced to express ourselves monolingually. For example, there are elements of cariño that are not expressed by care and elements of care that cariño does not speak to. The two terms are nuanced and each one has their own dimensions and derivatives. Translanguaging allows us to capture nuances not otherwise possible. This manuscript sheds light onto the truly complex linguistic practices of our bi/multilingual children and the ways that they draw on translanguaging to communicate and be understood. As teacher educators, we ask how do we prepare educators to enact *politically aware authentic care*, *authentic cariño* and translanguaging pedagogy? In particular, what does this mean for teacher educators at minority serving universities preparing bi/multilingual pre-service teachers? We

encourage teacher educators to consider enacting *politically aware authentic care* and *authentic cariño* and translanguaging pedagogy in their university classrooms by making space for bi/multilingual students to use their full linguistic repertoire. For example, teachers could give students the opportunity to produce translingual assignments, such as a multimodal presentation of their journey as meaning makers across their lifespan. The students could use the language of their memories in their presentations to authentically represent their bi/multilingual lived experiences. In this way translanguaging pedagogy, *politically aware authentic caring*, and *authentic cariño* can be viewed as part of a broader program of preparing bi/multilingual teachers to value authentic ways of bi/multilingual languaging and biliteracy development.

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