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Cruzando el Puente: Building Bridges to Funds of Knowledge

NORMA GONZÁLEZ and LUIS C. MOLL

What can be learned from the Puente experience about identifying and incorporating local funds of knowledge of Latino communities into precollege preparation? This article focuses on how Puente teachers and students can enhance their practice and mutual learning through ethnographic fieldwork in the students' home community. Through investigating the many local funds of knowledge that can be utilized to validate students' identities as knowledgeable individuals who can use such knowledge as a foundation for future learning, both teachers and students can engage in a critical pedagogy predicated on resources and not deficits.

WHAT CAN BE LEARNED from the Puente experience about identifying and incorporating local funds of knowledge of Latino communities into precollege preparation? At a time when national educational discourses swirl around systemic reform, upscaling of schoolwide programs, and wholesale replicability across school sites, we would like to present a counterdiscourse to scripted and structured educational packages. We hold that instruction must be linked to students' lives and that the details of effective pedagogy should be linked to local histories and community contexts. Closely linked to this premise, we contend that the call for greater teacher autonomy and stronger professional preparation should involve collaborative research to build an

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empirical understanding of the lived experiences of their students. Learning does not take place only “between the ears” but is eminently a social process. Students’ learning is bound up within larger contextual historical, political, and ideological frameworks that impact students’ lives. This is a call to invest time and effort in creating structures, to devote time to allowing greater levels of professionalization of teachers as they come to deeper insights and understanding of the sociopolitical context of diversity, and to allow high school students to become researchers of their own cultural capital.

As has been noted by several authors in this issue, the word *puente* can connote a bridge in many contexts. For Puente students, the program model is primarily a bridge between high school and higher education. But there are other bridges to be traversed also. There can be bridges that join community knowledge and school validation of that knowledge. There can be bridges between parents and teachers, school and community. There can be bridges of understanding in learning communities. There can be bridges between practical, out-of-school, experiential knowledge and academic, abstract knowledge. And of course, there are bridges between diverse peoples who come together to fulfill a common mission.

There is also the bridge between childhood and adulthood, the path that adolescents often tread precariously. For adolescents in high school, identity development is often the site for turmoil and conflict. In the formation of identities, students can draw from their own sociohistorical contexts (see Gándara, Gutiérrez, & O’Hara, 2001) and that of their greater community. However, as schools press for more standardization in the wake of high-stakes testing and exit exams, high school students can come to experience only dominant paradigms in their schooling experience. Because the knowledge that is privileged is external to their own communities, the construction of knowledge can be seen by adolescents as inscribed within communities other than their own. This can ultimately negatively impact the decisions that adolescents make, because the forms of knowledge that emerge from their knowledge base are seen as lacking and deficient. Although the methodology of the “funds of knowledge” has not been explicitly incorporated into Puente, it has been implicit in the conceptualization and design of the program. This article addresses four areas within which the funds of knowledge perspective could be explicitly incorporated into the Puente model. The first has to do with identifying and validating local cultural and social capital. The second has to do with fostering community and family involvement, which in themselves are a form of cultural and social capital. Third, the professional development of teachers is a significant outcome. Finally, the construction of student identities as researchers, as producers

rather than consumers of knowledge, is perhaps the most compelling possibility.

The concept of funds of knowledge is based on a simple premise (González & Amanti 1997; González et al., 1995; Moll 1992). That premise is that people are competent and have knowledge, and their life experiences have given them that knowledge. Our claim is that through first-hand research experiences with families, we can document this competence and knowledge, and that this engagement leads to many possibilities for positive pedagogical actions. We claim that the theoretical conception presented in this article, a funds of knowledge approach, facilitates a systematic and powerful way to represent communities in terms of the resources, the wherewithal they do possess, and a way to harness these resources for classroom teaching.

At the heart of our approach has been the work of teachers conducting research in their students' households. However, because the Puente Project involves high school students, we suggest that in addition to teachers researching their school communities, Puente students themselves could also learn ethnographic methodology and research their own communities. In contrast to other approaches that emphasize home visits, the teachers in our studies venture into their students' households and communities, not as teachers attempting to convey educational information, as valuable as that role may be, but as learners, as researchers with a theoretical perspective that seeks to understand the ways in which people make sense of their everyday lives. To accomplish this task, we have relied on a mix of guided conversation and interviewing, a sort of ethnographic interview, in which the principal task is not only to elicit information but to foster a relationship of trust with the families so they can tell us about their life and experiences, a task that students themselves could learn. The interview becomes an exchange of views, information, and stories, and the families get to know us as we get to know them. By focusing, theoretically and methodologically, on understanding the particulars, the processes or practices of life (in Spanish, *los quehaceres de la vida*), how people live culturally (*la cultura vivida*), we gain a deep appreciation of how people use resources of all kinds, most prominently their funds of knowledge, to engage life.

If one accepts the premise of this article, that people have knowledge acquired through their life experiences, then the question immediately arises, Why is it that some people's knowledge is considered more valid than others? Although this is an area that is much contested, we claim that part of the reason is because knowledge is not neutral, and particular types of knowledge are academically validated in schools. What happens, then, to students whose

households are seen as deficient in the “right” kind of knowledge? How can we overcome the idea that only particular knowledge counts? Our theoretical assumptions stem from notions of social capital and social networks that can be traced in the sociological literature, each addressing a distinctive set of social phenomena. We draw on the work of James Coleman (cf. Coleman & Hoffer 1987; Coleman, Hoffer, & Kilgore, 1982), which focuses on identity and affiliation and how families and communities can marshal social resources to enhance students’ academic endeavors. The second conceptualization is associated with Pierre Bourdieu (cf. Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) and the notions of differential access to highly valued institutional resources that are privileged as a higher form of knowledge. In the following sections, we explain how we have attempted to describe the social networks of households and students, as well as the local funds of knowledge that may not be academically validated in schools.

WHAT DID WE DO?

The underlying rationale for carrying out this work stems from the assumption that the educational process can be greatly enhanced when teachers learn about the everyday lived contexts of their students’ lives. In our particular version of how this can come to be accomplished, ethnographic research methods involving participant observation, interviewing, life history narratives, and reflection on field notes, help to uncover the multidimensionality of student experience. Teacher/ethnographers venture into their students’ households and communities, not as teachers attempting to convey educational information but as anthropological learners, seeking to understand the ways in which people make sense of their everyday lives. Although the concept of making home visits is not new, entering the households of working-class, Mexican-origin, African American, or Native American students with an eye toward learning from households is a radical departure from traditional school-home visits.

What we describe is a very different type of home visit by teacher/researchers. These are research visits for the purpose of identifying and documenting knowledge that exists in students’ homes and in the process, establishing a relationship between school and community.

WHO ARE THE TEACHERS?

We feel strongly that only teachers (and, we should add, high school students) who voluntarily desire to participate be included. Any project that adds to teachers’ duties and demands on their time has to take into account the

extra burden that it places on teachers' schedules and lives. There can be little benefit derived from mandating visits in which the teacher (or student) has no desire to be in the household, nor the household any desire in receiving them. However, when there is sincere interest in learning about and from households, relationships and *confianza* can flourish.

Teachers participating in the project in its various iterations have been primarily elementary school teachers, although recently middle school teachers have participated. They come from a variety of backgrounds and ranges of teaching experience. Both minority and nonminority teachers have said they have benefited from the process. Hispanic teachers from the community voiced that conducting household visits was in many ways "like coming home to my grandmother's house," triggering childhood memories for them, a process that might be of significance for adolescents.

HOW DO WE FIND OUT ABOUT KNOWLEDGE IN THE COMMUNITY?

In recent years, building on what students bring to school and on their strengths has been shown to be an incredibly effective teaching strategy (McIntyre, Rosebery, & González, 2001). What better way to engage students than to draw them in with knowledge that is already familiar to them and to use that as a basis for pushing their learning? But here is the challenge and dilemma: How do we know about the knowledge they bring without falling into tired stereotypes about cultural practices? How do we deal with the dynamic processes of the lived experiences of students? How can we get away from static categorizations of assumptions about what goes on in households? How can we build relationships of *confianza* ("mutual trust") with students' households?

Our answer to these questions focuses on the talk born of ethnography: respectful talk between people who are mutually engaged in a constructive conversation (see González, Andrade, & Carson 2001).

WHAT ARE THE METHODS FOR DOING THIS?

As the Funds of Knowledge project has evolved, the approach to ethnographic training has shifted as we have learned more about what works and what does not. Not surprisingly, what works is exactly what our basic assumption is predicated on: The more that participants can engage and identify with the topic matter, the more interest and motivation is generated. What does not work is a top-down, classroom-style approach in which participants can learn methodological technique but which strips away the

multidimensionality of a personal ethnographic encounter. In other words, we learn ethnography by doing ethnography.

It is difficult to reduce a complex process to formulaic terms, because anything called ethnography is always in jeopardy of reductionistic misuse. However, there are certain points that are key in adopting an anthropological lens. First of all, it is important to read ethnographic literature. Teachers have always been provided with a reader that contains numerous examples of ethnographic work relating to educational settings, and high school students could find a wealth of information on qualitative research, ethnographic inquiry, and community research. Second, it is important to role-play or discuss a non-evaluative, non-judgmental stance to the fieldwork they will be conducting. We may not always agree with what we hear, but our role is to understand how others make sense of their lives. Sense-making processes may be contradictory or ambiguous, but in one way or another, understanding what makes sense to others is what we are about. Third, it helps to be a good observer and, even more, to pay attention to detail.

The household visit begins long before the actual entrance into the home. Driving down the street, we can observe the neighborhood, the surrounding area, the external markers of what identifies this as a neighborhood. We can look for material clues to possible funds of knowledge in gardens (botanical knowledge?), patio walls (perhaps someone is a mason?), restored automobiles (mechanical knowledge?) or ornaments displayed (made by whom?). During our initial training session, we show a video that contains two short segments of ordinary community scenes and ask participants to talk about what they notice. The first video contains a family yard sale and shows a great deal of activity going on at once. We stress that this is usually what happens on a household visit: Life does not stand still so that we can observe it. The vignette usually elicits comments on what is being sold (wood doll furniture might indicate carpentry skills), the interactions involved (the older siblings are caring for the younger babies, indicating cross-age caretaking), and language use (code-switching between Spanish and English is evident throughout). It is fascinating to notice how our own interests and our own funds of knowledge often color and filter what we observe. One teacher commented that he noticed a fountain in the backyard because he was installing one himself.

The second video segment that we have used is particularly rich for tapping into potential curricular applications. It shows a 9-year-old boy in a backyard workshop, working with his father to build a barbecue grill. The scene is replete with measurement, estimation, geometry, and a range of other household mathematical practices. Because we do not often think of routine

household activities as containing mathematics, this slice of life helps to conceptualize the academic potential of community knowledge.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we ask respectful questions and learn to listen to answers. The dialogue that comes about in the face-to-face interaction of the ethnographic interview is key in building bridges between community and school and between parent and teacher. Asking questions with the intent to learn more about others is a powerful method for establishing the validation of community-based knowledge.

WHAT ABOUT CULTURE?

Because the term *culture* is loaded with expectations of group norms and often static ideas of how people view the world and behave in it, we purposely avoid reference to ideas of culture. The word *culture* presumes a coherence within groups that, most likely, may not exist. Instead, we have focused on *practice*, that is, what households actually do, and what they think about what they do. In this way, we open up a panorama of the interculturality of households, that is, how households draw from multiple cultural systems and use these systems as strategic resources. Because of the problematic nature of the term *culture*, the whole construct has been threatened with abandonment (González, 1999; Rodseth, 1998). However, the question then remains, how do we conceptualize difference? How can we replace the contribution of the culture concept, yet minimize its by-products? By focusing on practice, on the strategies and adaptations that households have developed over time, we have chosen to focus on the multiple dimensions of the lived experiences of students. In addition, the dialogue of the ethnographic interviews that the teachers conduct provides a rich source of discourse that encapsulates how people are thinking about these lived experiences. These two approaches together, discourse and practice, form the basis for our approach to viewing households (see Abu-Lughod, 1991).

WHAT KINDS OF QUESTIONS DO WE ASK?

It is important to remember that the interviews should emerge as a type of conversation rather than a survey or research format. We ask permission of the households first and are careful to explain that that pseudonyms are always used and every effort is expended to maintain confidentiality.

Based on our previous experience in household interviews, we have distilled critical topics into three basic areas. These areas correspond to three

questionnaires that are generally covered in three visits. Using questionnaires as a tool has been useful for teacher/ethnographers in signaling to families that they are approaching the households as learners. Entering the household with questions rather than answers provides the context for an inquiry-based visit. Questionnaires are used as a guide rather than a protocol, suggesting possible areas to explore and incorporating previous information as a platform for formulating new questions. Teachers have felt that the questionnaires help in guiding the conversation, and one teacher affirmed: "The questionnaires being used for this project represent decades of anthropological fieldwork and theory. As cultural instruments, they crystallize anthropological insight."

The first interview is based on family and labor history. The questions are open-ended and we invite stories about families. We begin by asking how and when the family happened to be where it is now. This generally leads to a conversation of family roots, tracing the movements of the family from locale to locale. We also ask about other households in the region that they may be related to, or with which they have regular contact. Their answers help us to conceptualize the networks within which the family operates. For example, we hear many stories of families who followed other family members to their present locale. They are then able to tap into knowledge about the area and job market that others have accumulated. The narratives that emerge from these household histories are incredibly powerful, and often are testimonies to the resiliency and resources of people whose lives are often lived in the economic margins. Teacher/researchers often come away deeply impacted by the obstacles that have been overcome or the current challenges of household members. One teacher talked about one immigrant household in which 15 people lived, with each adult member working in labor-intensive jobs to contribute to the pool of resources. Teachers regularly encounter households whose very survival often depends on the networks of exchange that surround them. These networks are important sources for the diversity of funds of knowledge to which children are exposed.

The knowledge of grandparents, aunts and uncles, and extended family relations are also resources that extend beyond the nuclear family. We have found that the very experience of relating a family history, rich in its own complexity, often evinced a historical consciousness in parents of where they have come from and how they got to be where they are. As parents relate stories of their own mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers, life histories can come tumbling out in a fashion that is not often elucidated. Mexican-origin households have told evocative stories of crossing into the United States on foot, of working in territorial mines and railroads, and of kinship networks that pulled them to their location. African-American

households have told stories of relocations and settlements, of grand matriarchs of extended families, and of their own views of community. Native-American households have related to teacher/ethnographers the importance of participating in local traditional ritual Easter ceremonies and the impact that these have on children's identity. Embedded within the experience of narrating one's own particular life trajectory is the extraction of deeper meanings from our own lived experiences. As family members narrate the stories of how they got to be where they are, everyday experiences come to be imbued with insights and coherence that can lead to alternate forms of learning. Teachers as learners, parents as learners, and students as learners can come together within communities in which learning is mutually educative, co-constructed and jointly negotiated.

We have also found that labor histories are very rich sources for the funds of knowledge that households possess. The jobs that people have worked at have often provided them with a varied and extensive wealth of information. However, the types of jobs and labor histories that are common within a particular location are linked to regional patterns of political economy. In the southwestern context of our work, we have found funds of knowledge consolidated in the ecologically pertinent arenas of mining and metallurgy, ranching and animal husbandry, ethnobotany, and transborder transactions. For many households who do not see relocation as an option, the economic climate of the region drives households into a wide breadth of marketable skills in a multiplicity of areas. Children are not only exposed to the funds of knowledge that these shifts engender but also the strategic shifts in employment goals. This ability to shift strategies in midstream is a skill that the successful and productive citizen of the future must embody. These children are keenly aware that survival is often a matter of making the most of scarce resources and adapting to situations in innovative and resourceful ways.

We have found family members engaged in diverse occupations that give them skills in many areas. For example, carpenters and seamstresses both engage in mathematical practices that are often intuitive, commonsensical, and not academically based. Yet, these practices yield efficient and precise results, because errors are costly and can impact their livelihood. One important point to remember is that a labor history does not necessarily mean a job in the formal labor market. Many women, for example, sell items out of their homes, such as tortillas and tamales, or cosmetics, or they have a regular stand at the local swap meet. Although these are not often counted as jobs, they are ripe with potential for children's formation of knowledge. One student, for example, was able to negotiate a barter system with a fellow swap meet vendor and was able to purchase particular clothes that he wanted.

The second interview is based on regular household activities. Children are often involved in ongoing household activities that can incorporate, for example, car repair, gardening, home improvement, child care, or working in a family business or hobby. We ask about music practices, sports, shopping with coupons, and other aspects of everyday life that help us develop a composite and multidimensional image of the range of possible funds of knowledge.

The third interview is the most complex, and teacher/researchers report that it is often the most revealing (and lengthy!). One area of understanding processes of sense making involves how parents view and construct their roles as parents and caretakers. This interview asks questions about parenthood, raising children, and the experience of being a parent. Parents are asked about their own school experiences and are asked to contrast it with their children's school experiences. Immigrant parents are asked about school experiences in their home country and are asked to contrast it with the educational system in the United States. There are also questions about language use for bilingual families, including when particular languages are spoken and under what circumstances.

It is important to remember that questions are not asked in an intrusive way, and any question that seems inappropriate is simply not asked. Teacher/researchers develop skills in asking questions as part of conversation, in a way that no one finds uncomfortable. None of the questions are prescriptive, and there is wide latitude in how the interview is conducted. The main purpose of the interview is the establishment of a relationship, and the discovery of funds of knowledge is an added benefit.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE INTERVIEW?

One important element in reflecting on the interview and visit resides in the written field notes. We do ask the families permission to tape-record the interview, because this helps in the reconstruction of the experience. The field notes document the findings and details of the visit in a way that helps to further process the experience. Although writing field notes can be time consuming, the written expression helps in collectively sharing the insights gained from the visit in the study group. Following their forays into the field, teacher/ethnographers were asked to write up field notes, as all field workers do, based on each interview, and these field notes became the basis for the study group discussions. Teachers overwhelmingly remarked on the time-consuming nature of this process, and we are sure that high school students will also find the task onerous. After a hectic school day, taking the time to conduct interviews that often stretched into 2 hours or more, and then to

invest 4 to 5 hours in writing field notes was an exacting price to pay for a connection to the household. The teachers cited this one factor as precluding wholesale teacher participation in this project. Yet, in spite of the strain of the task, the teachers felt that the effort was “worth it.” It was in the reflexive process involved in transcription that teachers were able to obtain elusive insights that could easily be overlooked. As they replayed the audiotapes and referred to notes, connections and hunches began to emerge. The household began to take on a multidimensional reality that had taken root in the interview and reached its fruition in reflexive writing. Writing gave form and substance to the connection forged between the household and the teacher.

The formation of study-group settings with teachers is central to our approach. These study groups could also take the form of a class that high school students are enrolled in. Each study group represents a setting not only to learn about theory and methods or to analyze data but to engage in reflexive thought with one another about the nature of the inquiry, our roles in creating knowledge, how we go about making sense of the families’ experiences, and our responsibilities to the families who allow us into their homes. Another important aspect of these study-group settings is their mobility. We usually meet after school and at the school, as a matter of convenience. However, we have also met at our homes, at restaurants, libraries, and other locations.

In any case, regardless of location, the study-group settings serve a similar mediating function between the household visits and the classroom work. The term *mediation* has a special meaning in our studies, one that we borrow from the writings of Vygotsky (1978). (For an elaboration of this theme, see González, Andrade, Civil, & Moll, 2001.) For Puente students, this concept has particular significance. A major point in his theory is how culture provides human beings with tools and other resources to mediate their thinking (Cole, 1996; Moll, 1998, in press). In a nutshell, from birth, one is socialized by others into particular cultural practices, ways of using language(s), and ways of using artifacts, especially symbol systems such as writing, that become the “mediational tools” through which to interact with one’s social world. Thus, from a Vygotskian perspective, human thinking has an essential sociocultural character from the very beginning, because all human actions, from the mundane to the exotic, involve mediation through such objects, symbols and practices (see Scribner, 1990; Tomasello, 1999). Put another way, these cultural tools and practices are always implicated in how one thinks and develops. Accordingly, many societies come to create special cultural settings, namely schools, to make these mediational tools widely available in one form or another, for (as we are well aware) schools may differ radically in how they perform these functions. Given their prominence in human activities, Vygotsky assigned such cultural means, and the special practices

of schooling, a prominent role in the constitution of human thinking (Cole, 1996).

There are three main ways that these ideas are found in our work. First, notice how these ideas relate to the analysis of household funds of knowledge. Funds of knowledge are generated through the social and labor history of families and communicated to others through the activities that constitute household life, including through the formation of social networks that are central to any household's functioning. From this perspective, then, funds of knowledge represent one of the household's most useful cultural resources, an essential tool kit that households need to maintain their well-being.

A second way is that funds of knowledge become cultural resources for teachers as they document their existence and bring them to bear on their work. But to carry out these tasks, teachers must themselves acquire certain specialized cultural tools, "thought methodologies," that mediate their thinking about these matters. In fact, we borrow the term *thought methodologies* from Pontecorvo's (1993) formulation of Vygotskian mediational tools:

Mediation tools include the semiotic systems pertaining to different languages and to various scientific fields; these are procedures, thought methodologies, and cultural objects that have to be appropriated, practices of discourse and reasoning that have to be developed, and play or study practices that have to be exercised. (p. 191)

It is this idea of "appropriating," of taking over, certain procedures, objects, discourses, and reasoning, all that come to function as mediation tools, that applies so well to how the study groups function in our approach.

To elaborate on the above, we highlight two aspects of these study groups that have to do with theoretical representations. These aspects underlie the development of a critical pedagogy for high school students, as well as the development of a critical consciousness of social processes. A major role of the study group has been to help mediate the participants' comprehension of social life in the households they study. The process by which these understandings are created varies, but it starts with the preparations to conduct the household visits. Entering the households with questions rather than answers provides the context for an inquiry-based visit, a very important aspect of our work, as explained earlier. As important is for teachers to gain an understanding of funds of knowledge as a "fluid" concept, and that its content and meaning are negotiated through discussions among participants. Thus, following each visit, the teachers are asked to write up field notes based on each interview, and these field notes become the basis for the study group discussions. It is through this process of writing and discussing that one gives theoretical

form and substance to the connections forged empirically between the households and the teachers.

As mentioned, our strategy has been to get close to the phenomena of household life by making repeated visits to households in our role as learners, armed with a particular theory and methods, as already explained. The elaboration of field notes, as well as other written products, is by necessity a strategic reduction of household life, a partial representation of reality, for that reality is too complex to understand without reducing it for specific purposes. Here is where the concept of funds of knowledge plays a major role as a cultural artifact, in the Vygotskian sense, that helps mediate the teachers' comprehension of social life within the households they study. This key concept (and related ideas), then, serves as a conceptual organizer, a strategic way of reducing theoretically (but with plenty of respect) the complexity of people's everyday experiences without losing from sight the rich and dynamic totality of their lives.

Notice how important this understanding of the concept is, especially for novices visiting a household for the first time. It is not a matter of conducting visits to document whatever one sees or hears; instead, it is a matter of entering the households with certain limitations, with theoretical provisions and methodological guidance that will give order to the often unmanageable task of learning about other people's lives. It is also a matter of learning how to use these theoretical tools wisely, carefully, and in consultation with others. Thus, our research starts with the theoretical questions we bring into households; but our data results from the translation of the information gathered into theoretically mediated narratives.

The field notes and other artifacts, therefore, such as audio- and videotapes, the tools of our trade, provide a social context for our interpretations and actions. These artifacts are central in helping us develop a new attitude toward the cultural resources found in local households and, by implication, in the broader community. But also notice that, in a sense, we first create this new attitude toward the text, toward the slice of life that we have represented in writing, as facilitated by the documentation of funds of knowledge, and then we generalize that attitude to the families with whom we work, the sources of the data. This interaction between text and social life, between word and world, is a constant process in the approach.

Of course, most of us are predisposed to think well of the families anyway, but even those who are not convinced or who have not given the topic much thought are influenced by the process, or at least develop a new vocabulary to refer to household practices. Terms such as *funds of knowledge*, *networks of exchange*, *reciprocal relations*, or the *creation of confianza* become part of

the theoretical lexicon of teachers. Thus, it is important to emphasize that we do not create these new attitudes, or the vocabulary, about the families simply by visiting them but through theoretically inspired text analyses and reflections.

Our mediated approach to understanding families and their cultural resources also includes raising possibilities for changes in practice. This is the third way that the Vygotskian formulations have played a role in our work, especially as combined with an anthropological perspective on classrooms, in understanding classrooms as cultural settings. During the course of our studies, we made the decision to take a more ethnographic stance toward the teachers' classroom practices. Our task shifted from stimulating changes in practice, especially as related to literacy instruction (see Moll, 1992), to understanding how teachers made use of their experiences and resources within classroom contexts, most often in different schools as well. As the reader will appreciate, it involves a much more complicated process of recontextualizing not only the knowledge obtained through the research but the perspectives and methods of inquiry that lead to that knowledge. Perhaps the connecting thread among the teachers who participated in our studies is a renewed emphasis on an inquiry model of teaching, one in which the students are actively involved in developing their knowledge. It is through an inquiry process, conceptualized in several ways, given the various participants within different work situations and curricular exigencies, that one can create conditions for fruitful interactions between knowledge found inside and outside the classroom. The key for any inquiry method is to expand the resources available for teaching and learning within classroom settings.

All of these processes take time to develop, which is why long-term collaborations are most useful in this work. That is, a teacher's access to the resources of the study group, and by implication, to the cultural resources of the households, involves what Manyak (2000) calls "evolving trajectories of participation" (cf. Lave & Wenger, 1991). This term refers to how, over time, one comes to participate in a variety of ways within a particular community, in this instance, the study-group settings, gaining access to its resources. Manyak puts it as follows: "Through engagement in increasingly central roles and responsibilities in practice, participants' access to community members, activities, discourses, and technologies expands and they experience new opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, and identities" (p. 6). This is precisely the "expanded" participation we attempt to facilitate in our approach. In direct contrast, a "confining" participation would limit access to learning resources and constraint possibilities for change.

We have emphasized how within classrooms students should be active in the production of knowledge, not solely recipients of knowledge from

teachers and curricula. Notice that this emphasis is consistent with how we collaborated with teachers in the study groups and with their expansive participation as producers of knowledge. An important point to convey here is that it is not primarily the infusion of funds of knowledge into existing classroom lessons that is of interest to us; we worry about reinforcing the reductionist forms of schooling that compose the status quo. A more critical goal from our perspective is how schooling may be reconceptualized to support new and broader possibilities than is now the case.

As such, from early in the study, we proposed an inquiry approach to instruction as a way of expanding the roles, activities, and resources available for learning in classrooms, to include those resources made available through the funds of knowledge research of teachers. The emphasis within such inquiry is the student as active learner, displaying competence within the expanded possibilities for action made available by exceeding the limits of tightly prescribed lessons, so typical within the reductionist school programs that are in vogue in the current education scene (see Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Asato, 2001). Within these inquiry arrangements, the emphasis is on literacy for action, as situated by the nature of the activities as developed by both teachers and students.

There are several ways that such inquiry arrangements can take place for high school students. To be sure, several authors have elaborated versions of inquiry-oriented models that are compatible with our approach, although they may not emphasize the use of funds of knowledge (see, e.g., Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000; Luke, 2000; Wells, 1999). These models also emphasize, as we do, learning and development as sociocultural processes, in which outcomes are an open question, for these processes are not deterministic but interactively constructed, so that outcomes come about through the quality of work of teachers and students. And these authors would also agree, as we do, with Farfard's (1992) claim, "We must view classroom change, not as the implementation of a particular innovation, but as an episode in the career-long learning of a professional" (p. 115).

To reiterate the four areas of potential impact of a funds-of-knowledge perspective for Puente students, we emphasize:

Identifying and validating local cultural and social capital. As teachers work with students in typical Puente assignments (e.g., autobiographical writing, community writing about mentors, etc.), the methods we have used can be a valuable resource in reconceptualizing the discourses of academic validation. If both teachers and students approach community practices with an anthropological lens, the complex layers of local social capital can become more transparent.

Community and family involvement. As Tierney (2002 [this issue]) has documented, "Almost a generation's worth of research has shown that parental and familial participation improves student learning whether the child is in preschool or preparing for college. . . . The assertion that children learn irrespective of the family has been soundly rejected." We might add to this assertion that students' learning is bound up in networks of relationships that extend beyond the nuclear family. By tapping into the extended networks and social capital of students, teachers can not only validate knowledge but can activate these networks for pedagogical purposes. For example, we found that the process of ethnographic interviewing of households opened up new venues for communication with the school. Parents who were reluctant to come into classrooms were willing to participate when teachers demonstrated a genuine interest and respect for their skills. Mothers came to classroom and talked about candy making or sewed dance costumes. Fathers volunteered their botanical or mechanical knowledge. Grandmothers, aunts, and cousins were often in the home when the interviews took place, thus integrating them into the school community at some level. Students do not exist in a vacuum, and an explicit consciousness of social networks and their impact on students' lives is a viable vehicle for building bridges. As Tierney emphasizes, bidirectional sense of engagement affirms "cultural integrity (1999, 2000) that calls on students' funds of knowledge to enhance learning. Because Puente students are mindful from the time of the initial interview that parents are critical to the success of the program, respectful ways of building bridges to the school for families is axiomatic. Grubb, Lara, and Valdéz (2002 [this issue]) argue that Puente is not only a college preparation program but also a form of parental education; it is important to remember that this enterprise must be mutually educative, with educators learning from families and families learning from educators.

Professional development of teachers. Because Puente teachers indicate (Gándara, 2002 [this issue]) that their training in Puente impacts their non-Puente classes, the professional development of teachers can have wider repercussions. As we have outlined in our discussion of the study groups, teacher development and professionalization is markedly affected by the process of teacher research. The mere act of going beyond the classroom walls is in itself a transformative process, as teacher/researchers push the boundaries of their pedagogical practices. The conscious reflection on social processes within the school community, as well as on the theoretical elaboration of households, artifacts, and cultural practices, enhances teachers' (and students) use and understanding of mediational tools for academic achievement.

Students as researchers. Because all of the diverse strands in the Puente model involve students as not only consumers but producers of knowledge, the ethnographic training of students as researchers could contribute to overall goals. Pradl (2002 [this issue]) indicates that the Puente high school English program works to draw on Latino community knowledge as a way of “presenting, sharing, and negotiating the knowledge—both canonical and procedural—that will be expected of students as they progress in their school careers and imagine new social roles and economic scripts.” Similarly, as students assume new roles as ethnographers, they are better equipped to demystify the world of educational and occupational institutions. These skills can transfer across a variety of disciplines and activities. For example, Cazden (2002 [this issue]) documents how the counselor in one school arranged for Puente students to shadow and interview school personnel within their own high school and the district office. With exposure to qualitative research skills, these assignments can take on greater depth and breadth for students. Additionally, as Giroux (1988) has noted, a critical pedagogy must involve students’ voices and speak to a way in which teachers can

organize classroom relationships so that students can draw on and confirm those dimensions of their own histories and experiences that are deeply rooted in the surrounding community . . . assume pedagogical responsibility for attempting to understand the relationships and forces that influence students outside the immediate context of the community traditions, histories and forms of knowledge that are often ignored within the dominant school culture . . . create the conditions where students come together to speak, to engage in dialogue, to share their stories, and to struggle together within social relations that strengthen rather than weaken possibilities for active citizenship. (pp. 199-201)

Within such a pedagogical possibility, students who have been active researchers in their own and other communities, who have interrogative practices, and who reflect on these practices, can strengthen “possibilities for active citizenship.” Puente students, as ethnographers, can hone their skills in multiple arenas, building bidirectional bridges from the familiar to the abstract.

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