

Faculty Commons Graduate Student Research Conference

June 9, 2021

Presentation Abstracts

“Communication and Care” Panel

Melissa Mallon, Hispanic Studies (Latinx and Latin American Studies)

Authentic Materials for Language Learning: A Critical Antiracist Approach

Abstract: Spanish language educators have long called for the incorporation of authentic materials into classroom instruction. Authentic texts, or those created for real-life purposes (for example, an advertisement found in a Spanish language magazine or a song in Spanish) are thought to be more representative of how language is used in daily life compared to the artificially created activities found in language textbooks. The benefit of authentic materials is that students are exposed to more complex linguistic forms while also enriching their cultural knowledge. Conversely, authentic materials are problematic in that they are perceived as inherently lacking stereotypes or biases and are seldomly viewed through a critical lens. I argue that authentic materials carry raciolinguistic implications such as standard language ideologies that value the idealized “native” speaker while stigmatizing varieties such as Spanglish, which is perceived to be too “informal” or “slang” for the classroom. When these ideologies go unquestioned, the language classroom perpetuates linguistic hierarchies that lead to the discrimination of speakers of marginalized language varieties. What I propose, then, is to employ a critical, antiracist approach to authentic materials where students and instructor collaboratively examine authentic texts for root narratives that reflect raciolinguistic ideologies. In this way, students develop a critical awareness of language while working towards dismantling dominant discourses related to language and race.

Jessica Gutierrez Masini, Music (Performing Difference)

Doing Research “in a Good Way”: Decolonizing the Group Interview through Talking Circles

Abstract: Inspired by scholar musician Dawn Avery’s (Mohawk) use of talking circles in her group interviews with Native composers (2014), I explore decolonizing the group interview using talking circles. Talking circles are a distinctive tradition among some North American Tribal Nations that give every member a chance to speak on a particular topic. Today, talking circles have found their way into classrooms as a pedagogical tool for structuring discussions in-person and online. Considering the COVID-19 pandemic restructuring the way we research, I share the benefits of talking circles in a virtual setting by focusing on a talking circle group interview I conducted in May 2020. Talking circles present an opportunity to do research “in a good way” (to use an expression that is common among my friends and interlocutors). Additionally, they can create a sense of community and foster an environment in which dignity and respect are given and received by all. Talking circles can explore community tensions or resistance and facilitate listening and learning together. In my current research, I investigate cross-cultural perspectives of Indigeneity (Indigenous identities) through music and dance making in Danza (an Indigenous music, dance, and spiritual

practice from Mexico) and powwow (a North American intertribal music and dance practice) spaces in the Southwest. Talking circles have presented opportunities for an interpersonal analysis of Indigenous intertribal relations, including notions of Indigeneity and decolonial praxis, thereby echoing current and historical modes of decolonial meaning making among Indigenous scholars and communities (Tuhiwai Smith 2012).

Gabriela Ortiz, Anthropology (Inequities in Health)

Platicas as Public Health Through Online Engagement

Abstract: The global pandemic illustrated pervasive social inequities and the impact on health among low-income communities of color. In Riverside County, Black, Latinx, and Native American communities are disproportionately at greater risk for COVID-19 infection, hospitalization, and death. Despite an increase in vaccination efforts in Riverside County, specifically in the Eastern Coachella Valley, Latinx communities remain vulnerable to structural barriers, citizenship status, language, and poverty, which significantly impacts their access to COVID-19 testing and vaccination. In collaboration with community health workers (promotores) and a Federally Qualified Healthcare Center, this project aimed to establish free and consistent COVID-19 testing sites across the unincorporated rural communities of the Eastern Coachella Valley. Additionally, this project produced and disseminated culturally relevant and language appropriate public health information.

In an effort to reach structurally vulnerable Latinx populations, the project used a community-based participatory research approach to gather vital information relating to COVID-19 perceptions, knowledge, and practices among Latinx and Indigenous Purépecha Mexicans in the rural desert communities. Promotores disseminated public health information through Facebook and in-person chats (platicas) as a method to address myths and anxieties regarding COVID-19 testing and vaccines. The weekly platicas opened up a space where community members could ask COVID-19 related questions to a physician from Mexico, becoming one of the earliest forms of COVID-19 intervention in the ECV. This presentation offers a discussion of the ways this approach could be implemented to respond to varying public health concerns among structurally vulnerable populations across both rural and urban settings.

Joshua Liashenko, Anthropology (Inequities in Health)

Gender-Affirming Care from a Distance: Perspectives on Telehealth among Trans and Non-Binary Therapists in Southern California

Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic presents challenges to healthcare providers and has exacerbated existing inequalities for trans and non-binary (TGNB) people in accessing healthcare (Herman and O'Neill 2021). This work examines patterns of community care as TGNB Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFTs) navigate providing mental health services for other TGNB people during the pandemic. Due to stay-at-home orders and the rollback of prohibitive institutional regulations (Hamnvik et al. 2020), LMFTs have begun to use or have expanded their use of video conferencing technology. Concurrent research on telemedicine and gender-affirming healthcare

indicates an increase of trans people seeking care during the pandemic due to the flexibility offered by telehealth services. Evidence suggests telehealth has a positive impact on health outcomes among trans patients (Lock, Anderson, and Hill 2021), however, as technology and internet access is required, inequalities are reproduced alongside innovation. While research exists on the impact telehealth has on TGNB healthcare systems and patients, there is a lack of qualitative research with TGNB therapists regarding their perspectives using teletherapy. This work ethnographically explores how telehealth has been integrated within trans-affirming mental healthcare in Southern California. Data collected from semi-structured interviews highlights how TGNB LMFTs evaluate their ability to provide affirming care through teletherapy. As TGNB LMFTs have experience as both patients and providers within trans healthcare systems, this research analyzes how experience-informed care is administered in-light of the adverse conditions presented by the pandemic.