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Bimusical Identity of Children in a Mexican American School

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**Abstract**

Bimusical Identity of Children in a Mexican American School

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The purpose of this ethnographic study is to examine the bimusical identity of Mexican American children in a Mexican American bilingual-bicultural school as they navigate between the different musical and cultural spheres that are present within their daily lives. The research lens is directed towards the bimusical interests and sensibilities of Mexican American children, and to the extent that they are present in the articulation and manifestation of their musical identities. The school and home influences, and various “agents of influence” (including teachers, parents and extended family members, and the media) are explored as children forge their bicultural, bilingual, and bimusical identity in one school and community rich with American mainstream and Mexican-based cultural practices. Documentation was amassed over a period of 37 weeks, including observations of school music classes, performances, recess periods, mariachi rehearsals, and community events, along with interviews of 67 children and school personnel. The children enrolled in an elementary school in a small community in the Yakima Valley, Washington state, shared a spectrum of interests and enthusiasms for music, and offered perspective, on their knowledge of two different languages and their family cultural traditions. Children articulated their musical identities through their knowledge of Mexican-based repertoire—including Spanish-

language children's songs, church songs, mediated popular songs, and mariachi music and English-language children's songs, American mainstream popular music, and songs of the standard school repertoire. Their attunement to Mexican-based music and awareness of American mainstream music (especially school and mediated popular music) was evident in their musical engagement and in what music, musicians, and musical activities they could verbally describe. This ethnographic study revealed children who were rooted to the musical sensibilities honed at home and continued in the dual-language curriculum of a bilingual school, where Mexican-based and American mainstream musical experiences are present. Implications were discussed for teaching music to children whose language, culture, and musical roots were decidedly of a culture other than the school-dictated dominant English-language culture, and recommendations were offered for honoring home and school culture in a music curriculum that pays tribute to a strengthening of the bimusical identity of children.

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## **DEDICATION**

To the Children of Valley View Elementary School

## Prologue

As I flipped through old childhood pictures, I came across myself as a second grade child dressed in a ballet folklorico dress with multi colored ribbons woven through my hair. My mother and I recounted musical experiences of my childhood. My grandmother would sing and play many of the Mexican folk songs when I would stay with her. Throughout elementary school, I was a ballet folklorico dancer during our annual Cinco de Mayo celebrations in the school district. My mother laughed as she pulled another photo of me singing a Juan Gabriel song with my microphone in hand; he is an internationally known Mexican singer even to this day. I remember feeling the cool breeze as I was about to fall asleep while standing outside my grandmother's window with my uncles and extended family preparing to serenade my grandmother with *Las Mañanitas* at midnight on her birthday. Throughout my childhood I recalled hearing my mother singing along with the radio to many of the Spanish pop tunes while she cleaned the house.

As I entered the sixth grade, the silver flute was calling my name. I enrolled in band and practiced hard to become the first chair flute player in my middle school band. After starting to listen and play Western classical music, I could not quite make the connection between this new music that I was learning about at school and the *Conjunto*, *Tejano*, and mariachi music we listened to at home and in community events. As I continued my formal study of music, my home-and-family music began to feel less interesting. Although sometimes confused about the musical connections in my life, I stayed in band through high school and rose to the position of drum major during my last years of school. Leadership experiences in the school music program confirmed my decision to become a band director, even while it was during those four years of high school that I *really* learned how to dance to

conjunto and Tejano music. I had always known the basic moves and could manage a dance with my father or brother but after many weekends filled with dancing, I became quite good at it. My friends and I would often show up at a wedding in the local town hall just so we could dance to the great *Conjunto* and *Tejano* groups that were hired to play.

After graduation, I left for college to pursue a music education degree. I delved deeper into the Western music paradigm through my studies. I also experienced Ghanaian drumming, and after graduation traveled to Ghana. These few experiences stirred in me a desire to explore musical experiences outside the Western art music culture. In turn, this then led onto my studies in ethnomusicology at the University of Washington. I was challenged academically and culturally, and had become even further removed from my home culture, even as I then shifted to Ph.D. studies in music education with an emphasis on the study of world music pedagogy. I had to confront and reconcile the complexities of my musical identity and my long-held beliefs about music, especially “my” cultural music. I discovered that I was not alone either, in situating myself at the overlap of multiple musical identities.

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

*During the annual Riverview Elementary School winter music program, I was set up to record in the middle of the fourth row gym bleacher and was surrounded by first and second grade students who were eagerly awaiting the appearances of the musicians. As the school mariachi moved onto the gym floor, the children stirred and the volume of their voices increased noticeably. The fledging mariachi, with all of four months of practice sessions, commenced to play Las Mañanitas. Children in the bleachers spontaneously sang along with the players. Just then, one first grade boy pitched his grito: “Aaaaay ha ha ha aye,” and another boy joined in halfway through the first boy’s grito. The surrounding children giggled, and the first grade teacher, Mrs. Saldivar, smiled and nodded approval to the boys. Meanwhile, Mrs. Thomas, a second grade teacher, turned to the boys, frowned, shook her head, and reprimanded them with a directive to “please be quiet.” The young grito-boys seemed unfazed by the reprimand, as they were surrounded by their peers who had enjoyed it and who knew, as they did, that gritos go hand-in-and with the live performance of mariachi music. Experiences like this one were common in the lives of the Riverview Elementary School children and not only revealed the complexities of their musical and cultural identities, but the push-and-pull tensions of growing up in two parallel worlds.*

### **Musical Identity**

Identity is like a weathervane, turning and twisting in the wind, subject to the influences of the forces in the environment. Children are shaped by their environment, such that their musical and cultural identities are developing as they absorb the words and deeds of those with whom they live (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Green, 2011; MacDonald, Hargreaves, & Miell, 2002). Familiar neighbors, teachers, friends, and the personages who parade on

screen and over the airwaves all influence who they are. By the age of 18 months, the process of children's development of identity is evolving, and it continues through their early school years and culminates into adolescence (Bukatko & Daehler, 2011; Jensen, 2011; Lamont, 2011; Sloboda, 1996). Identities that emerge in the school years (Bukatko & Daehler, 2011; Jensen, 2011; Padilla 2006; Schwartz, Luyckx, & Vignoles, 2011; Sedikides & Brewer, 2001; Villa, 2000) often serve as a foundation of who children will be all their lifetimes. Hebert and Campbell (2000) suggested, "among all of the activities humans possess as means by which to create such a powerful sense of identity and community, music may be among the most personal and the most meaningful" (p. 16). Music is one piece of the puzzle of children's identities; the music they consume and express early is foundational and functions as a filter for other musical experiences they will encounter.

MacDonald, Hargreaves, and Miell (2002) separated musical identities into two categories, identities in music and music in identities. Identities in music or a person's self-concept (with regard to music) are influenced by one's environment such as school and family, as well as the "aspects of musical identities that are socially defined within given cultural roles and musical categories" (MacDonald, Hargreaves, & Miell, 2002, p. 2). Therefore, identities in music are based on social and cultural stimuli.

Music in identities reveals how music can be used "as a means or resource for developing other aspects of our individual identities (MacDonald, Hargreaves, & Miell, 2002, p. 2). Stokes (1997) argued that music "provides means by which people recognize identities and places, and the boundaries which separate them" (p. 5). Music is a vehicle to develop and establish one's identity; of which ethnicity is a part of; musical identity reveals the complexity of our personal identity. Green (2011) noted that musical identities are:

forged from a combination of personal, individual musical experiences on one hand, membership in various social groups- from the family to the nation-state and beyond – on the other hand. They encompass musical tastes, values, practices (including reception activities such as listening or dancing), skills, and knowledge; and they are wrapped up with how, where, when, and why those tastes, values, practices, skills, and knowledge were acquired or transmitted. (p. 1)

A person may have multiple musical identities that are continually being constructed, reconstructed, and/or shifted as one grows older, obtains more musical experiences or training, and interacts in varied ways with the social systems surrounding them (MacDonald, Hargreaves, and Miell, 2002). Lamont (2002) stated that children’s musical identities can be understood by studying the “external and observable activities and experiences” of children, as well as their participation as a member of a group in music (p.43). The children’s music preferences, participation in music (ensembles) and musical movement (dancing) groups, and their involvement in cultural groups allow insight into the complex musical identities of a child. Furthermore, Lamont (2002) noted that children with a positive musical identity “engage in more extra-curricular music activities, show more positive attitudes towards school music and like their music teachers” (p. 56).

Ethnicity is another important facet of a person’s identity, one that enables individuals to distinguish a set of self-ideas about their membership in a specific group due to their discovery of a related set of attitudes, values, and behaviors and this ethnic identity forms in the early years of life. Ethnic identity embodies a person’s “sense of peoplehood based on one’s ancestry and is associated with one’s cultural values and traditions. It is an

ascribed identity into which one is born, although ethnic groups themselves are fluid and dynamic, changing with historical and social events” (Jensen, 2011, p. 173).

Bernal et al. (1990) discovered that between the ages of six to ten years old, Mexican American children were able to label, group, and self-identify as Mexican. He acknowledged that by this age they are able to understand the permanence of their ethnicity, especially those children who speak Spanish at home. Identity plays an important role in the socialization of a child, which affects how a child deals with others and how others deal with the child (Bernal & Knight, 1993; Phinney & Rotheram-Borus, 1987; Tajfel, 2010).

Pieridou-Skoutella (2007) conducted an ethnography on the construction of national musical identities in and out of school of Greek Cypriot primary school children in connection with Cypriot traditional music and found that the children often developed insecure, ambiguous, and contradictory national musical identities as a result of the messages they received in the public music education classroom. It is evident that the cultures of school and community are significant influences in the creation of a child’s musical and cultural identities (MacDonald, Hargreaves, and Miell (2002).

Research has been conducted on the concepts of children’s ethnic identity and musical identity (Bernal et al., 1990; Jiménez, 2010; Macias, 2006; Matsunaga, 2010; MacDonald, Hargreaves & Miell, 2002; Lew 2005), as well as efforts to understand the effects of multicultural and bilingual programs on children’s development (Garcia, 2004). There has been limited examination of the relationship between children’s musical identity and how their ethnic identities help shape their bimusical identity, particularly as relevant to Mexican and Mexican American children. Ethnicity is a determinant of cultural identity, and typically bears a significant influence on the music a person listens to and expresses.

MacDonald, Hargreaves, and Miell (2002) suggested that children's development of musical identity is shaped by the individual groups and social institutions they encounter every day.

Mexican American children form their identity as they cross back and forth between the cultural and language spheres that are present in their homes and communities, and within the social institutions they frequent. As these children navigate between the two identities on a daily basis, they learn how to "code-switch" (shifting between languages and cultural behaviors) as they become fluent within the two cultures (Davies & Bentahila, 2006; Gardner-Chloros, 2009; Heredia & Altarriba, 2001; Lederberg & Morales, 1985). This process of code-switching may find its parallel in their musical education at school, where the children's greatest musical interest may be related to the local musics that surround them at home and within the cultural community (which may be far from the music instruction they are offered at school).

O'Hagin and Harnish (2001) explored the role of music in the lives of migrant farm workers in Northwest Ohio. They spent time with four families and paid attention to the role of music in their lives. They identified preferred musical genres and explored the process of music transmission between the different generations of four families. (Relevant to the current study, children were first- and second-generation Mexican Americans, many from families who were or currently engaged in migrant labor.) The migrant children's musical culture contained game-playing songs, songs that adults normally sang, and songs that were passed down through their family. The researchers concluded that the migrant children were:

growing up bicultural and bimusical- that is, with the ability to make music and sing songs in both Latino and Anglo styles...Through our visits and conversations with youth, we concluded that most enjoy a variety of musics in this bicultural

mode... These fluid and ever-changing innovations reveal instances of interactions of the American and Latino, reflecting the youth's own identity issues (Loza, 1994) (p. 28).

The impact of their family and community interactions on the bicultural and bimusical selves was noticeable, as were the influences they received from interactions with media and technology. Their rich and varied musical identities mirrored their ethnic and cultural identities. O'Hagin and Harnish's study explored the transmission process of music in migrant families. It confirmed the importance of musical and cultural agents on a child's musical identity, but did not investigate the influences of school music experiences on a child's musical identity. Furthermore, findings were weighted towards the observations and interviews with the parents, as opposed to receiving first hand accounts of the children's perspective on the matter.

### **Technology, the Media, and Musical Identity**

Issues of constructing and retaining ethnic and musical identity are dependent on a variety of factors such as age, environment, and technology. Physical space becomes less important as technology enters the lives of individuals and allows for an increase in exposure to the media, music, and culture for those who were once restricted to influences in their surrounding (and very local) communities. Even though the physical community plays an important role in developing and sustaining ethnic identity, sociologists explain that Spanish-language media is another common factor in the development of ethnic identity in Mexican Americans. Macias (2006) uses social theorist Benedict Anderson's notion of "imagined communities" as a basis for arguing that Mexican Americans are able to perpetuate Mexican ethnicity. Macias argued that:

“mediated culture,” in the form of Spanish-language television and learning opportunities provided by cultural institutions in the ethnically concentrated Southwest and California, have helped to sustain the “imagining” of Mexican American ethnicity even after certain cultural practices strongly associated with this identity have long been abandoned. By using an “imaginary” approach in this analysis, I deliberately attempt to downplay thinking about culture as a set of “traits” or fixed characteristics that define a cultural subgroup. Instead, I focus on how the people I spoke with utilize available cultural resources – specifically, religion, spoken Spanish, cross-national encounters, and Spanish-language television to reinforce and recreate Mexican ethnicity in their day-to day lives. (p. 23)

These “imagined communities” not only play an important part in establishing ethnic identity, but also heavily influence one’s musical identity. Radio and television provide visual and aural representation of ethnicity and music is a large component of that, thus expanding the cultural soundscape for people who may be limited with resources because of location.

After investigating the musical interests of an eight-year old Mexican child who had migrated to the United States when she was very young, Lum and Campbell (2009) found that technology was central to her experience. They observed:

Technology is at the heart of Mirella’s music enterprise, constantly defining and re-defining her musical identity.... This technology also allows migrants like Mirella and her family to taste and immerse themselves in the musical cultures they knew so well in Mexico, creating “diasporic attachments...the doubled connection that mobile subjects have to localities, to their involvement in webs of cultural, political, and

economic ties that encompass multiple national terrains” (Inda & Rosaldo, 2002, p. 18). It matters not that Mirella’s family lives in a rural, agrarian community, in a small town removed from both Mexico and the urban locus of hip-hop, because the music is carried over the airwaves and to the dish that serves the genres they enjoy. (p. 122)

Children like Mirella are exposed to Spanish-language media and music that may be assisting them in the development of their ethnic and musical identities. Increasingly, even in rural areas, radio stations from around the world (including Mexico, and in poor and rural Mexican American communities in the Yakima Valley) can be accessed with the advancement of radio streaming technology. Cable and dish networks offer more television packages that include network channels from all over the world, thus allowing people to cultivate or to retain a sense of cultural and musical identity within these “imagined communities” in addition to influences from the home, school, or community.

### **Musicianship in One or More Cultures**

With an increased inclusion of a diversity of the world’s musical cultures in classrooms, and with considerable attention to cultural representation in curricular lessons and programs, children are afforded opportunities to acquire musicianship skills in more than a single musical culture. The concept of musicianship “can be displayed and evaluated by our values and our experiences, our theoretical, philosophical and practical orientations, and where we are situated, culturally” (Russell, 2004, p. 335). Schwardron (1974) proposed that older definitions of musicianship encompassed conventional studies in music theory and history, keyboard skills, and sight-singing courses, all of which require local, national, and global music examination and redefinition (Leong, 2003). Through extensive interactions

with a variety of musical cultures, musicianship builds differently, and various musical proficiencies are valued to a greater and lesser extent. Leong's (2003) definition of musicianship offers perspective, too, for the musical ways that develop as a result of training:

Musicianship is about acquiring known information and emerging knowledge to create, perform, share and even disseminate their own music. This includes the ability to 'pick out' stylistic elements from any new music they listen to, and to be able to assimilate these ideas into their own practices using available technologies. (p. 157)

This revised definition of musicianship better answers the issues surrounding multiple music genres that students are learning about and interacting with on a daily basis in their home and school life. For the purpose of this ethnographic study, the term musicianship applies to skills that allow the individual to listen to, sing, play, and/or dance, (and thus to understand a musical system) within the context of the culture in which it is situated.

### **Bimusicality**

Ethnomusicologist Mantle Hood (1960) acknowledged that throughout the world, musicianship is interpreted as the understanding and acquisition of musical skills for understanding Western art music (even those living in places in the world far removed from the West). He observed the challenges of his UCLA students faced in studying music from the East Asia and Southeast Asia, but he urged them to become proficient in an unfamiliar and new (to them) musical system. Through his personal observations of Western-trained student musicians who were also learning Javanese and Balinese gamelan, Japanese gagaku and nagauta, Persian music, and South Indian music, Hood (1960) noted the possibilities of acquiring musicianship of multiple (at least two) cultures and coined the term "bi-

musicality,” to refer to the capacity by some to be technically proficient in two musical systems.

Becoming bimusical may go beyond learning to sing or perform another style of music previously unfamiliar to the individual. Biculturalism, of which bimusicality may be a component, is described as having an understanding of insight into the “language, religion, customs, history--in other words, the whole identity of the society of which music is only one, but one very important part” (Hood, 1960, p. 58). In order to become fully bimusical (and thus partly bicultural), one must be able to understand the purpose and function of the music from the perspective of the culture as well as to understand the contextual information and subtle nuances that allows the music to become alive.

Definitions of bimusicality have varied with scholars, musicians, and music educators. G.L. Clements (2008) claimed that bimusicality encompasses the following traits:

It (1) occurs on a continuum (2) involves performance in two cultures, and (3) understanding of the music in its original context. Someone can be considered bimusical if the three elements listed above are present, however the degree to which someone achieves performance proficiency and cultural understanding will vary because of the capability and experience one has with a musical culture. (p. 22)

Clements argued that, “As long as an individual has a baseline cultural awareness and minimum performing skill, however, they may be considered bi-musical” (p. 22).

### **Bimusical Identity**

In her study of children skilled in South Indian Karnatic music and Western classical music, Teicher (1995) observed that they possessed two musical and cultural identities, those

of their home and school cultures and of the knowledge and values of their heritage and common-school experience. She concluded that:

American-born children may tend to prefer American popular music, especially while they are with their peers who are not involved in Karnatic music. One style, however, does not necessarily preclude another. In interviews, several of the children mentioned how Western and Karnatic music both have a place in their lives, and that one doesn't influence the other. They are separate compartments so to speak, because the two musics are so different and are expressions of two very different cultural foundations. (p. 83)

These findings reveal the possibility of children developing skills and knowledge in two different musical and cultural systems that then contribute to the construction and establishment of their bimusical identity.

As this current study seeks to understand Mexican American children in their development of musical identity (which is typically more than singular), one important consideration is their knowledge of repertoire considered “mainstream American” (comprised of standard school-based and mediated popular music) or Mexican-based (prominently Spanish-language) in styles. Children may know music in school and beyond school, at home and on the media, much of it, which streamed to them from English- and Spanish-media sources or occasionally heard live. Some may be tuned to mediated popular music of one style or another, while others may be fully ensconced in music of their heritage; still others find a place and time for many musical expressions in their lives. Those that understand more than one musical expression respond with understanding to it, and may even sing, dance, or play a standard instrument from each of the two styles, can be said to possess

a measure of bimusical identity. For some, there are multiple identities that they carry in their ear, their musical thinking, even their bodies, such that they perform and listen with understanding to these musical expressions, and may even be qualified as “multimusical” in nature.

Musical identity can align with a person’s cultural or ethnic identity (Green, 2011; Teicher, 1995). If children are developing an affiliation with the dominant culture (such as mainstream American) and an association with the culture of their own or their parents’ (or grandparents’) origin (Mexican), then it stands to reason that these children may also be developing a musical identity within each culture, thus constructing for themselves a bimusical identity. Musical identity encompasses three aspects: (1) knowledge of the repertoire of a musical culture (through listening, singing, playing, or dancing), (2) participation in each musical culture (through listening, singing, playing, or dancing), and (3) understanding of the context in which the music is situated, and thus the music’s function and meaning. Identity in music typically requires that the three aspects be present in order that deep experience and understanding is possible. There may be degrees of identity, however, in which a lighter musical understanding is possible in the event that only two (or even one) of the aspects are present.

### **Issues for Consideration**

A person’s musical identity can be influenced by the local community they reside in as well as the globalized community they are exposed to. Green (2011) observed that young children in places as far apart as a remote Australian Aboriginal village, rural and urban areas of Cyprus, and the townships of South Africa are forming their musical identities in relation to global mass-mediated popular music, based on sound

that originated either actually, or stylistically and historically, in the United States.

Such children are negotiating these globalized identities with other identities formed at both the local and the national level. (p. 13-14)

A person's musical identity becomes more complex with the advancement of technology and as these musical identities move from various geographic locations that cross regions, states, and countries and is part of a diasporic group (Green, 2011). Appadurai (1998) argued that cultural spheres, "are part of the cultural dynamic of urban life in most countries and continents, in which migration and mass mediation co-constitute a new sense of the global as modern and the modern as global" (p. 10). Migration, media, and participation in a sphere or 'scape' representing a larger global culture can influence and/or retain a person's musical identity enabling them to have multiple musical identities that contain intricate subcategories of genres and preferences (Lum, 2006). In the context of investigating the musical identities of Mexican American children at a bilingual-bicultural school, participation and exposure to these diasporic spheres through migration or through media reveal that even if musical genres are simplified through country of origin or through language, there exists a complex matrix of music inherent within the overarching (and simplified) bimusical identity that may emerge.

Furthermore, it is important to adhere to the notion of "agentive critical race theory," which deconstructs categorizing race into a binary system of either/or and acknowledges that racial categories are created socially and can be questioned and reconfigured (Riley & Ettlenger, 2010). Due to the nature of the school population and curriculum present at Riverview Elementary, the majority Mexican American school population represented a great many "histories" that differentiated them and their families from others in the

community. There were differences by geographic origin of the family (with claims to home cultures in over ten distinctive Mexican states) and time of family migration and immigration (so recent that the children were born in the U.S., or so distant that as many as three or four generations of the family have known residence in the U.S.—and even American citizenship). The differences were difficult to tease out due to limitations of questions that could be asked before adults would become suspicious and children would become confused; verification of responses could not easily be known.

From a musical standpoint, there were complications, too, in that the binary system was convenient but not typically adequate to describe the musical interests and experiences of children. In classifying their musical affinities, it was one matter to categorize the songs children sang or the dances they demonstrated as mainstream American by way of school repertoire, child culture, or mediated-popular forms. But it was quite another matter to call the many artists and musical genres that children could name or identify as so simply “Mexican” when they may have emanated from genres so distinctive as *mariachi*, *son jarocho*, *conjunto*, *banda*, and the like—or to mix hip hop, country, techno, and R & B singers into a single category called mainstream American. The term bimusical identity was coined as an overarching means of attending attention to and understanding of two major musical categories distinguished mostly by language, but the two categories were often too minimal to allow the rich diversity of so many musical expressions in children’s lives to be recognized. In the end, bimusical identity was determined to be an appropriate term only with the understanding that there was fluidity within and even between the two encompassing categories.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following are definitions of terms central to the current research.

**School-standard music:** Repertoire in K-12 school music programs that has become standardized over generations of teachers and teacher education programs, and that asserts the need for children to know largely Western sonic structures and values.

**Mainstream American music (also referred to as American mainstream music, or Mainstream American popular music):** Mainstream American music encompasses various styles and forms of music within the United States, including but not limited to rock, country, hip hop, techno, and music from Broadway shows, films, and television—which is often disseminated on the internet. Children are frequently familiar with the mainstream American music that emanates from The Disney Channel, Nickelodeon, and Music Television Network (MTV), and local radio stations that broadcast popular music expressions.

**American:** While there is a wide array of cultural subsocieties whose characteristics have not become “part of the shared national culture,” residents of the United States of America share an “overarching American identity...that contributes to many characteristics with Anglo-Saxon Protestants...” (Banks, 2009, p. 10-13); they are American. Since school curriculum is historically dominated by Anglo-American ideals and culture, school-standard music repertoire and instructional processes traditionally taught in American music education programs are oriented towards Western European forms. This music of school bands, choirs, orchestras, and classes for children typically embraces sonic sensibilities and cultural forms from Anglo-, Germanic, and other Western European systems (Anderson and Campbell, 2010).

**Mexican American:** Children who are either born in Mexico and now live in the United States, born in the United States of Mexican percentage, or whose earlier ancestry hails from Mexico, are Mexican American. In this research study, children were not asked about their citizenship status (due to the regulations of the Institutional Review Board regarding Human Subjects), which then left no official way to verify their migrant classification or their family's history of settlement and citizenship in the United States. Only children who claimed a connection to Mexico (either through birth, their family's history, their frequent journeys there, or by way of their fluency in Spanish-language) were included in the study.

**Mexican/Mexican American Music:** The music genres that arose in the research via interviews, conversations or observations in performance or classroom activity included *conjunto, Tejano, norteño, banda, pasito duranguense, & mariachi*, all of which originate in Mexico and/or in Mexican American communities. (Descriptions of those genres are presented in chapter three). In this study, Mexican and Mexican American genres were both referred to as "Mexican music" or "Spanish-language music" by the children and members of the Riverview Elementary community.

**Bilingual:** A bilingual person is one who has spoken fluency in both English and Spanish languages (Goldstein, 2012).

**Bicultural:** A bicultural person is one who possessed two main cultural identities, the dominant culture of the nation and the culture of the individual's or family's origin (Yeh and Hwang, 2000). In this study, bicultural refers to one who identifies as American (dominant) and as Mexican (culture of origin).

**Bimusicality:** Bimusicality is competence in two musical systems (Hood, 1960; Clements, 2008; Teicher, 1998). The bimusical individual exhibits fluency in singing, playing, dancing, and/or through responses in culturally appropriate ways.

**Musical Identity:** A person's musical identity is defined by his or her (1) musical preferences, (2) musical values, (3) performance skills, (4) contextual musical knowledge, (5) musical experiences, (6) musical practices that include listening and dancing, and (7) membership within musical social and cultural groups (Green, 2011).

**Bimusical Identity:** When a person's identity is associated with two distinctive musical cultures, it is referred to as bimusical. These identities are manifested in, demonstrated, or verbally articulated knowledge of the repertoire of each of the two musical cultures (through listening, singing, playing, or dancing), including the music's context, function, and meaning, and by participation in each musical culture (through listening, singing, playing, or dancing).

### **Dimensions of Multicultural and Multilingual Education**

The place of bilingual programs in multicultural education is briefly explored to gain a sense of the purpose, importance, and outcomes as a result of being incorporated into school programs. Furthermore, guiding principles of multicultural education will later serve as a foundation for discussing elements of multicultural music education programs. Banks (2004) described the main goal of multicultural education by stating its important "to reform the schools and other educational institutions so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups will experience educational equality" (Banks, 2004, p. 3). In the facilitation of this goal, he established five dimensions of multicultural education: (1)

content integration, (2) knowledge construction, (3) prejudice reduction, (4) equity pedagogy, and (5) an empowering school culture and social structure.

Content integration, which is often the main dimension that surfaces in multicultural education programs, incorporates curriculum that illustrate concepts, principles, and theories from a variety of cultures and groups (Banks, 2004). A second dimension, knowledge construction, involves the process that allows students to understand, investigate, and question how assumptions in a discipline are created. Prejudice reduction is a third dimension that is aimed at understanding children's racial attitudes and creating teaching methods and materials that change or modify their prejudices against others. A fourth dimension is equity pedagogy, which allows equal academic achievement opportunities for all in the classroom by using a variety of teaching styles that correlate with the different ethnic, cultural, and social groups. A fifth dimension focuses on restructuring the culture and organization of the school that can create or empower the culture of a school to foster educational equality for racial, ethnic, language, and social-class groups (Banks, 2004).

The United States has become increasingly multicultural as well as multilingual with the country's foreign-born population reaching just over 38 million (12.5%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). As a response to these changing demographics, multicultural and bilingual education programs have been integrated into the educational system in a variety of different forms. Bourdieu (1991) argued that language is a political space where power is differentially formed, employed, and performed based on race, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic class, thereby organizing social reality and its reproduction. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1970) contended that the dominant culture allows only a few modes of communication and thus subtly oppresses minority-language speakers. This dominant

culture devalues their mode of communication while restricting their opportunities to learn and participate within the “codes or culture of power” which affects their academic performance (Minami & Ovando, 2004).

Juarez (2006) advocated for the inclusion and success of a dual language program in schools of Mexican (or other immigrant) communities:

Dual-language education, also referred to as a bilingual or two-way immersion program, is widely cited as a promisingly effective means of successfully educating language-minority children, reducing racism, and serving as a vehicle for attaining equity and inclusion in educational access and outcomes (Brisk, 1998; Christian, Montone, Lindholm & Carranza, 1997; Lindholm-Leary, 2001) (p. 42).

Studies by Pierce (1995), Ibrahim (1999), and Valdés (2001) support the connection between language acquisition and identity construction. Ibrahim’s (1999) investigation between the relationship of identity and learning of French-speaking African immigrants living and attending school in an urban Franco-Ontarian high school, illustrates that these students use rap and hip-hop as a learning tool to “become black” or the North American ideal of being “black” through language and associated customs. He stated that learning is an engagement of one’s identity and if ESL (English as a Second Language) pedagogy is void of the inclusion of identity, then it will be unsuccessful and even damaging. He urged teachers to understand the importance of identity construction when preparing for curriculum and instruction for their students:

Because language is never neutral, learning it cannot and should not be either. Thus we teachers must first identify the different sites in which our students invest their

identities and desires and, second, develop materials that engage our students' raced, classed, gendered, sexualized, and abled identities (Ibrahim, 1999, p. 366).

Music is a space that is used to create and confirm one's identity in ways that are strongly intertwined with language. Educating a child without reference to his or her identity and culture within the curriculum and methods of transmission can have potential negative effects on minority students learning, thus widening the gap between the identities of minority children and of the identity of the curriculum and instruction presented in the classroom. If structured correctly, multicultural education and bilingual programs can contain the necessary elements to provide equal educational rights to all students regardless of native tongue, allowing them to become on par with other students of the dominant culture academically and personally as they form their own identities.

### **Educating Mexican Americans**

Because of the gap between classroom instruction and the identity and language complexities inherent in being Mexican American, children and youth have been challenged in their education and schooling in the U.S. Numerous educational models have been explored and implemented to allow for the success of bilingual Mexican American students, particularly those born in Mexico or into families who continue the language, customs, and values of Mexican cities and communities. Mexican Americans are the largest group within the U.S. Hispanic population classification and many school populations (especially in California, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona) consist of a Mexican American majority (Garcia, 2004; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

In a review of educational achievement scores by Mexican Americans, Garcia (2004) summarized that they are overrepresented among the nation's least successful students by

scoring far lower on standardized tests and have higher dropout rates than other ethnic groups. In addition, they are underrepresented among students who receive bachelor, graduate, and professional degrees. Garcia also noted that “first grade data is a powerful reminder that the achievement patterns for all racial/ethnic groups are basically established in the early years of school” because the achievement levels did not undergo significant change between the early primary grades and grade twelve (Garcia, 2004, p. 494).

Early goals of multicultural education were centered on the process of “Americanization” which intended to merge small ethnic and linguistically diverse communities into a single dominant national institutional structure and culture. Valdés (1996) and Garcia (2001b) have argued that this is still the goal of many multicultural education programs aimed at Mexican American students (Garcia 2004, p.498). Garcia stated:

In one way or another, every Mexican American child, whether born in the United States or in Mexico, is likely to be treated as a foreigner, an alien, or an intruder.

Unfortunately, even today the objective is to transform the diversity in our communities into a monolithic English-speaking American-thinking and American-acting community (Garcia, 2004, p. 499).

Most often, bilingual programs use a student’s native language as a bridge to learn the mainstream language and usually do not include content integration centered on promoting and respecting the historical and cultural contributions association with the secondary language (Trueba, 1987). “Double immersion” bilingual programs went beyond the approach mentioned above and were aimed at “enhancing human relations” by promoting bilingual and bicultural outcomes in the schools around 1988 in response to the large

population of Mexican Americans in Texas and California. Because there is no single approach to the education of Mexican American students, therein lies the difficulty of multicultural education programs. Mexican American students deserve to have a school community that fosters, respects, and incorporates their personal and cultural values while receiving the same opportunities for success in an educational setting.

### **Bimusicality in the Practice of Music Education**

According to Mantle Hood and other ethnomusicologists (Palmer, 1994; Rice and Garfias, 2011; Tilton, 1995), being bimusical is the ability to perceive, perform, and understand the music of another musical system in relation to the context of the music and its place in the culture and community. Music educators and ethnomusicologists have discussed the importance of becoming bimusical and training our students to be bimusical (Anderson and Campbell, 2010; Campbell, 2004; Rice and Garfias, 2011; Schippers, 2010).

Ethnomusicologists have acknowledged that students gain a different type of access into the musical culture they are researching if they are bimusical and develop a bimusical identity.

The Visiting Artists Program (also called the World Music Performance Program) was developed by Robert Garfias at the University of Washington and the “World Music Conservatory” at the University of California at Los Angeles have encouraged the interaction by university music students with multiple musicians, musical systems and cultures, in attention to their development of bi (or even multi-) musicality (Rice & Garfias, 2011; Solis, 2004).

The definition of bimusicality has been probed, acted upon, and challenged by music educators since Hood’s definition of the term in 1960. Lundquist (2002) questioned whether “cross-style performance counts as bimusicality” (p. 633), and whether the two musical

expressions (of bimusicality) must be completely foreign from one another (i.e. Jazz and Western classical music). Scholars such as Atta Annan Mensah (1970), Martha Ellen Davis (1994) and David Howell (1970) have made the case that one can be bimusical even if the two types of musics have emerged from a hybrid of cultures of which one is Western music (Clements, 2008). Cottrell (2007) has challenged Hood's (1960) definition of bimusicality as he described musicians in London (in the Western urban context) who moved between different musical traditions as being "recognized as 'local bimusicality.'" (p. 102) After reviewing various scholarly stances on bimusicality, he came to the conclusion that:

(1) that the concept of bimusicality is problematized to a degree by the issue of how far one needs to travel, as it were, from one performance tradition to the next, in order for competence in both of them to be construed as bimusicality; (2) that these different traditions can be identified by the different codes which characterized them, and these codes relate not only to musical conventions but to issues such as modes of dress and other patterns of behavior relating to performance practice (familiarity with and movement between these codes might be seen as analogous to linguistic code switching); and, (3) that the concept of bimusicality can be used metaphorically as a way of seeing ourselves, something which helps us consider our own identity as well as that of others. (p. 90).

In Teicher's (1995) study on the bimusical Indian children who could perform Karnatic and Western music, she posited the premise that becoming bimusical allows a person to, "transcend the cultural and musical limitations of both cultures, so that the new musical/cultural learning is facilitated by a wider range of underlying musical and cultural concepts" (p. 78).

Anderson and Campbell (2010) advocated that music teachers teach musical styles from more than one culture so that their students will develop an intercultural and interracial understanding, and can become polymusical, which leads to greater musical flexibility and the making of overall better musicians. Music educators are challenged with ways and means for developing the musicality (let alone bimusicality, or “polymusicality”) of their students. In fact, in many instances, music educators are recognizing that students may arrive to school with home musical cultures intact and that with the education they receive in the Western art or mainstream musical system, they are likely to be developing a bimusical identity that are a balancing of home and school musical sensibilities. O’Flynn (2005) constructed a meaningful relevance of bimusicality to musical education.

Applied broadly, a ‘bimusical’ conception of music education recognizes the value of both *formal* and *informal* modes of learning. A more conventional application of bimusicality might be appropriate in some music education contexts such as the training of music teachers in two different styles of music, or the detailed study of an ‘other’ musical culture at high school or undergraduate levels (for example, see Mertz, 1998). (p. 198)

This bimusical combination of music learned at home, coupled with school music culture, encourages the bimusical identity of children who are exposed to more than one musical culture.

Traditionally, North American universities, conservatories, and school music programs are structured to the Western music system. Within the past half-century, music programs across the world have begun to acknowledge and incorporate other musical systems and styles. In many other instances, however, music educators are again challenged

in seeking out prospects for growing a multicultural understanding by students of music in its diverse manifestations. Because of lack of training and limited personal experiences, teaching for multicultural musical understanding and teaching children from migrant and immigrant home cultures, are aspects that merit careful attention in the pre-service and in-service education of teachers. Human, print, and media resources, collaborations by teachers with ethnomusicologists and culture-bearers, workshops, and university training are changing these issues. With the rapid growth of technology that leads to a truly globalized culture, the value of all musics and the different musical practices are being recognized in the classroom.

### **Mexican Music in the School Curriculum**

Music serves as an important vehicle in the creation of one's identity; therefore, it is important to evaluate the curriculum content and methods of transmission in the music classroom, especially in regards towards Mexican Americans. There is a wealth of Spanish-language music available to music teachers; much of it developed alongside the growth of the development of the multicultural music education movement of the last quarter-century. The popular and most widely used music textbooks for elementary and secondary music classes all have some component related to Spanish-language, Mexican, and Mexican American music traditions (Feay-Shaw, 2001). In a review of the *Music Educators Journal* (MEJ) from 1935 through 1999, and fourth and fifth-grade textbook series, Feay-Shaw (2001) observed that the first published article on teaching Mexican American music appeared in that journal as recently as 1992. Many Mexican American folk songs were introduced into music textbooks in the early 1940s, but they were often classified solely as "Latin American."

In recent years, Smithsonian Folkways has been instrumental in providing valuable teaching resources for Mexican and Mexican American music. Their free interactive online exhibit, “Meet the Mariachi! Explore Mexico’s Musical Gift to the World,” and another exhibit, “*Corridos sin Fronteras* (Songs without Borders),” are valuable instructional materials. These materials offer musical and contextual information as well as video-recordings, timelines, and opportunities to test the reader’s knowledge of the subject through quizzes and composition. In addition, Smithsonian Folkways offers lessons on the musical styles of Mexican Americans from South Texas, or Tejano, communities. Their certification workshops in World Music Pedagogy, run in various locations nationally since 2008, often feature the music of son jarocho, mariachi, and of conjunto and Tejano styles. Books like *El Patio de Mi Casa: 41 Traditional Rhymes, Chants, and Folk Songs from Mexico*, by Gabriela Montoya- Stier (2009), *Songs of Latin America: from the field to the classroom = Canciones de América Latina: De Sus Orígenes a la Escuela* by Campbell & Frega (2001), *Fiestas: A Year of Latin American Songs of Celebration* by José-Luis Orozco and Elisa Kleven (2002), and *Multicultural Perspectives in Music Education*, (2010) are examples of the resources that showcase Mexican and Mexican American songs and lesson plan activities that are increasingly surfacing on today’s market.

Mariachi has rapidly spread into schools, particularly at the secondary level, in the past ten years. Over 500 public school mariachis are active (Brown, 2005), especially in the American Southwest, Texas, and California. A professional commitment by the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), beginning in 2006, supports this recent music-educational movement. A mariachi program would seem to be an important means of facilitating a bimusical identity among those students who may come to school with

American mainstream musical experience but no experience in this Mexican- and Mexican American genre (or vice versa), as well as to support the presence of bicultural and bilingual education in schools. Mariachi gives a sense of cultural pride and social acceptance for Mexican Americans where mariachi may be part of their personal or family cultural identity.

For many students, mariachi is the music of their homeland, or of their parents' and grandparents' earlier experiences while growing up in Mexico. Many second and third generation Mexican American students may have a certain enculturation they know in the sound and social meaning of the genre. Mariachi helps foster cultural identity and self-esteem and is reaching out to a population that has often been ignored in the traditional school music program (Boss-Barba & Soto, 2008).

Mariachi music is being incorporated into the school music curriculum through various approaches within the different grade levels. Schools may have an entire mariachi program, one class period or an after-school rehearsal meeting time. Mariachi music are being incorporated into the string orchestra programs with publications like John Nieto and Bob Philips's *Mariachi Philharmonic: Mariachi in the Traditional String Orchestra* (2005), which features arrangements of traditional songs and lyrics for beginning and intermediate string orchestras. For children in elementary school, some are in the pre-mariachi stage of listening to mariachi music, singing mariachi songs, and responding to mariachi music through the dance, while in a very few schools, children as young as nine years of age are learning basic instrumental techniques for mariachi-style guitar and violin.

### **Approaches to the Musical Education of Mexican American Students**

Yet while there is a wealth of materials, including publications for teaching mariachi, offering listening and viewing experiences of Mexican-based ensembles, and teaching

Spanish- language songs of other Mexican and Mexican American cultures, attention to a full-fledged instructional approach tailored to the needs of Mexican American children is nearly nil. Nor is there literature that addresses the bicultural, bilingual, and bimusical realities of children of Mexican heritage in American school music programs. Music educators are instead teaching without reference to or knowledge of the musical, cultural, and linguistic experiences which Mexican American children bring to school.

Music teacher beliefs and attitudes in teaching Mexican American students are little known. Gilbert Soto (1995) conducted a quantitative study of the teaching strategies of music teachers who taught elementary music in a district that was predominately Mexican and Mexican American located on the border between Texas and Mexico. Some interesting yet disturbing information about the music education process and strategies when teaching Mexican and Mexican American children arose from his research. He found that their language and culturally familiar music were in fact barriers to their musical education because teachers were non-Spanish speaking without training and experience in Mexican music.

Soto reported that 64% of teachers agreed that Mexican American students showed a lack of motivation when music educators employed traditional American music (only). An unsettling 44% of teachers viewed the study of the musical history of Mexican Americans as unnecessary for the children (Soto, 1995, p.57). Almost 60% of teachers disagreed with the stance that they themselves needed to understand the cultural backgrounds of Mexican American children. It was apparent that even though teachers were concerned about introducing Spanish- language songs into their curriculum, they were not concerned about the overall structure of the curriculum and its relation to the cultural backgrounds of their

students. This parallels early bilingual education programs in which Spanish language (and Spanish-language songs) served as a bridge towards learning the English-language (and Western musical traditions) without any consideration of the cultural contributions and distinctiveness of the Spanish-speaking students of Mexican and Mexican American musical cultures. Soto argued that elementary music instruction requires the restructuring of current programs within the music taught that includes an understanding of the culture's aesthetic values in order for instruction to be effective in a bicultural society and classroom. Despite the extent of Spanish-language songs and musical activities available for teachers, there appears to be little attention yet to the musical and cultural spheres of Mexican American children and how best to reach these students and to tap into the culturally relevant resources and a bimusical identity that they may bring into the classroom.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The cultures of school and community are significant influences in the creation of a child's musical and cultural identities (MacDonald, Hargreaves, & Miell, 2002). As part of their educational programs, schools typically offer Mexican American children bilingual-bicultural instruction at the primary grade levels, which are then phased out by the intermediate grades (Garcia, 2004). Early on, Mexican American students frequently learn to negotiate between the languages and experiences of home and school. They come to recognize that they straddle Mexican American and mainstream American cultures represented in the academic and arts curriculum, and that they form their musical and cultural identities through the influences of their formative years. If students are encouraged by teachers, administrators, family members, and members of the community to acquire the tools and sensibilities of two languages and cultures, then children develop the natural

connection between cultures as their bicultural and bilingual sensibilities are nurtured. It would follow that bimusical identity may also emerge from an environment that respects and promotes two cultures, languages, and overarching musical systems.

The purpose of this ethnographic study is to examine the bimusical identity of Mexican American children in a Mexican American bilingual-bicultural school as they navigate between the different musical and cultural spheres that are present within their daily lives. The research lens is directed towards the bimusical interests and sensibilities of Mexican American children, and to the extent that they are present in the articulation and manifestation of their identities. The school and home influences, and the agents of influence (including teachers, parents and extended family members, and the media), are in question in the crafting of an ethnographic account of children in the process of forging their bicultural, bilingual, and a bimusical identity in one school and community rich with American mainstream and Mexican-based cultural practices.

### **Guiding Questions**

Three questions guide this ethnographic research:

1. What are the musical identities of Mexican American children living in a community (and educated in a school) whose majority population is Mexican?
  - a. What musical styles and genres are most familiar to the children?
  - b. What songs do children know, and how have they learned them?
  - c. What is the children's involvement with instrumental music, listening, and dance?
2. Who are the musical and cultural agents within the school and how are they influential of Mexican-American children's musical and cultural identities?

- a. What roles do administrators, school teachers, and staff play in children’s musical and cultural development?
  - b. Are there efforts at school to recognize and develop children’s bimusical sensibilities (alongside bicultural and bilingual efforts)?
3. How do family and community members and experiences influence children’s musical and cultural identities?
- a. What roles do family members (parents, siblings, grandparents, extended family) play in children’s musical and cultural development?
  - b. What roles do the church and community events play in the children’s musical and cultural development?
  - c. How does radio/television, Internet, and other technologies play in children’s musical and cultural development?

### **Overview of Chapters**

The research questions provide the fundamental themes addressed across the chapters. Chapter two describes the research method employed, with explanation of observations, interviews, and “material culture”, as well as contextual information concerning the elementary school and its community. The positionality of the fieldworker is also addressed. The school’s bilingual program is analyzed for its cultural aims and approaches in balancing Spanish- and English-language in the curricular composite of school-day experiences.

Chapter three describes of the musical soundscape of the surrounding “Valley” and school community. It includes a grand sweep of the various musical genres that children encounter within their daily lives beyond the school walls. Community cultural events that

surround certain musical expressions related to worship, holidays, and other festivities and events within the neighboring area are examined for their impact on the child's musical development. The children's exposure to English- and Spanish-language radio and television are also analyzed for their effect on the children's bimusical identity. Cultural and musical agents within the school are presented, along with their influence on the manifestation of a bimusical identity of the children. The extent of encouragement by school personnel, family, and community to be bimusical or to develop bimusical identity is analyzed through the observations, interviews, and all material culture collected.

The fourth chapter examines the ways in which the school music culture fosters the bilingual, bimusical, and bicultural aims through the music classes and various musical events that take place throughout the school year. Observations of children within their English- and Spanish-language classes, music classes, and within cultural events in the school and community have allowed an opportunity to examine how children "code switch" between Mexican and mainstream American cultural settings. The bilingual program is investigated in more detail in relation to its impact on the development of a bimusical identity within the children. Descriptions of a common English-language music class, a Spanish-language music class, and a typical mariachi rehearsal demonstrate the various ways children are becoming bimusical or developing a bimusical identity. Children's language and music preferences in music class will be discussed. A closer examination of the school's annual musical events and concerts reveal the support and encouragement for children to develop bicultural and bimusical sensibilities. Through these experiences, the children's bimusical identity emerges, thus demonstrating the impact of school culture and community has on music they know and value.

Chapter five examines the children's musical influences that impact their bimusical identity and interests out of school. An examination of the musical soundscape of the children of Riverview is investigated, including their song repertoires and the music they like to perform and listen to. Through observations and interviews and a Parents' Night music survey, an analysis will be accomplished of the songs children favor in and out of the classroom, familiar genres, and instruments played will be undertaken. In addition, a closer inquiry into the music performed outside school, at church, and during recess will be described.

Chapter six draws conclusions on the findings while returning back to the literature noted in this first chapter. The principal findings of the guided questions will be presented, visual models will be offered as summaries on conceptualizations of principal findings, recommendations for future research and implications for music education practices will be provided.

## **Chapter Two: Method and Context**

In the research that unfolds through the course of this dissertation, a distribution of techniques characteristic of ethnographic fieldwork is evident. This examination of the bimusical identity in the lives of Mexican-American children is wedded to the ethnographic research method comes that is described in some detail in this chapter. Following a description of research method comes the scene-setting of the ethnography by way of a description of the context in which this ethnography occurred. The intent of this chapter, then, is to provide a sense of the rigor of the research method, the process of inquiry—as it is embedded within the place in which the players (particularly, children and school personnel) live.

### **The Research Method**

Ethnography is not new to research in music education, although it is also not prominent among the methods of inquiry utilized within the field. Campbell (2003) noted that “early pioneers” within music education (such as Krueger (1987), Booth (1986), and Klinger (1996)) included extended fieldwork, transcriptions, participant-observer/performer, and interviews in their studies of teaching and learning (in North Indian tabla lessons [Booth] and North American fiddling workshops [Holmes]). Even earlier, Krueger (1987) had argued that ethnography allows the researcher to go beyond theories that explain, predict, and control practice so that research scholars in music education can examine teaching and learning in all of its social and personal detail. Ethnographic techniques have been actively employed, particularly since the mid-1990s, by music education researchers in the study of children’s songs, chants, homemade instruments, movement and dance, and listening preferences (Campbell 2010; Harwood, 1998; Lew, 2005; Lum, 2008; Lum and Campbell,

2009; Lum & Whiteman, 2012; Marsh, 1995, 2008). Beyond studies of children's musical cultures and of children in elementary school settings, ethnographic research has to date been less frequently applied to the study of secondary school and tertiary-level education in music (Feay-Shaw, 2002; Krüger, 2009).

In order to fully gain insight into the musical identities of children in one Mexican American School and its surrounding community, an ethnographic research method has been employed in the current study by which observations, interviews, and the examination of material resources were assembled and examined. Particular attention was paid to ideas and events unfolding over the autumn-winter-spring period of 37 weeks, even though a total of approximately three academic years were spent on site; see below for a description of the first two years (Spradley, 1980; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). This ethnographic study was located at one elementary school, called "Riverview Elementary School," in a majority Spanish-speaking community within the town of Toppenish, Washington, in the Yakima Valley region. Homogeneous sampling was employed in which Mexican American children were studied, who were first-, second-, third-, and fourth-generation Mexican heritage from kindergarten through fifth grade (Creswell, 2005). Observations of and interviews with children were joined with observations within the community to reveal aspects of the cultural and musical spheres in which children lived. Children were invited to express their thoughts and opinions on music in the school, at home, and in the community, including specific song repertoire, styles, artists, and functions of their interest; their views and voices serve to confirm or refute the observations.

My experience in the context of the school site and community was already two years long at the inception of this research, which grew to a total of three years onsite. I served as

itinerant classroom music teacher and coordinator for the Music Alive! in the Valley project, a partnership program between a university and the local school district of this valley town (Soto, Lum, & Campbell, 2009). As the research project commenced, I was spending two days weekly with a total of 18 to 20 hours in observation of children and two to three hours of interviews with children, teachers, and people in the community. The schedule in Appendix B presents my nonparticipant observations of music and subject classes, music at lunch and during recess periods, and at community functions (Adler & Adler, 1994).

Audio and video recordings were utilized during observations (as permitted), enabling me to verify descriptive and reflective fieldnotes; these were utilized during interviews to help students recall feelings, intentions, and thoughts about events in question. An Olympus DS-30 digital voice recorder with an external microphone for recording in stereo and monaural modes was used in all interviews and observations as permitted. A Samsung NV24HD camera was used to photograph and video record observations. Children's songs, chants, "rhythmic" behaviors, movement and dance, musical activities, and expressed musical interests were carefully recorded, as were school classes in which music was taught, experienced, or learned. Visits to local churches, community centers, restaurants, stores, and shops were useful in providing a more comprehensive picture of the musical lives of children in this Mexican American school. The presence and the use of radio, television, internet, and various other media and technology influences, by children were duly noted, particularly for the extent to which Mexican American, American mainstream, and other musical styles are present within the school, home, and community environments.

Structured and semi-structured one-on-one and small group interviews were conducted with children, and with cultural agents -- teachers, school administrators and staff, parents, and community members who were a part of the children's social sphere at the elementary school (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Two classroom teachers, the music teacher, the principal, the bilingual reading coach, and the librarian were interviewed. Children interviewed included two kindergarten children, and children in first grade (10), second grade (11), third grade (13), fourth grade (15), and fifth grade (9), for a total of sixty student interviews in all. Interviews with the children were conducted during music class time. Interviews were audio- and video-recorded, coupled with notes written during and after each interview that was entered into a laptop. Structured interviews with children, teachers/administrators, and parents were conducted. Lists of preliminary questions are available in Appendix C. Unstructured interviews were also conducted with the individuals mentioned above when structured and semi-structured interviews could not be obtained (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Informal and formal interviews with children in small groups from each classroom in all grade levels (typically two or four) were conducted during phase one and two, for as Graue and Walsh (1998) suggested, "kids are more relaxed when with a friend than alone with an adult. They help each other with their answers. They also keep one another on track and truthful" (p.114). During the first phase, interviews with children in groups, teachers, and parents were conducted to gain trust, access, background information and an understanding of who may be key informants and participants of the study. The second phase consisted of school and community observations and interviews where individual children, teachers, and administrators were asked about their ethnic and musical identities. About midway through the interview process, it emerged that the young children

(K- 2<sup>nd</sup> grade) were often at a loss for describing music, musical instruments, artists, and events with which they were familiar and a Radio-Scan strategy was introduced. This strategy consisted of scanning locally-based radio stations with the children during their interviews to help facilitate their recall of music they knew or for which they might have opinions and to evaluate their responses to the songs or genres being played (see Table 1). Of the selections, thirteen songs representative of the most commonly genres heard from the radio-scan emerged (either heard on radio at the time of the interview, or recalled by children as a result of their listening for the radio-scanned selections). They included songs by Selena, conjunto music, banda, mariachi, hip hop, Spanish-language children's folk songs, *son jarocho*, Spanish-language popular music, and pasito duranguense. These recordings offered a platform from which to discuss the preferred or familiar genres. Even if children did not recognize the exact song on the radio-scan, I would follow up with questions like, "Does the song sound familiar to you?" or "Is it similar to music that you listen to?" The strategy jogged the children's memories and allowed children to discuss issues like dancing and instrumentation. Because the music was playing, it was easier for children to demonstrate their knowledge of the dances that were associated with the music.

**Table 1.***Playlist: Music of Interest to Children as Heard or Recalled through Radio-Scans*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Artist</b>	<b>Genre</b>
1. Bidi Bidi Bom Bom	Selena	Tejano
2. El Coco Rayado	Ruben Vela & Su Conjunto	Conjunto
3. Que Bonito	Banda el Recodo	Banda
4. Cielito Lindo	Mariachi Los Amigos	Mariachi
5. Crank That (Soulja Boy)	Soulja Boy	Hip Hop
6. Pin Pon	Salta a Cantar Book	Folk
7. La Playa/Maria Isabel	Salta a Cantar Book	Folk
8. Los Pollitos	Salta a Cantar Book	Folk
9. O Que Gusto (Cumbia)	Los Volcanes	Conjunto
10. Pájaro Cú	Son del Centro	Son Jarocho
11. La Bamba	Ritchie Valens	Rock/Son Jarocho
12. La Tortura (featuring Alejandro Sanz)	Shakira	Pop Latino
13. Cómo Pude Enamorarme de Ti	Patrulla 81	Pasito Duranguense

All interviews were downloaded to a computer, transcribed, and placed into categories defined by the following: children (by grade level), teachers (by grade level/specialty), administration, staff, family members (by relationship), and community members (occupation). Video data sections deemed relevant to the guiding questions were transcribed and sorted in these categories. The software program, OneNote (Microsoft 2008), which is an information-management program and which enables the user to capture, store, and compile information in electronic form, was used to store and code the data. Data was coded by the themes related to the guiding questions as well as codes related to the age, gender, musical qualities discussed or demonstrated, cultural events and agents, and family influence.

So that a myriad of evidence was extracted and compiled from different individuals, data sources, and methods, all interviews, observational fieldnotes, reflections, and research materials were reviewed and systematically categorized for triangulation (Creswell, 2005).

Material resources include newspaper articles, district announcements, school newsletters, teachers' classroom materials, school and community websites, announcements, newsletters, and museum exhibits.

***Schedule of Observations and Interviews.*** Before my research began, I had served for two years as the program coordinator for a university-school partnership called Music Alive! in the Yakima Valley. My work as project coordinator continued during a third year, at which point I began fieldwork for the dissertation. The entirety of the dissertation fieldwork period extended from August through June, thus aligning with the scholastic year. During the course of the research, I systematically observed children, teachers, and various school staff members through the day, in music classes, at morning and lunch recesses, in the cafeterias and hallways, and on the playground. I was present at after-school events, too, in study of musical and cultural activities. Interviews were scheduled at various times through the day, and informal and unscheduled conversations added further to the mix of data sources.

### **Material Culture**

District newsletters, calendars, and teacher correspondences were important components of material culture that was collected for further examination. Photos of children's artwork for the Cinco de Mayo celebration, children's coursework activity sheets, and classroom posters and bulletin boards were also analyzed and catalogued.

The school held monthly Parents' Night meetings centered around different subjects and topics. One night was devoted to music, and so I assisted in developing activities that children would enjoy alongside or with the assistance of their parent or guardian. One activity was to fill out an informal survey of their favorite music, groups, and instruments

(see Appendix E). Both children and parents worked together in completing the survey, and a total of twenty-two surveys were collected.

Throughout the year, the teachers of Riverview Elementary School posted student artwork on the walls outside of their classrooms. Throughout the school, the halls were papered with signs and posters in the English- and Spanish-languages. On the first day of school, the school marquee at the entrance to the parking lot posted “Welcome Back Students” in the English-language on one side and Spanish-language on the other side. The bulletin boards and walls within the classrooms displayed the alphabet, numbers, shapes, colors, and educational phrases in the English and Spanish-language, and the library was stacked with books in both the English and Spanish-language. Especially prominent was the bulletin board/wall at the school entrance and in front of the cafeteria, which was decorated in the theme or the month for Christmas, Cinco de Mayo, Martin Luther King Day, Halloween, and Easter. In addition, pictures of musicians and dancers associated with the different genres of music from Mexico were decorated by students and hung around the school for the Cinco de Mayo celebration. This material culture clarified children’s knowledge of the mariachi and of the various associated folk dances.

### **Positionality of the Fieldworker**

I was first introduced to Riverview Elementary School on a cold morning in February. My professor and I were meeting with the university liaison to the local Toppenish community. He referred us to the principal at Riverview Elementary School (who had been an old school friend of the university liaison). The wind chill was in the teens but the sun shining brightly, and we quickly walked into Riverview to meet Mr. Flores, the principal of Riverview Elementary School. We discussed partnership possibilities between the university

and the school district, all the way to the provision of homestays for the visiting university students that would spend weeklong residencies in the town to perform, exchange, and teach music to the school children.

Arrangements were made for me to be a visiting teacher of music in ways that might enhance their reading, math, science, and social studies curriculum. Over two years, I visited the Riverview Elementary School six to eight times per ten-week quarter as part of the university-community partnership. These visits were dependent upon my university course schedule (as I was a full-time graduate student), the weather conditions at the 3,300-foot mountain pass that separated the university in Seattle from Toppenish, and the Riverview Elementary School schedule of classes, holidays, and teacher in-service days. During the period of the partnership, I taught music to children in the kindergarten through the fifth grade. Interdisciplinary lessons were designed to connect music to the subject area of each grade level as requested by classroom teachers; they petitioned for music lessons that exposed their children to world music selections. In addition, some lessons incorporated repertoire for the university-school partnership performance. My music sessions extended to thirty minutes per class, per visit. I arrived to each session with the intent of delivering songs, rhythms, movement and dance activities and experiences in playing instruments. While a part-time music teacher (Mr. Smith, see chapter three, p. 79) was on staff at the school, the role in the university-community partnership was to provide children with knowledge and skill development in the musical expressions of a broad variety of musical cultures from throughout the world, and to prepare and follow-up on the visits of university students to the school for lessons they were planned and delivering to the schoolchildren as partial requirements for a music education methods course.

I developed professional relationships with the teachers, the school's clerical staff, and the principal. Teachers and children became accustomed to my presence in the classrooms, in the halls, in the library, the gym, and on the playground. Teachers spoke to me about some of their children's abilities in music and would discuss interest and issues of the broader Toppenish community in the teacher's lounge during their lunch and planning periods. I was honored when children would surround me during their recess periods, singing, questioning, laughing, dancing. They would talk about various topics, from their musical interests to their home life. They released wonders, joys, and their frustrations to me about the songs that we learned in class. They asked where I was from and sometimes would discuss personal issues such as being bullied by another child. Children were warming up to me when they saw me at recess, during their music classes, and after school functions like the Cinco de Mayo festivities, Fall Carnival, Family Night, McTeacher's Night (when teachers worked at the local McDonald's as a fundraising event), and in mariachi class.

As my fieldwork began, I was staying in the Valley and was involved at Riverview Elementary School for increasing periods of time. I became fully immersed in the school culture and participated in preparing the children for the Winter concert and assisted the music teacher in preparing the music program for Parent's Night. I worked with the physical education teacher (who is in charge of all non-academic school events) in making the Fall Carnival decorations and planning the games, as well as putting up the winter concert decorations. In addition, I helped the music teacher, Mr. Smith, in securing mariachi instruments from the district's high school so that he could create a mariachi ensemble. I was able to persuade the district to provide for seventy-five new Yamaha recorders for fourth

grade students to play, so that we could strengthen the instrumental program that would lead to children's notational literacy.

I was one of ten teachers from Riverview Elementary School involved in the McTeachers' Night, a fundraiser that was conducted in conjunction with the local McDonald's restaurant. Students were urged to dine in the restaurant and to see their teachers at work cooking hamburgers and French fries, making milkshakes, and packing orders. I worked for two shifts, greeting the Riverview families as they walked in, selling McDonald's discount coupons to parents, and helping to clean the tables and chairs. I was able to meet many of the parents of the children of Riverview Elementary School. Interactions with teachers on McTeachers' night allowed me to become more familiar and acquainted with the teachers even as they, in turn, came to recognize that I was committed to serving and being a part of Riverview Elementary School.

***"Being" Mexican American.*** I grew up in the Texas-Mexico borderlands, minutes away from Rio Grande River in an area known as the Rio Grande Valley. I am a second generation Mexican American. Both sets of my grandparents are of Mexican descent. My mother's parents were born in northern Mexico and migrated to the United States in their 20s. My father's parents lived in a border town on the Texas side with family on both sides of the river. My grandmother on my father's side explained that she lived half a mile from the Rio Grande River and would walk with her family members to take a three-cent water taxi to cross freely to Mexico to visit family. Growing up without electricity, running water, or air conditioning in an area where summer temperatures reached the 100s with 90% plus humidity meant for a difficult life on the border. My grandmother told me how her family made their own soaps from scraps they found, played in the dangerous Rio Grande River for

entertainment, and would attend small dances at neighboring houses on small dirt floors that were surrounded by cardboard boxes to sit on. Gloria Anzaldúa (2007) described this borderland as such: “The U.S. –Mexican border *es un a herida abierta* where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country – a border culture” (p. 25). This borderland has shaped me as a child and influenced who I am today.

My hometown is Mercedes, a border town, a place where 92% of the people are Hispanic, exclusively of Mexican heritage, and living in poor economic conditions (where almost all children received free lunch at the local public schools). In the late 40’s, my hometown, was situated in a place where the Mexicans were geographically separated from the “Anglos” by a train track. Many of the surrounding towns were also built to separate the “Anglos” from the Mexicans by restricting each group to either side of a train track that ran between the two communities. It was a place where the segregation of Mexicans was very real within the realm of the schools, housing, and relative to which stores and businesses they could visit. Mexican-heritage American citizens were treated as second-class citizens; they were not allowed into universities, and were unable to secure jobs that were not labor intensive. In the days of my grandparents and my parents, racism was pervasive. Even today, Mercedes is a place where racism exists and is prevalent between the different generations of Mexican and Mexican Americans. Yet it is also a place where the culture, the community, and the proud spirit of being a “Tejano” (a Texas-Mexican) still thrives and is fully alive. Mercedes is a place where the weather and the Mexican food are hot and the drinks are cold, and a place where family is the central focus. Mercedes is my home and I am proud to call myself a *Tejana*.

Although Toppenish is 2,600 miles away from this borderland town, I see many aspects that remind me of my hometown. Toppenish is about the size of the city that I grew up in. Just like the Rio Grande Valley, the Yakima Valley is a string of towns that connect to one another (List, Jasper, and Ragland, 1993). In many of the small towns, Mexicans are the majority and own many of the businesses. In both Valleys, agriculture is the main source of income. *Norteña, banda, Tejano, conjunto*, Christian, and Spanish pop, rock, and hip-hop are the popular genres of music in the communities of the two valleys. As further verification of similarities between the two valleys, many people have migrated north from the South Texas borderlands to settle in the Yakima Valley (Estrada, 2007). There are dual language schools in many of the towns in the two valleys, even as there is also uncertainty, confusion, and sometimes outright opposition to these programs. Many of the people use the same Spanish slang and the same use Spanglish (a mixture of English and Spanish-language) (Rothman & Rell, 2005).

### **Context**

***The Historic Yakima Valley.*** Centrally located and hailed as the “Palm Springs” of Washington state, the Yakima Valley boasts almost 300 days of sunshine each year, is situated southeast of the Cascades in Eastern Washington, and is a vibrant agricultural center of the Pacific Northwest that houses one of the largest Native American reservations in the country. Apples, dairy, hops, grapes, and cherries are the leading agricultural products grown in this region. The Yakima Valley derives its name from the Yakama Nation whose people now live nearby across the land of their Native American reservation. The “Valley” is especially well known for the grapes it produces, which have spurred the creation of more than fifty wineries.

The Yakima Valley region, which is contained within the boundaries of Yakima county, is home to a population of 243, 000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010) people distributed among a spread of smaller towns such as Wapato, Toppenish, Sunnyside, and Granger that trail southeast of the largest city of Yakima. Yakima's urban area population is 140, 000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010) and is the hub for these smaller communities due to its offering of full medical care, state and federal government offices, services, and facilities, and the area's largest retail centers. In addition, Yakima is home to the area's only large entertainment and cultural venues such as theatres, concert halls, museums, casinos, fairgrounds, a speedway, and even an airport. There are numerous golf courses and opportunities to attend minor league basketball, baseball, and soccer sporting events. Yakima is host to many events throughout the year such as an ongoing weekly Farmer's Market, holiday events and parades, a Cinco de Mayo celebration, numerous music festivals, and the Central Washington State Fair. According to the U.S. Census Bureau of 2010, the Yakima county population is 54% White/Caucasian, 39% Hispanic, 1.3% African-American, 5% Native American, 1.2% Asian, .3% Pacific Islander, and 1.9% identifying as a mixture of two races. The country population is 16.9% foreign-born, and 32% speaking a primary language other than English.

***The Changing Yakima Valley.*** In 1943, a group of 250 Mexican workers entered the Yakima Valley under the Bracero Program, also known as the Mexican Farm Labor Program. Because of World War II, there was a need for an increase in agricultural products and a decrease in the supply of labor especially in the Pacific Northwest because many laborers were called to wartime industries (Darian, 2006). In 1941, agricultural organizations faced a dire situation of a shortage of workers and were asking for the

importation of Mexican workers. The Bracero Program was an agreement between Mexico and the United States that allowed Mexicans to enter the United States to work in the agricultural fields. It was signed and took effect on August 4, 1942 and continued for 22 years until 1964 during which time, 5 million Mexican laborers entered the U.S. Specifically, 40,000 workers were brought to the Pacific Northwest who accounted for 21% of all workers who came to the U.S. and were only second to the number of workers that went to California. The program came to a close when the cost of transporting and housing workers became so great that there was a shift to cheaper migrant workers from parts of the Southwest (Darian, 2006; Gamboa, 1973).

Migrant workers from Texas, California, Arizona, and New Mexico began coming to the Yakima Valley during the 1950s and 1960s to work within the thriving agricultural industry (Estrada, 2007). Many decided to stay because of steady work. With changed conditions in the Southwest due the Chicano Movement, there was a decrease in migrant workers to Washington State in the 1970s, which began an increase of migrants from Mexican states such as Michoacan, Jalisco, Guanajuato, and Oaxaca (Barco, 1998).

***Toppenish, City of Murals and Museums.*** Situated on the edge of the Yakama Reservation and within a few miles from a booming wine-growing region, Toppenish is a small rural town. Toppenish describes itself as a city where the “West” still lives. Toppenish is derived from an Indian word "Xuupinish", which means sloping and spreading (Toppenish Chamber of Commerce, n.d.). There are over seventy murals in the town, with a horse drawn wagon tour of the murals available from May through September. There is a small downtown area located just a few minutes drive from Riverview Elementary School that contains one main intersection. The downtown area contains buildings designed to look like

old western stores, with old fashioned street lamps lining the sidewalks (Visit Toppenish: Come see all Toppenish has to offer!, n.d.). There is an old fashioned soda shop, Mexican, Chinese, and “Pioneer Kitchen” restaurants, a Bank of America, an “Amish Store” that offers handmade items for sale, and a clothing store that sells Western and Mexican style clothing. On the edge of the downtown area, there is a Mexican meat market and grocery store.

There are three museums located in Toppenish: (1) American Hop Museum, (2) Yakima Valley Rail and Steam Museum (housed in the restored Toppenish Depot), and (3) Yakama Nation Cultural Center. This last museum includes a library, a longhouse/restaurant, a store of Yakima nation book clothing and jewelry, and an area of cultural exhibits. In addition to these museums, there is a Toppenish Wildlife Refuge located at the edge of town as you head towards the mountains towards Satus Pass. There is the Yakama Nation Legends Casino is located at the Western end of Toppenish, across from the Yakama Nation Cultural Museum.

Toppenish is one of the Yakima Valley towns with a majority of Mexican population. It saw a 32% increase in the Mexican population between 1980 to 2000 (Darian, 2006). In 2010, Toppenish had a population of 8,949 residents, 83% of whom were Hispanic, including 63% Spanish-speaking adults and children over the age of four years (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Only 18% of this population held more than a high school diploma, and this may partly explain a low median household income of \$28,896 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010)

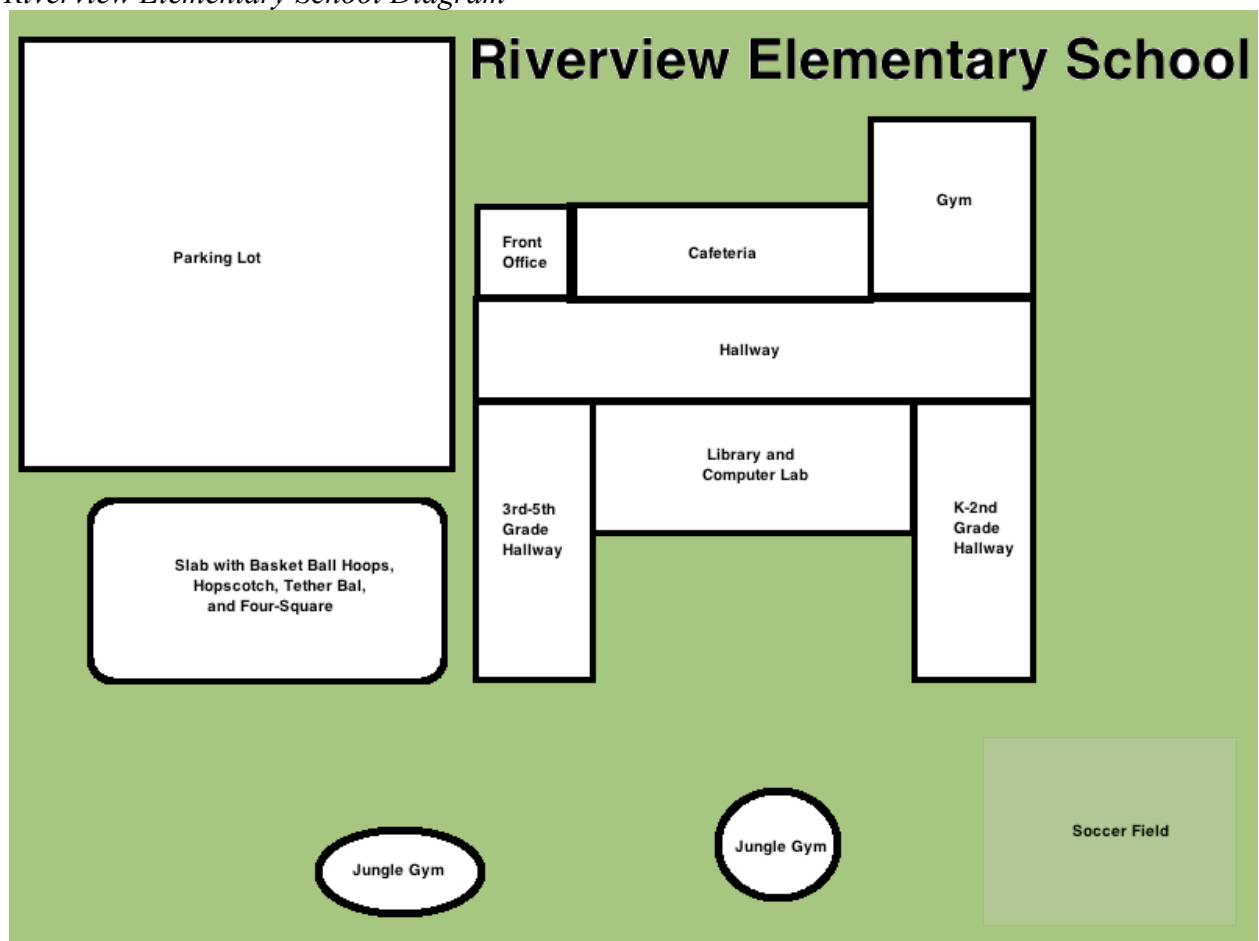
The city’s school district governs and oversees curriculum and instruction in four elementary schools, one middle school, one high school, and one alternative high school. According to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction Washington State Report Card, there were approximately 3,616 enrolled students in the Toppenish schools, 81% of

whom are Hispanic, 13% of whom are Native American, and the remaining 5.2% who are Caucasian, and the remainder comprising of African-American and Asian students. In a conversation with the district superintendent, he observed that over 500 students leave the district every year and migrate to other areas of the country with their families to follow the seasonal work of “migrant workers” which supports the numbers that state that 18% of the students in the Toppenish School District are migrant children. Breakfast and lunch were provided by the school district to 99.8% the children at no cost. There were 32% of children who were “transitional bilingual”, for whom the native (Spanish) language was used for a period or two to three years as a vehicle for learning and function within the English-language.

***Riverview Elementary School.*** Amidst fields of corn, Riverview Elementary School was built at the southeast edge of Toppenish. Prior to the building of the new school facilities five years earlier, the school was known as “Old West”, with classes for children housed in portable buildings. The community supported the building of the new space, passing a school levy to do so. Houses lined the eastern side of the school, while cornfields surround the school on the remaining sides. The school stuck out like a shiny new thumb among all the older, smaller wooden homes in the neighborhood. Twenty classrooms within the school were positioned on either side of two hallways. There was a library, a cafeteria, a gym with two large closets and a small office, a computer lab, central office which houses two secretaries, the principal, nurse, and counselor, a teacher’s lounge and work area, a reading specialist’s office, and one very large playground with two large jungle gym structures. Classrooms were of normal size with large windows that line the outside wall. All classrooms came equipped with enough student desks, a teacher’s desk, a rolling cart that

houses the document camera, a large 32” television with a CD/DVD player, a water fountain/sink area, built-in shelving, cabinets, a small closet, and four Macintosh computers. Grades three, four, and five were housed in the front hallway, which kindergartens and first and second grades were housed in the back hallway near the gym. Both hallways had exits to the playground with the library, cafeteria, and computer lab sitting in the middle of the two hallways (see Figure 1). The playground was a large field that was partially fenced in and was situated at the back of the school. In addition to two large jungle gyms, there was also an asphalt area where children can play basketball, jump rope, four square, and marbles.

**Figure 1.**  
*Riverview Elementary School Diagram*



Riverview Elementary School was one of four K-5 elementary schools in the Toppenish School District; it was the principal site of this ethnographic research. The student population of Riverview Elementary School was 95% Hispanic at the time of the research. The fifteen classrooms of children in grades K-5 contain an average of 25 children each with three classroom groups at each grade level. The majority of children Riverview Elementary School spoke or could understand Spanish. This school was a “dual-language school” where instruction was offered in English and Spanish languages on rotating days. It was also a “reading-first school,” in that most of the school day is devoted to reading.

There were fifteen certified classroom teachers at Riverview Elementary School. Seven teachers identified culturally as Hispanic, one was half Native American and half Mexican-American, and seven were Caucasian and of various Euro-American backgrounds. Only two teachers resided in Toppenish, while the others commuted from outlying areas to the school; several lived as far as an hour’s drive from school (and far from the Mexican American communities that dot the Yakima Valley). Teachers were urged by the principal and administrators to focus classroom studies on reading, as the majority of the school day was primarily centered on these class periods in which no disturbances or interruptions were permitted. Reading was such a high priority that other subjects, including social studies, science, and the arts were shifted aside if students were observed to be struggling in reading or math. The principal remarked that much-needed state and federal funding were in risk of being retracted if their scores did not improve.

***The Dual Language Program.*** The dual language program at Riverview Elementary School was the only program of its kind in the Toppenish district —despite the preponderance of Mexican Americans throughout the town of Toppenish. Spanish was the

first language of 40 percent of elementary school students in the Yakima Valley, and the concentration of Spanish-speaking students in Toppenish exceeded that of most Valley communities. Toppenish was one out of five districts in the Yakima Valley that offered dual language classes, which may be part of a larger bilingual program.

In 2009, citizens in the neighboring town Wapato discarded their dual language classes, citing that the students test scores were lagging behind the state and federal standards such that as a result the district was receiving decreased funding and resources (Ferolito, 2010). Considerable debate arose in Wapato following the cutbacks. Some cited that student test scores were usually lower when students were involved in the dual language program, although many of the Spanish-speaking families attribute the dissent of the program to the larger national debate (and bias) over immigration. Research supports the type of dual language program that has been implemented at Riverview Elementary School as the most effective bilingual program when well implemented (Collier & Thomas, 2004). This program enables students who learn to read in their dominant language first to learn more quickly in their second language (rather than launching all school learning in the second language). The dual language program as featured at Riverview Elementary School created high levels of proficiency in being biliterate, and attention was directed towards the long-term benefits of dual language instruction as the greatest accomplishments are achieved in middle school as a result of beginning the instruction in kindergarten (Collier & Thomas, 2004).

According to the Riverview Elementary School Improvement Plan, most of the students had limited writing, reading, and speaking skills in English and 84% of students qualified for the bilingual education program. Thirty percent of students qualified for the

migrant program. Riverview Elementary School's dual language program used the Gómez & Gómez Dual Language Enrichment Model that was originally developed and implemented in the town in which I grew up in the Rio Grande Valley in South Texas in the 1990s. This program has been incorporated into over 450 schools, across three states. This dual language model is based on the theoretical framework described in Collier and Thomas's (2004) *PRISM Model*. There are four key components that meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students and families: language development in the student's dominant language and their second language, academic development in both languages, cognitive development, and social and cultural processes. Teachers are also trained to incorporate Project G.L.A.D. (Guided Language Acquisition Design), which incorporates a variety of techniques to aid in language acquisition and to incorporate multicultural activities throughout the content areas (Project G.L.A.D., 2012). Riverview's dual language program allows students to learn from one another as well as from parents (in and out of school) who are valued for their linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

The dual language program at the Riverview Elementary School has grown within the past three years, and more bilingual teachers have been added to the staff. Five out of fifteen teachers on staff at the school were bilingual, and all six paraprofessionals were bilingual. There was a waiting list for new students to enter the bilingual program and there was discussion about expanding the program to all classes, which would require that all teachers be bilingual. "In Toppenish, because so large a fraction of the student body speaks Spanish, it has been difficult to find English-speaking students for the dual language program" (Pennucci & Kavanaugh, 2005, p. B-16). According to Pennucci & Kavanaugh (2005), the Toppenish School District had two different models at the elementary for the

English Language Learners (ELL). All five elementary schools provided content for English as a Second Language (ESL) students within the mainstream classroom because the school district supports teachers through tuition reimbursement, trainings, and workshops related to ESL strategies. Furthermore, Riverview Elementary School offered a dual-language program, even though it had been difficult to recruit and retain bilingual teachers to teach intermediate grade content.

### **Summary**

This chapter laid out the cultural and structural frameworks of the researcher, the community, and the school, and served as the foundation for understanding the events that will unfold throughout this dissertation. The ethnographic method as described here allows an investigation of a “culture-sharing group’s shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language that develop over time,” in which the researcher is both a participant and an observer who gathers fieldnotes, conducts interviews, and collects documents for examination (Creswell, 2005, p. 436). This “ethnographic record” (Spradley, 1980) was created because of informal, semi-formal, and formal types of observations and interviewing and an examination of material culture (Berg, 2007). Triangulation, or the method of examining multiple methods of data collection, was used to acquire the principal findings from the research data collected (Berg, 2007, Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Because of the university-community partnership, I was able to work as participant within the school through my teaching sessions and through participation with the school and community events. Furthermore, I was able to observe general subject classes and music classes, and at recess and school and community functions. It is through the time spent in the field and the research techniques employed that I gained insight into the development of

children's musical and cultural identity. I was privy to the children's "sense-making of their musical worlds, and of their personal worlds through music" (Campbell, 2010, p. 8), and thus could tell the story of the children, and the adult and mediated influences on their emerging interests and identities.

### **Chapter Three: Local Music and Culture: Influences, Events, and Agents**

As you drive over the South Umpatum Ridge on Interstate 82 east, you come face to face with Mt. Adams, the sacred mountain of the Yakama people. The snowcapped top of Mt. Rainer is evident, too, peaking over the foothills that rise out of the Yakima Valley. Not only has one entered an entirely new geographic landscape in Washington, particularly if the origin of the trip is western Washington's commercial center of Seattle, but a different cultural landscape becomes evident, too, that defines the Yakima Valley as a special and spiritual place. One needs not to depart from the car, either, to hear the cultural landscape, as a surf of the numerous music channels on the radio create a unique soundscape that is the Yakima Valley. As Shelemay (2001) posited, soundscapes of a grand variety are found across the world, each a product of people's meaning-making within their environments. The multiple and overlapping soundscapes are sometimes found in children's lives, too, as they are exposed to musical expressions within their elementary schools, their home lives, and in the communities that enable them to construct or retain the musical and ethnic identity. This chapter offers descriptions of the music in the Valley and within earshot of children enrolled at Riverview Elementary School. Descriptions of community sources of music are offered as well, including church and home and family venues in which children are likely to encounter music, language, and other facets of Mexican-American culture. Attention is then turned to important players within the school who facilitate learning for children, and who offer children opportunities to succeed as bicultural, bilingual, and bimusical citizens of their world.

## **The Music of the “Valley”, Toppenish, and Riverview Elementary School**

The immigrants from Mexico changed not only the economic and agricultural landscape of the Valley; they changed the cultural landscape as well. Mexican migrants brought their language and culture to the Valley, including a wide variety of Mexican musical expressions. For it is true that there is no single definition of “Mexican” (or Mexican American) music, but many views and hues in a complicated matrix of regional cultures. Migrants brought their rich tradition of *conjunto*, that vibrant dance music of south Texas, and other Tejano musical expressions such that, “throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, Yakima and Sunnyside (both Washington from along the Yakima River) were important stops for touring Texas-Mexican conjunto stars like Tony de la Rosa (y su conjunto), Little Joe (y la familia) and Robert Pulido (y los clasicos)” (Rabinowitz ,1995, p. 1). Pena (1985) classified conjunto as the music of the working class because it was an integral part of migrant worker culture and was an available and affordable form of entertainment.

Conjunto was developed in the Rio Grande Valley, as well as in various other cities in South Texas in the 1920s and 1930s. In Spanish, “conjunto” refers to a “group” or “ensemble.” This ensemble centers around the music of the accordion; it came into its own recognizable form after World War II in 1935 (Pena, 1985, p. 2). The ensemble consists of four instruments: A diatonic button accordion, a *bajo sexto* (12-string guitar), guitar or bass guitar, and the drums. Conjunto music combines a Mexican repertoire of *rancheras*, *cumbias*, *huqvangos*, *redovas*, *danzones*, and *boleros* and of polkas and waltzes borrowed from the Czech, Polish, and German immigrants that migrated to South Texas.

Tejano is a Spanish word used to refer to a person from Texas with a Mexican descent. The term is also used to distinguish a genre of music that originated from the southern borderlands between Texas and Mexico and has its roots in conjunto music. Musicians took the structure of conjunto and mixed it in with other musical genres such as country, rock and roll, jazz, R & B, and some Colombian *cumbia* to form the modern day sounds of Tejano music. Tejano and conjunto music is present at family functions such as weddings, dances, proms, family and religious functions, clubs, rodeos, carnivals, and *quinceañeras* (15 year old girl's birthday which acknowledges her graduation to womanhood).

Conjunto and Tejano music are popular among the various small towns within the Yakima Valley due in part to the fact that this music is the voice of the Texas Mexicans who have settled there (as well as the Chicano community on a whole (Rabinowitz, 1995, p. 1)), and because of the growing population of Mexicans and Mexican Americans who have made the Yakima Valley their permanent home. Local musicians migrating from the Southwest or Mexico or who are native to the Yakima Valley, have kept the genres alive today.

*Norteño* or *musica norteña* is another genre of Mexican music from the northern part of Mexico. It provided the foundation for conjunto music of Texas and shares the same instruments as the conjunto. It distinguishes itself from conjunto music with a slower, more rural sound with less fusion of modern musical genres such as country, pop, and jazz.

*Banda* is another popular music that is present in the Yakima Valley and one that is commonly heard on the radio, at celebrations, and at family and community events. Originating in Sinaloa, Mexico, *banda* is Mexican music that has been mixed with German

polka music, and which has become increasingly popular throughout much of Mexico—on TV, on stage, and in town. It is a brass-based form of music and includes brass, woodwind, and percussion instruments such as the *tambora*. The *tambora* is a bass drum with a cymbal on top. Synthesizers commonly fill in the missing instruments and parts, making performing this music much more accessible to those who do not play instruments. Banda repertoire includes cumbias, rancheras, corridos, and boleros, but also includes Mexican pop and rock.

*Duranguense* or *Pasito Duranguense* (Durango step) is another popular musical genre familiar with many children at Riverview Elementary School. Almost all the students identified it immediately, on its first seconds of audio-play, during interviews. Some of the older students in third, fourth, and fifth grades demonstrated dancing to it, or described how they might dance. *Duranguense* has grown in popularity among Mexican-American and Mexican migrants in the United States, especially since the 1990s. *Pasito* is the dance step that accompanies *duranguense*, *banda*, and *norteño* music in its diatonic melodies and chordal patterns. It uses synthesizers for the melody and bass lines and has a much faster tempo (see page 177 for description of the dance). Even though the music is deeply rooted in Mexican sensibilities, *duranguense* originated in Chicago, Illinois and has flourished in the United States as well as within Mexico.

While *duranguense* has received national awards for its popularity, it continues to have a fan base, which belongs to a very unique and particular community. This subculture, as some may call it (Subcultures Reader) is comprised primarily of second-generation and recent Mexican migrant youth in urban and suburban settings. It has also grown in popularity in numerous Mexican states, as bands book tours to states such as Zacatecas, Guerrero, Durango, and Michoacan. (Diaz, 2008, p. 2)

According to the children at Riverview Elementary School, duranguense is played (live or recorded) or at local festivals, community and family celebrations, at the Cinco de Mayo celebrations, and at home and in the family.

Mariachi music is a part of the musical soundscape of the Yakima Valley, and mariachi ensembles are an established curricular choice in the music programs at a growing number of high schools in the Valley. One of the first school mariachis in the United States was established in the 1980s at Wenatchee High School, a school in the next Valley (of the Columbia River), about three hours by car from the city of Yakima. The Wenatchee program awakened other music teachers in central and eastern Washington to the prospects of developing mariachis within their own schools of significant Mexican and Mexican-American populations. Saturday workshops proliferated for a while so that music teachers would receive training on instruments and repertoire of the ensemble. In the period of research for this dissertation, the part-time music teacher (who had once directed a mariachi in a local high school program) began the journey of proposing a mariachi program at Riverview Elementary School, then fund-raising for the instruments, and finally moving into place the beginning of the children's mariachi program.

The radio and television streamed a grand variety of American mainstream popular music styles to residents in the Yakima Valley, and collections of CD recordings of these styles were mentioned by children as present in their family homes. Children listened alone, or with their siblings, parents, extended family members, friends and neighbors, to a variety of genres ranging from Rap, Hip Hop, Reggaeton, Rock, Country, and Classical (that is, Western art music) on a regular basis, as they also regularly viewed the musicians in their dancing and visually (even theatrically) expressive communication. The children were eager

audiences in the family home as well as in the family vehicles where these musical genres played while they were gaining hold of the musical vocabularies of these genres with every experience.

In addition to these genres listed above, Riverview Elementary School children were enamored of the musical offerings from the Disney, Nickelodeon, and Music Television Channel (MTV) channels offered through basic cable, thus the description to follow of specific programs. The Disney Channel is owned by the Disney-ABC Television group and is available through basic satellite or cable (Potter, 2012). There are many Disney sister channels, including Disney, XD, ABC Family, Disney Junior, and Radio Disney. This network is targeted towards young children and pre-teens through a variety of original television series and movies. Almost all the interviewed children in this study mentioned that they listened to and were fans of the Disney Channel including the following hit shows and movies:

- *Hannah Montana;*
- *Camp Rock;*
- *Camp Rock 2;*
- *JONAS* (featuring the Jonas Brothers);
- *The Cheetah Girls: One World;*
- *High School Musical 1;*
- *High School Musical 2.*

All of these television shows or movies had accompanying albums that the children would listen and sing to and had in their CD collection. These channels offered music-themed original programming through sitcoms and film.

## Community Music Events

*Music in the Family Band.* Students often spoke of family members who either sang in a musical group, or played musical instruments like the guitar, accordion, and saxophone. One young student had much to say about her participation in her father's band, a conjunto group. She proudly shared her love of singing and of the frequency with which she and her siblings would sing ("almost every night") with her father's group. I visited Linda at her family home during one of her father's band practices, and was accompanied by my colleague who later wrote of aspects of the experience (Lum and Campbell, 2009). Linda was certainly singing, as she was also playing on a miniature drum set complete with a small-sized snare drum, bass drum, and cymbals. Linda and her father pieced together their experience in learning the instruments and repertoire of the conjunto and other musical genres such as banda--informally, without private lessons, school instruction, or any other prior performance or formal instructional experience. Linda mentioned to me that her father's band members learned how to play their instruments by listening to the radio or to the CD player and then imitating the music that they had internalized. Sometimes they could play through a song because of their familiarity with it well in advance of the rehearsal with the melody, its harmonies, rhythmic features, and sung texts, and at other times they would listen together to a piece, play and sing, listen again, check and correct themselves, and continue to 'play it forward.' Linda's father's band members consisted of cousins and work colleagues who rehearsed weekly, and even more frequently than that when preparing for performances at weddings, *quinceañeras* (a traditional Mexican celebration of the milestone coming-of-age 15<sup>th</sup> year birthday), and various parties.

After a brief interaction in the living room of Linda's family home, we were invited to their makeshift band studio in the basement while the band warmed up and then played a few tunes. Linda played right alongside the adult band, she on the miniature drum set while her younger brother, Alex who was five years old, played a child-sized accordion (even though he could only figure out how to play a single drone). Luis was moving his hands and arms back and forth in imitation of the accordionist in his father's band. Linda was soon invited to join the band in singing *El Camaleon* (The Chameleon), a well-known banda piece by Los Diferentes de la Sierra. She sang with a light and tuneful voice, and she knew every word (even the fast rap-like sections). She did not shy away from the task but seemed completely in control in singing with the adult musicians. I was personally impressed by her singing, and also very happy to hear this particular song, because it was one that many of the Riverview children had mentioned and whom I had heard sing. The song was played several times at the Cinco de Mayo celebrations in which students, parents, and teachers would all sing along. Linda's father was intent to have Linda learn more songs, as she wished, and to perform singing with the group at various locations.

Other Riverview children recalled family music-making activity as well, although none quite as involved as Linda's conjunto experience. Sammy, a fourth grade boy, had enthusiastically described the work of his father to me. He created radio commercials for Spanish-language radio stations in the area, writing public announcements, descriptions of products, producing voiceovers, composing jingles, and incorporating music as a background thread to the announcements. The music was Mexican-flavored to appeal to the local listening market. A considerable number of children mentioned the presence of a guitar in

their homes, and times in which their fathers, mothers, siblings, and other family members would strum away during group singing experiences at birthdays and other celebrations.

One day, in the midst of a second grade class, the music teacher had pointed to a little girl named Marisol. He informed her about her family lineage of mariachi musicians as he sought to recruit her into the school mariachi: “You would be good for my mariachi group next year. Your mom was the lead singer in my mariachi group. Your Aunt Guadalupe was the trumpet player. This all happened before you were born. Your Uncle Ramon was also a member of the group as well.” Marisol was influenced by her family of musicians, as she delighted in the thought of joining the school mariachi as she became of age. Along with the music teacher, other members of the Riverview staff would occasionally mention to me of the parents who performed Mexican (or other) music, and who were enthusiastic participants in cultural events featuring music in the community.

***Cinco de Mayo.*** A key Mexican celebration in the United States (and only a few places in Mexico) happens on the fifth of May, and often for several days surrounding this time of the commemoration of Mexico's victory over the French at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862 (Hayes-Bautista, 2012). This holiday has come to represent among Americans a celebration of Mexican heritage and pride of identity, and parades, folk dances, music, and food are at the heart of these celebrations. Most communities in the Yakima Valley celebrate this holiday within their local churches, at schools, at family parties, and as celebrations sponsored by the local Chamber of Commerce (Courtney, 2010). Many Toppenish families participate in the sizable celebrations in the city of Yakima, or in Sunnyside, WA, another town about 30 minutes by interstate to the southeast of Toppenish.

Local Mexican restaurants and grocery stores decorate with sombreros, Mexican flags and artwork. They feature an array of festive foods, and the holiday offers good reason to order something beyond the ordinary everyday tacos, tostadas, and burritos; for example *pozole* and tamales. There are specially concocted drinks, too, such as *aguas frescas*, *horchata*, and the Mexican Flag, which is a combination of three shot glass that contains tomato juice, tequila, and limejuice, representing the colors of the Mexican flag. Local musicians stroll between the tables, and guitarists play while people seated at the tables sing favorite songs in Spanish such as *El Rey* and *Cielito Lindo*.

Across the Yakima Valley, people frequently take a day (or two) away from work to celebrate their Mexican heritage. *Fiesta Grande* is the Cinco de Mayo celebration held in the city of Yakima. It has been said that this is the largest Cinco de Mayo celebration within the state of Washington. There is a three-day carnival of rides and games, *charro* horse performances, a car show, and a parade. Over 10,000 people, most of them Mexican Americans, participate in this event annually (Courtney, 2010). With roots in a tradition brought over from Spain in the 16th century, charro horse performances include a skilled horseman who performs a series of maneuvers with the horses while being decorated with decorative charro clothing that include a colorful suit, chaps, *sombrero*, and boots.

In Sunnyside, another town with a majority Hispanic population who migrated there from Texas, California, and from parts of Mexico work in the vineyards, in orchards, and on farms. There have been over 20,000 people are in attendance at the Cinco de Mayo celebration held in Sunnyside (Courtney, 2010). There are three days of carnival rides, contests, and live music, a town parade, and a charro competition. Participants in the parade include local marching bands, low-riding cars in colorful decorations with music blaring,

motorcycles, charro horses, local business and school floats, and folkloric dancers who step and turn their way down the main street of the town. There are street food vendors and live performances from mariachi ensembles, conjunto, Tejano, norteño, banda, and duranguense groups. Of great interest to the young girls is the incorporation of a “Cinco de Mayo Miss America” beauty pageant that awards scholarship money.

With its considerable population of residents with Mexican Americans roots, Toppenish gears up for its annual Cinco de Mayo festivities many weeks in advance of its community event. Headquarters of the event, and all of its preparations, are at Riverview Elementary School. The school hosts a community-wide barbecue, and features a program of performances by student dancers and a professional dance group who dances to Mexican folk dances in colorful regalia known as Bailadores del Sol. The fledging children’s mariachi group of Riverview Elementary School recently joined the program (once instruments had been found and a routine of weekly lessons had been established such that the students could then muster their beginning renderings of *Y Ándale* and *Las Mañanitas*). Carnival games are organized for the children and include the standard piñata activity of breaking open the hanging shapes of paper mâché animals or cartoon characters so that candies could be spilled out for all of the gathering children to collect from the air and across the floor. Face-painting is standard practice at the festive occasion, too, and children stand in line to have flowers and animals hand-painted in purples, oranges, and greens on their cheeks and foreheads. Other families in the Toppenish community join Riverview families at this event, and it is not unusual to see nearly a thousand adults and children of all ages at the school at this spectacular evening event.

***Virgen de Guadalupe (Virgin of Guadalupe).*** The feast of the Our Lady of Guadalupe is a Catholic religious celebration to honor the “Brown Madonna” (Florez, 2011). Our Lady of Guadalupe, also known as in Spanish as the *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* or the *Virgen de Guadalupe*, is Mexico’s version of the mother of Jesus--Mexico’s patron saint. She is believed to have appeared to an indigenous Indian named Juan Diego in 1531, asking him to tell the Catholic bishop in Mexico City to build a church where she appeared. No one believed him and she told him to pick some roses and to carry them in his apron as proof of her message. When he dropped the roses from his apron in front of the bishop’s feet, the image of the Virgen was miraculously imprinted on the apron. The church was built at the site and this holiday has been celebrated since 1531, and became a Mexican national holiday in 1859 (Florez, 2011). Juan Diego’s apron now hangs in the Basilica of Guadalupe in Mexico City, Mexico.

Hispanic Catholic communities in Mexico and in many Mexican American communities continue to celebrate this holiday every December 12<sup>th</sup> with an all-day or at least a full evening’s celebration. This festival is preceded by the nine days of novenas in early December and there is a period of praying the rosary together in churches where special readings and music can be heard. On the date of Our Lady of Guadalupe, church ceremonies may began at midnight or as the sun rises. A serenade of the widely known song, *Las Mañanitas*, is usually performed by violinists, guitarists and singers, and often a full mariachi, in a procession around the church or across the town square. There are songs, dances, a high and solemn celebrative mass, and festivals of food, drink, and music in church social halls or out in the centers of town to round out the celebration for this holiday. *Pan dulce* (Mexican sweet bread) and Mexican hot chocolate are usually served after the novenas

in the evening, and at the holiday mass, in addition to homemade tamales, pozole, enchiladas, rice and beans, and tortillas for the main feast day. Roses are brought as an offering for the *Virgen de Guadalupe* and usually adorn the church altar.

There are two Catholic churches in or near Toppenish that many of the Riverview Elementary School children and their families attend: St. Aloysius in Toppenish and the Church of the Resurrection in Zillah, a small town just a five-minute drive from Toppenish. St. Aloysius does not celebrate the *Virgen de Guadalupe*, but at the Church of the Resurrection, there are the novena days and the singing of *Las Mañanitas* (at 5:00 a.m. on the morning on December 12<sup>th</sup>). A mariachi ensemble performs the song and then leads the congregation into the mass, where the choir and other musicians of the standard church ensemble join them. A group of women perform folkloric dances in brightly colored full and flaring skirts at the front of the church. Six hundred people come flocking to this country church, and participate in the prayers and singing as well as by offering roses for the *Virgen*. After the morning mass, people continue into the hall for the morning fiesta where *menudo* tamales, pan dulce, coffee, and Mexican hot chocolate are some of the goodies served. The parish features the story of Juan Diego and the Virgin, and offers a guide to the novena, on their website (Resurrection Parish, n.d.). There are both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking priests on staff, and all information (and many of the prayers) are offered in the English and Spanish-language. Many of the families from the Riverview Elementary School community drive over the interstate bridge to this parish, due to the Spanish-language services and the greater attention to Mexican-rooted traditions, holidays, and values.

***Las Posadas.*** A *posada*, or lodging, is the singular form of the nine-day Catholic celebration originating in Spain. Las Posadas represents the travels of Mary and Joseph who

sought lodging at the time of their travels to Bethlehem prior to the birth of Jesus. This period runs December 16-24, to the eve of Christmas, the Nativity of Jesus. Children and adults in Spain, in Mexico, and in other Latin American countries celebrate Las Posadas by traveling from house to house with candles while singing carols (Bauml and Field, 2012). They may follow the pageantry of asking for housing, or may request a sweet or a drink from every house they visit. In some homes, travelers will enter, pray at the family nativity scene, sing Christmas carols and other religious songs, break *piñatas*, and imbibe in various festive foods.

The Las Posadas tradition is filled with music. Children often participate enthusiastically in the posadas, and for many weeks may be in rehearsal of the songs, which at church and during Sunday school. Some of the Riverview children referred to their activities during this December event, and the involvement of their families as members of the Church of the Resurrection. Children noted being familiar with the seasonal carols sung in both the English and Spanish-language.

**Television.** In 2009 Univision, the widest-reaching Spanish-language television network in the United States, surpassed Fox, CBS, ABC, and NBC in ratings for attracting the greatest number of viewers for popular shows targeted towards young adult viewers, ages 18-34. Some of the top-rated shows on Spanish-language television are *telenovelas* (refers to the combination of the Spanish words for television and novel and to the dramatic programming similar to the American soap operas). Telenovelas are often referred to as *novellas* (shorten version of the telenovelas) and reality shows. A full account of the large popularity of the Spanish-language television and radio is documented by Godwin (2009):

In many American cities, Spanish-language TV news shows, such as that of KMEX in Los Angeles, outscore their English-language rivals, not just in ratings but in scope and depth...Spanish-language media dominance extends far beyond television. Radio hosts, such as the fiery Renán Alemndárez Coello, known as el Cucuy-the Boogeyman-with his show El Cucuy de la Mañana on KLAX-FM in Los Angeles, also rule the American airwaves...el Cucuy had the top-rated show in Los Angeles and 10 other American cities, beating much better-known English language figures such as Howard Stern. (Godwin, 2009, p. 47)

The children of Riverview Elementary School invariably watched television on a daily basis. When I asked them if they were more likely to watch English- than Spanish- language programs, many responded that they watch more Spanish television because that was what their parents preferred. Elizabeth, a third grade student, expressed her bilingual television-viewing experience: “I listen to both (English- and Spanish-language music) because sometimes I see novelas in Spanish. Then I get used to Spanish songs. Then my brother watches cartoons in English and my mom tells me to leave it there.” Several eager students described to me the Mexican *telenovela* (soap opera), *Rebelde* (Rebel or Rebellious). The program is a remake of the Argentine *Rebelde Way* and was adapted for the Mexican audience. The show fascinates Spanish-speaking youth as it is set in a private high school where students are forming a pop band (which is played by members of a real (and popular) band called RBD. The show, while in Spanish, includes an assortment of English-language phrases. Several children mentioned that their families owned a satellite, or that they had a “dish” TV anchored to the house that could facilitate their watching many of the dish network Spanish stations (and the English-language Disney Channels as well).

One station, Channel 838, or “Mun2” (pronounced “moon dos”), was particularly attractive to second-, third-, and fourth-grade children at Riverview, due to its programming in Spanish-language of informal, fresh, fast-paced, and hip teen shows and movies (Lum & Campbell, 2009, pg. 121).

Riverview children described and demonstrated the dance moves to Spanish songs that they acquired through their frequent viewing of the Mun2 channel. Furthermore, they also watched MTV (Music Television), the Disney Channel, Cartoon Network, and Nickelodeon. Even though there seemed to be limited economic means among the families of the children of Riverview, there appeared to be widespread access by families to cable or dish television that allowed into the homes these Spanish programs, of which music was invariably an integral part. Children expressed that their families sat together weekly or even nightly to watch the high-drama Spanish *telenovelas* (Spanish soap operas) of love and romance. Television and the music played out in the homes as the programs are critical and constant influences in children’s daily lives. Lum & Campbell’s (2009) study clarified the importance of technology and the media, particularly television, in the construction of the musical identity of one Mexican American migrant child whose story was replicated by many more in their Toppenish homes and families. Lum and Campbell (2009) noted that technology in the home allowed migrant families to:

... taste and immerse themselves in the musical cultures they knew so well in Mexico, creating ‘diasporic attachments...the doubled connection that mobile subjects have to localities, to their involvement in webs of cultural, political, and economic ties that encompass multiple national terrains’ (Inda & Rosaldo, 2002, p. 18). (p. 122)

They observed that families living in small towns removed from Mexico and the urban hip-hop and reggaeton scenes could nonetheless stay connected to contemporary Spanish-language music and cultural emblems, “because the music is carried over the air waves and to the dish that serves the genres they enjoy” (p. 122).

Riverview children claimed that a considerable amount of their out-of-school time was enmeshed in music. The songs and steady rhythmic runs of classic and contemporary popular Mexican styles came at them via television, radio (either in their homes or in the family cars), and on their compact disc and mp3 music players. Having access to Spanish-language media such as television and radio allowed Mexicans and Mexican Americans to connect with the “language and popular culture associated with their ethnic origins” allowing them to create a stronger bond with their culture and larger “Mexican-origin community” (Jiménez, 2010, p. 124).

**Radio Programs.** Radio is the most popular medium of communication to the Mexican Americans in Toppenish, as is often the case in rural and remote communities elsewhere. Radio KDNA, which is pronounced *cadena*, which means “chain” in Spanish is considered to be the Northwest Communities Education Center and hub of community life in the Yakima Valley (“Grantee Profile: KDNA Radio”, n.d.). Children, as well as parents and teachers, verified that they gather national and local news and information about forthcoming events, from Radio KDNA broadcasted in 91.9 FM. Radio KDNA was always used as a vehicle of communication to announce any school events or functions that maybe related to the children or to the parents for Riverview Elementary School. Mr. Flores, the principal, had remarked of the radio’s essence: “We make sure to send news bulletins to Radio KDNA so that all of our parents are informed of upcoming school events. That is how we get so

many people here for our Cinco de Mayo celebrations.” KDNA is the only full-time educational Spanish-language public radio station in the United States, and has been in operation since 1979. Their mission statement is as follows:

Radio KDNA will direct its efforts as a minority public radio station in response to the cultural and informational isolation of Hispanic/Latino and other disadvantage communities. Radio KDNA will produce quality radio programming to help such communities overcome barriers of literacy, language, discrimination, poverty, and illness. In this way, KDNA will empower these communities to more fully participate in our multiethnic society. (“La Voz”, 2012)

Radio KDNA is a unifying space for the migrant and Hispanic communities in the area to learn about their own rights as citizens and as migrants. It offers valuable resources and services that are available to them, including employment opportunities, news of the area and of communities back home in Mexico, and of course familiar musical expressions. According to its on-air line-up, Radio KDNA plays *norteña*, *accordion*, *banda*, *mariachi*, *Tejano*, *musica popular* for the younger generation, children’s Spanish songs, notable Mexican musicians, instrumental music, and spiritual programs on Sunday.

There is a full hour program intended for children that runs every weekday morning at 9:00a.m. *El Jardín de los Niños* (The Children’s Garden) has been on air since 1979 and was one of the radio station’s most popular shows. Ezequiel Ramirez, known as *El Viejito* (The Wise Old Man), is the host and main character and includes an addition of “*Tía Dora*” (Auntie Dora) in 2006. The show’s main goal was to inform, entertain, and educate children and has incorporated the teaching practices of the Washington State Department of Early Learning’s “Thrive by Five” with the help of a staff member who has a Masters degree in

Education. Latino cultural identity, history, and accomplishments were presented within each show so that children understand that “Latinos have so much to be proud of. Latinos have always played an important role in the development of our great society and we showcase this on a daily basis” (“La Voz”, 2012). The following priorities are stated on the show’s website: to encourage parents to read with their children, to provide parenting tips, to provide safety tips, to excite children about school and learning, to provide cultural identity, to encourage bilingualism, to support emotional transition into kindergarten, to encourage parents to become active in their child’s school, and to have fun (Trevino, 2008). The program boasted its educational service of providing reading books to children and gift certificates for children’s birthday cakes and piñatas. It also shared local resources and events that often give away free necessities and special treats. Sprinkled within all this helpful information were favorite children’s stories that read on air, Spanish children songs that children were listening, singing, or dancing along to. Many of the children of Riverview acknowledged that they knew of El Viejito because they listened to him at home or while they were in daycare. Several students excitedly described their experiences of calling in to the station to talk to this reputable character.

El Viejito was invited to Riverview Elementary School by the principal, Mr. Flores, to offer a school-wide presentation in the gym. The children were bursting with excitement, and when El Viejito appeared in front of them at the presentation, there was joyful screams, squeals, and hearty laughter. The children were almost silent, transformed, as they listened intently to him and the stories he told them. They sang and clapped along with the songs El Viejito sang, or which were played through the loud gym speakers.

Even though teaching children's traditional song culture was not a priority for the radio program, it is still much of the essence of the show. Spanish-language songs and Mexican music is woven in through the stories and dialogue sections so that there was no time within the program where there was not music playing either in the background or being showcased. There were many children who called in and asked for their favorite songs, and El Viejito tried to have a conversation with them. Some of them were old enough to speak and some just babbled and could say hello or goodbye. He commonly mentioned during the radio show, "We are always talking on this show, we may not always understand what is being said, but we are always talking." He was referring to the fact that he does not always understand the kids (referring to children babbling), but that he enjoyed them anyway. Parents also called in and requested songs for their children or for other children of family members. During the last ten minutes of one radio program to which I tuned in, parents and children were calling in to request songs whose melodies then came cascading across the airwaves:

- *Pin Pon*;
- *Caballo Pancho*;
- *Los Perritos*;
- *Gummy Bear (Osito Gominola)*;
- *Besitos de Chocolate*.

The *Besitos de Chocolate* song came up during my interviews with the Riverview Elementary School children, when they spoke of songs they liked or those they were familiar with (see Figure 2). The program, El Jardín de los Niños, appeared important in keeping alive Mexican children's culture in Toppenish and throughout the Yakima Valley. Children were listening, singing, and dancing to these songs on a daily basis. These songs come

through the radio to them in their home, in their daycare settings, and when as they enter preschools and kindergartens.

**Figure 2.**  
*Besitos de Chocolate Transcription and Lyrics in the English- and Spanish-Language*

Besitos de Chocolate

trans. by A. Soto

Voice Be - si - tos de cho - co - la - te Be - si - tos de ri - ca miel be -  
 Vo. si - tos de ca - ca - hua - te re - lle - nos de fre - sa y nuez Si quie - res un - nos be -  
 Vo. si - tos sa - bro - sos yo te da - ré tu di - me de que los quie - res y  
 Vo. pron - to te be - sa - ré Yo ten - go sur - ti - do ri - co de fre - sa vain - illa y  
 Vo. nuez mis más ex - qui si - tos be - sos con Gus - to yo te da - ré

<b>Spanish</b>	<b>English</b>
Besitos de Chocolate	Chocolate kisses
Besitos de rica miel	Rich honey kisses
Besitos de cacahuete	Peanut kisses
Rellenos de fresa y nuez	Filled with strawberry and walnut

Si quieres unos besitos	If you want some kisses
Sabrosos yo te daré	I will give you tasty kisses

<b>Spanish</b>	<b>English</b>
Tu dime de que los quieres	You tell me what you want
Y pronto te besaré	And I will soon kiss you.

Yo tengo un surtido rico	I have a rich assortment
De fresa, vainilla y nuez	Of strawberry, vanilla, and nuts
Mis más exquisitos besos	My most delicious kisses
Con gusto y te daré	I will gladly give

*Other Community Events.* Toppenish and the Yakima Valley community supported other area events at which music sounded. There was a Fourth of July parade replete with marching bands and recorded music of various popular genres that sound from the loudspeakers of floats. At the edge of town, seasonal pow-wows were hosted by the Yakama Nation Cultural Center, and drummers, flute players, and a couple of country and rock bands play for dancing and mingling inside the Center, at the Casino (usually hands-off to children), and in the outdoor park areas surrounding these sites. A Concert in the Park was promoted in the summer, at which the Yakima Community Band appears to play Broadway tunes, light classical music arrangements, marches, and renditions of songs popular among older generations of concert-goers (Visit Toppenish, n.d.). Some children mentioned these musical events in their conversations with me, although the music was out of reach of their experiences.

Riverview children could typically claim a pastiche soundscape comprised of multiple musical experiences, both live and mediated, with the potential to shape their bimusical and bicultural identity. It is within these soundscapes where the bimusical identity of children were being nourished, and their skills in recognizing and performing the songs of Mexican and Mexican-American culture were very much a result of what they heard at home, in church, and in their neighborhood surroundings. Their teachers largely understood and valued the importance of keeping cultural and ethnic connections alive with their children, and that music was an important means of doing so. Thus, they toil in creating a space for the Riverview Elementary School children to be bilingual, bicultural, as well as to establish a bimusical identity.

## **Musical and Cultural Agents at School**

The school community as a whole is responsible for creating a bilingual and bicultural environment for the children at Riverview Elementary School. Furthermore, it is the actions that are taken by various individuals that provide opportunities that foster the bimusical identity of children within their academic and music classes and through the various school functions outside class that take place during the school year. Seven musical and cultural agents are described (some more definitively musical and others more cultural in their influences), all of them involved in providing or establishing a space for the children of Riverview Elementary to explore their bimusical interests, to have their cultural identities solidified, and to reinforce their abilities to speak in both the English-and Spanish-language.

*Mr. Smith, Music Teacher.* Mr. Smith was the music teacher at Riverview Elementary School. He taught music at a nearby elementary school several blocks away in the mornings and then at Riverview for the afternoons. Mr. Smith was in his middle 60s, was moving into retirement soon, and had over twenty years of experience as a secondary band director. He enjoyed working with school children, especially at Riverview Elementary School, since his wife cooked in the school cafeteria. He taught thirty-minute classes in a cleared-out gym storage closet at the side of the gym. The gym closet was outfitted with an oversized desk, twenty music stands, a four-drawer filing cabinet, an overhead projector, a rolling cart, an old upright piano, a three-step riser, and a dingy floor carpet. In the corner of the room was a stairway with boxes piled high containing academic classroom and cleaning materials. Kindergarten through second grade music classes were held in this gym closet. Music instruction for third, fourth, and fifth grade were held in their own individual classrooms.

Mr. Smith's music curriculum included Orff-based lessons, even though his instruments were limited to two glockenspiels and three alto xylophones. He incorporated the singing of English- and Spanish –language songs, rhythmic body percussion, and non-pitched percussion activities. He also had a supply of several hand percussion instruments, a set of wooden temple blocks on a stand, recorders (85), and several guitars. He taught recorder to fourth grade students and guitars to the fifth grade students. He featured songs from the mariachi repertoire in his classes of children, at all grade levels. Mr. Smith used a mixture of English and Spanish in his classes. Not only did he explain the various instruments in English, but he also gave the Spanish names for them as well. Classroom management advisories and reprimands also came forward from him in English and Spanish, in all of his classes. Following the dual language guidelines, he introduced a mixture of English- and Spanish-language songs.

Mr. Smith's greatest music-educational passion was mariachi. He once directed mariachi at the high school and concert band at the middle school. He attempted to create a fifth grade band at Riverview at an earlier time, but it initially fell through because families could not afford instruments and the afterschool practices were difficult to adhere to by students who required bus transportation home. After borrowing mariachi instruments from the high school, he began a before-school mariachi with interested third, fourth, and fifth grade students. Mariachi students met every Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.. Mr. Smith was an active member of the Washington State Mariachi Teachers Association and attended all mariachi workshops and conferences held across the state. His fledgling mariachi at Riverview Elementary School consisted of girls and boys in grades three, four, and five. They met weekly in order to develop techniques and repertoire to play

for the school's Cinco de Mayo celebration, the talent show, and eventually (past the time of my research) by invitation at the University of Washington.

As natives of Texas, Mr. Smith and I had much to talk about over our lunchtimes together. Given his historical perspectives on Texas and on music education as a long-time teacher, Mr. Smith offered stories of various sorts on schools, teachers, and students. Mr. Smith was a gracious host to me and allowed me to observe in his class and teach any classes of my own choosing (largely in preparation for or follow-up to the teaching visits of university students in the partnership program). He shared many helpful suggestions and explanations of his classroom method and allowed me to interview students during his music session. He was working in a situation that was far from ideal, in that it allowed him only part-time work, thus making it challenging for him to develop student skills. Further, as a teacher experienced in secondary school settings, the elementary school setting left him a little uncertain as to the musical and pedagogical needs suited to working with children.

***Mr. Flores, Principal.*** Mr. Flores was a native of Toppenish. He grew up alongside the assistant superintendent of the district (Mr. Escobedo), just blocks away from Riverview Elementary School. His mother migrated from South Texas and his dad migrated from California. He was educated in the Toppenish district. After high school, he attended Washington State University for his Bachelor's degree and principal's certification training. He remarked that, "I always knew that I wanted to return to Toppenish. I always wanted to come home and make a difference in the lives of the Mexican and Mexican American children here in Toppenish."

During one segment of my fieldwork, Mr. Flores was gracious enough to allow me to stay in his old (and first) family home where he himself had grown up. The house was

situated five miles out of town between Toppenish and Wapato and was surrounded by a vineyard, a field of hops, and a pasture. In the distance was a clear shot of Mt. Adams, a quite beautiful sight set against the gorgeous sunsets. As he was showing me the place, he proudly explained that his father was the first Mexican American to open up a grocery store in the area, and showed me the newspaper article on his father's contributions. Mr. Flores married a woman from Mexico and they had three children. Every year, often in December, they made a road trip to Mexico to visit family relatives. The father of Mr. Flores would visit me every morning to check on my well-being and to do minor work on the yard and house even though it remained unoccupied. There was family pride in maintaining the property, as there was also a resident cat and beautiful fragrant roses surrounding the house.

Mr. Flores had been the principal of Riverview Elementary School for four years, beginning this position as the new school building was opened. Since he grew up in Toppenish, he witnessed the demographic changes including the presence of different generations of Mexican and Mexican Americans, who now comprise the majority of his school community. Riverview Elementary School was the only school in the district (although one of several in the lower Yakima Valley) that contained a dual language school. Mr. Flores' position was that children needed to retain or learn the Spanish-language because it was an important and crucial means for creating successful students and citizens of the community and of the world. Mr. Flores understood the background of the Toppenish community, and he knew first-hand of the challenges that Mexican and Mexican American children faced in their education. He was bilingual and offered school correspondence in both the English- and Spanish-language. Mr. Flores could speak to the parents in their language, and they related to him because they saw him as was 'one of them.'

Mr. Flores understood the importance of connecting and educating the community in order for his students to exceed. After school, the library and computer lab were left open so that citizenship classes and General Education Development (GED) classes could be held at the school for free. He sponsored the Mexican Consulate to come out for several days for members of the community to get their passports in a matter of minutes (a process that could otherwise take months). There were English-language classes and computer classes in the school that were offered for free for the local community. He supported the activity of several teachers in their involvement in a new on-line high school diploma and college degree program from Mexico. Students and parents alike could complete online courses through the computers at the school, and could return to Mexico with a degree or credits that could be validated and transferred to Mexican schools and universities. Every week there were family math, science, and/or reading ‘nights’ in which parents were given information about how they could aid their child with homework or educational activities.

Mr. Flores was also a proponent of celebrating the Mexican culture with which he and so many of his students and staff identified with. Every May, he sponsored a BBQ dinner and dance show for the Cinco de Mayo festivities. He alone donated the meat, and the teachers and the staff donated and served side items. There was a local DJ that blared out Mexican tunes, while people enjoyed the *carne asada* BBQ. In addition to the children’s performances at the Cinco de Mayo celebration, Mr. Flores sponsored a local dance troupe to perform at the Cinco de Mayo celebration.

Mr. Flores annually invited the radio figure *El Viejito*, the KDNA radio personality, to conduct an assembly for the Riverview Elementary School children. Mr. Flores would advertise all school events and community events held at the school on Radio KDNA,

because he said it was an effective way to reach the parents of the Toppenish community. As principal, Mr. Flores supported the presence of a mariachi ensemble for the older children. He helped the music teacher to secure unused guitars, a *guitarrón*, violins, trumpets, and *vihuelas* from the high school, and allowed the music teacher to use grade level classrooms during morning and lunch recess to teach the students the skills of mariachi performance. Mr. Flores supported and rallied for the purchase of recorders for the fourth grade classes, as well, for he saw music as critical to children's social, emotional, and intellectual development at large.

***Mrs. Garcia, Librarian.*** Mrs. Garcia was a veteran teacher of the Toppenish School District. At the age at which she qualified for retirement from her teaching career, she decided to stop teaching fourth grade and become a librarian. After a year and a half a librarian, Mrs. Garcia decided to become the project manager for a program that facilitates online education courses from Mexico. The relatively new adoption of this program took Mrs. Garcia to Mexico several times for training.

Mrs. Garcia was a native of South Texas. She migrated to Toppenish when she was a teenager, close to 40 years ago. She had seen social change come to Toppenish and the Valley. Meanwhile, her husband still worked out in the fields. She offered many stories of her work in the fields when she was young and of the struggles of raising a family while working towards her degree and certification to become a teacher. She lived a comfortable life in her retirement age, even though she had certain health problems that made retirement a scary option with the high cost of health care.

She lived in the Toppenish community and extended her work far past the school day because of afterschool community classes. It was not unusual for Mrs. Garcia to work seven

days per week, especially to keep the facilities open. She assisted with the English-language courses, GED courses, citizenship courses, and other various programs throughout the year. She understood the importance and impact of these courses and did not mind working them.

Mrs. Garcia was an important cultural and musical agent within the school. She kept the library chockful of child-appropriate books in both the English-and Spanish-language. All the signs in her library were posted in the English- and in Spanish. She conducted a variety of lessons in both the English-and Spanish-language and introduced songs that she learned over years that are in Spanish. She assisted me in finding materials to use in my music lessons and she gave me several Spanish language songs that I used in my lessons. Mrs. Garcia witnessed and supported my work with the children of Riverview and allowed me to use library time to teach musical songs and activities.

***Mrs. Stern, PE Coach.*** Growing up in the Western part of Washington state, Mrs. Stern was not a native of the Yakima Valley. She completed her bachelors and masters degrees in education at Central Washington University and faced an hour-long home-school and school-home commute each day. She was active in all the school activities, and a number of her colleagues and students remarked as to her constant presence within the school. Mrs. Stern assisted with reading groups, and with student interventions to help get them caught up with their math assignments each morning and taught physical education every afternoon. If Riverview teachers missed work, Mrs. Stern frequently became the substitute teacher for their classes during the morning hours. She was in charge of the family open houses and the winter and spring concerts and she held many fundraisers for field trips and equipment. Her responsibilities also included the coordination of the crossing guards program, which allowed fifth graders to serve as safety guards at the pedestrian walks across streets and parking's.

She received grants for much of school's sport equipment. Mrs. Stern's work spread across many realms, and she enjoyed decorating the school halls, cafeteria, and gym for holidays or special events. She alone coordinated the school-wide fall carnival, and every winter she led the para-professionals in creating a scenic seasonal backdrop for student photos.

Mrs. Stern was an asset to the Riverview Elementary School community. We became friendly during the course of the fieldwork, and I could count on her to update me on special events, assemblies, and schedule changes. She welcomed me warmly into her classes and allowed me to teach short music lessons and assisted me in some of the music projects. In return, I would help her create the scenic backdrops and other various arts and craft projects. Mrs. Stern kindly lent me tennis balls, scarves, and tin cans that I used as instruments and props with students during music lessons. One further and quite remarkable asset was that Mrs. Stern knew the school (and many of the family) histories of the students because she had been teaching them since their entrance to kindergarten.

***Mrs. Sanchez, Bilingual Reading Coach.*** Mrs. Sanchez clarified at the outset of our conversation that bilingual education was not always present in elementary schools, and that only thirty years earlier, "There was no dual language program when I was growing up" in the small northern city of Redding, California. Still an infant, she moved with her family back to Mexico where they stayed until moving to Toppenish when she was seven years old. She recalled feeling lost when she first came to Toppenish: "It was different back then. The demographics have changed. Back then there was very few Hispanics and now we are predominantly Hispanic." She remembered feeling as though her culture and language were not valued. Her dominant language while growing up was Spanish, but because of schooling and the extent of her time now in the United States, she now views English as her primary

language. She remarked, “I did not learn how to speak and write Spanish properly. I can probably teach Spanish until the third grade, but I couldn’t do farther than that because I don’t know the vocabulary very well.” She had pride in her work, and adamantly claimed that “My mission and goal is for children to be able to enter school and to have their language and their culture valued.”

Mrs. Sanchez was an important force in organizing the dual language curriculum for teachers of children of all grade levels. She provided workshops for them on materials and strategies, addressed issues or problems that arose in teaching particular children, provided activities and Spanish language songs for teachers to use in class, assisted teachers and paraprofessionals in their testing of children’s language facility, and compiled and analyzed the reading test scores. She kept up with state and national standards and attended regional and national trainings on bilingual education. Mrs. Sanchez consistently observed the dual language teachers in their work, and offered her time to pull students out of their classes to work with them individually or in small groups.

Mrs. Sanchez hosted me in her home during my time in the Yakima Valley. She allowed me to stay while I was working on the university-community partnership, and through some of my fieldwork visits. She lived with her husband, two children, and her in-laws in a beautiful historic home several blocks from the school. Her husband was a member of the Toppenish police force. They often invited me to dinners and breakfasts with her family, and I relished our times of sharing Mexican food, listening to Spanish-language songs on the radio in their kitchen, and talking about the school and community. I was a witness to this Mexican American family, and their three generations of activity, and I made note of their home life and of their negotiations of the different cultural spheres in their lives.

Mrs. Sanchez's second grade daughter, Angelica, was exemplar of a child with a bimusical identity, and I observed her at home and at school. Angelica would participate in school music class, performing Spanish-language singing games and mariachi songs. She danced in the Cinco de Mayo celebrations at the school performing the colorful folkloric dances of central Mexico. She studied piano with a local area piano teacher and I observed these lessons even as I later offered her a few piano lessons. (This was challenging, too, such that we would be playing piano even while Spanish language music was playing a few feet away in the kitchen as her mother prepared Mexican dishes like *carne guisada*). Angelica spoke mostly the English-language in her home but understood and could speak the Spanish-language as well. The family would switch back and forth from the English-to Spanish-language in dinner table conversation and around the home, and Angelica was certainly in the midst of the bilingual exchanges.

***Mrs. Martinez, First Grade Teacher.*** Born in Guerrero, Mexico, Mrs. Martinez migrated to Wapato, Washington, as a young child. She was raised and graduated from a high school in that small town, and was now teaching just a ten minutes' drive away from that town in Toppenish. After graduating from a nearby university, she decided to return to teach in Toppenish because she always favored smaller communities for what she viewed as having supportive parents and hardworking students. Mrs. Martinez was charged with full responsibilities for the children of her first grade classroom, and taught all subjects in a bilingual manner that merged Spanish- and English-language throughout the school day. She made a regular effort to bring music in the classroom. As she remarked, "I like to play music when the students are working. We do some songs like the weather or calendar song. It is getting harder (to incorporate more music time into classes) because of the extra time

required to be spent on reading and math subjects). I will play some Spanish music that usually comes from the compact discs that Mrs. Sanchez provides. For example, I have played *Chocolate* for the children. They sing along and do the motions of stirring the hot chocolate with the *molinillo* (wooden whisk)” (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3.**  
*Chocolate Transcription and Lyrics in English- and Spanish-Language*

Chocolate

trans. by A. Soto

Chant  $\text{H} \frac{4}{4}$

Ba - te Ba - te Cho - co - la - te tu nar - iz de ca - ca - hua - te

3

$\text{H}$  U - no dos tres CHO! U - no dos tres CO!

5

$\text{H}$  U - no dos tres LA! U - no dos tres TE!

7

$\text{H}$  Cho - co - la - te Cho - co - la - te Ba - te Ba - te Ba - te Ba - te

9

$\text{H}$  Ba - te Ba - te Cho - co - la - te! Ba - te Ba - te Cho - co - la - te!

**Spanish**  
Bate, Bate, Chocolate  
Tu nariz de cacahuete  
Uno, dos, tres, Cho!  
Uno, dos, tres, Co!  
Uno, dos, tres, LA!  
Uno, dos, tres, TE!

**English**  
Stir, Stir, Chocolate  
Your Nose is a Peanut  
One, Two, Three, Cho!  
One, Two, Three, Co!  
One, Two, Three, LA!  
One, Two, Three, TE!

Chocolate Chocolate  
Bate, Bate, Bate, Bate  
Bate, Bate, Chocolate  
Bate, Bate, Chocolate!

Chocolate, Chocolate  
Stir, Stir, Stir, Stir  
Stir, Stir, Chocolate  
Stir, Stir, Chocolate!

She mentioned that she once incorporated songs that stimulated children's responsive movement, usually at the beginning of the school day, but had stopped doing so because she feared "what the principal would say if he were to walk in" (when she might be expected to be using her class time with the children to teach to the state standards and assessments). Mrs. Martinez had recently attended a workshop about the importance of movement and music in stimulating the brain, and so was beginning to re-think her fear.

Mrs. Martinez believed that her students should learn about their own cultural heritage in school. This belief was furthered by her seeking out an endorsement in bilingual education as part of her state teaching certification. She explained: "I think it is important. We learned about history of *Cinco de Mayo*. I make it a point because I want them to be proud of it (their cultural history). I didn't have that when I was in school. No one ever made me feel proud of where I came from and of my culture. We were embarrassed when we said we ate tamales for Christmas." Mrs. Martinez worried that children may not understand that they are part Mexican even if they were born in the U.S. She continued, noting that children should know their family histories and develop pride in their cultural roots. Mrs. Martinez believed that by understanding their own history and culture, they would be open and receptive towards others cultures that may be similar to or far from their own.

Mrs. Martinez remarked that many of the Riverview teachers incorporated cultural information within their lessons, and yet there were teachers who were resistant to do so due to perceived time restrictions, lack of knowledge (or ready access to it), or a philosophical

disposition to teach fundamental skills rather than ‘peripheral information.’ She had observed an existing tension between some of the teachers regarding a school-wide requirement of the teaching faculty and staff to work and participate in the annual evening Cinco de Mayo celebration. She cited some teachers’ sense that there was an overemphasis on Mexican culture and Spanish language in the Riverview curriculum and commented: “If they wanted to have a different type of celebration I would be there and help out. As long as we are doing something for the community and we are learning about each other, I do not see the harm whether it is Cinco de Mayo or something else. I am sure our Hispanic families would love to learn about another culture if we could think about (developing) another type of night (of cultural celebration).” She posited that the tensions and resistance result from lack of proper training in their university studies as teachers, noting that “You would think that teachers would have more of an understanding about the importance of teaching and validating the culture of a student but we are a long way off! You would not think this would still be an issue today, but just look at our population. We are still falling behind and something is not working.”

***Mr. Castillo, Second Grade Teacher.*** Mr. Castillo was a bilingual second grade teacher who conducted his science and social studies courses in Spanish. He welcomed me warmly to his classes to teach music during the partnership program, and was both flexible with scheduling and enthusiastic in his support of musical enrichment for his young students. Mr. Castillo had been born in La Rivera, in the state of Jalisco Mexico, at the border of the state of Michoacán. He had first ventured into the United States at the age of seventeen to work in the Yakima Valley. He studied English, obtained his GED, and then continued his education at Heritage University in Toppenish and at Oregon State University where he

earned a degree and a teaching certificate. He was drawn back to Toppenish, where schools were recruiting teachers with Spanish fluency and knowledge of Mexican culture. Mr. Castillo was a perfect fit because he was an immigrant from Mexico and could relate to the language, culture, and experiences of his students. He chose to work at Riverview Elementary School, because he could still speak his language and inform the students of their native culture while being surrounded by it in his personal life within the community.

Mr. Castillo responded to the question of connecting to his students: "I feel like I do. We do talk about where I am from and that I live pretty close to where the students visit (when they return with their families to Mexico for holidays) or where they come from. They recognize that I know where they come from and that I am also from Mexico because they ask where I am from and I tell them that I was born in Mexico." He remarked that many of the students are from Michoacán and clarified that: "Most of the students identify as Mexican even when they are born here. They see themselves as Mexicans. I don't know if it is because we talk about it in the class or because their parents tell them."

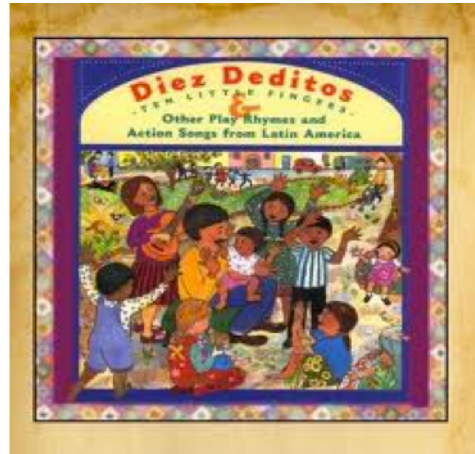
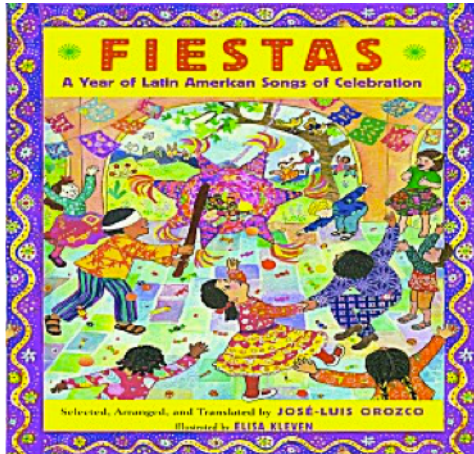
Mr. Castillo discussed the important role that music plays in the daily lives of his young students. He described how he frequently played "music for the kids during work time or various times. I play *Cepillín* in class." *Cepillín* (in Spanish, a little toothbrush), is the name of a dentist (Ricardo González) who painted his face in bright and colorful designs so that children would not fear going to the dentist. After being interviewed by a local news station, *Cepillín* was invited to do a television show for children produced by Televisa called, *El Show de Cepillín* (Historia: *Cepillín.TV*, n.d.). This show has a combination of educational segments that are woven through comedic and interview segments. *Cepillín* is very popular in Mexico and in Latin America. There are many films and albums that were

created as part of the franchise. The children at Riverview Elementary School knew Cepillín well, watched his show, and owned his albums.

Mr. Castillo featured other Spanish-language recordings in his classes (see Figure 4):

- *Fiestas: A Year of Latin American Songs of Celebration;*
- *Diez Deditos (Ten Little Fingers) and Other Play Rhymes and Action Songs from Latin America;*
- *Lírica Infantil con José-Luis Orozco: Latin American Children's Folklore;*
- *Canto y Cuento;*
- *Cepillín 15 Exitos;*
- *Niños Triunfadores: Solo Para Niños;*
- *Solo para Peques;*
- *Las Numero: “Cri Cri;*
- *Tatiana: La Reina de los Niños - El Regalo 2.*

**Figure 4.**  
*Mr. Castillo's Spanish-Language Albums*



These recordings are representative of the popular children's media culture in Mexico and in Mexican American communities. There are numerous songs in these collections with educational messages and songs that teach children to count, to learn colors or shapes. Some are folk songs and lullabies that are familiar throughout Mexico and among Mexican Americans, and there are also some standard mariachi melodies such as *Las Mañanitas*, *Malagueña*, and *Tú Sólo Tú*.

Mr. Castillo described the travel of his young students and their families to Mexico, usually at Christmas. He added that due to the long journey and the family valuing of time with their extended family in Mexico, “some of them skip some school because of it.” Mr. Castillo was most surely an agent for the understanding by his young students of their Mexican American identities at large and in music. Still uncertain at age seven and eight years of a complete fluency in the English-language, these children were comfortable in connecting with Mr. Castillo through the Spanish language, and through the personal experiences he related to them of his having grown up in Mexico and of experiencing life as a new immigrant American. They also connected to Mr. Castillo through the music that he plays in his classroom. As well, their teacher supported them in school performances, including leading practices of their singing of *El Niño del Tambor* (The Little Drummer Boy) for the winter concert or by allowing students to practice their Cinco de Mayo dances during his class time.

### **Summary**

This chapter provided insight to the musical and cultural soundscape of the Yakima region, of the surrounding community of Toppenish, Washington, and within the school community of Riverview Elementary School. The richly diverse musical expressions that are

sounded across the airways provided a sound connection that aids in understanding the development of children's identities. Due to their involvement in family songs and family bands, in cultural community celebrations like Cinco de Mayo, and in religious festivities that honor the Virgen de Guadalupe, children were able to establish and cultivate their ethnic and musical identity outside of school in both American and Mexican ideals. Thomas Macias (2006) argued that culture is not just a set of "traits", but is defined by how people "utilize available cultural resources- specifically, Spanish-language television, Mexican food, religion, language, and gender roles – to reinforce and recreate Mexican ethnicity in their day –to-day lives" (p. 26-27). Children were accessing these cultural resources that were offered to them in their home, community, and within the school community that encompassed culture, music, food, and language. The agents of culture and music of the school community were enablers for the children's discovery of a bimusical identity. The positive messages these agents sent to the children validated their language, culture, and music allowing the children to create independent musical identities of two different musical cultures that allowed them to successfully navigate back and forth across a spectrum of their bicultural, bilingual, and bimusical lives.

## **Chapter Four: Learning Music in a Bilingual School**

The children of Riverview Elementary School demonstrated in a variety of ways that they listened through “filtered ears,” that they found meaning and value in various musical genres within their family homes, and that they were developing a bimusical identity, as they were bicultural, bilingual, and bimusical. The impact of the soundscapes described in the previous chapter on the manifestations of the children’s bimusical identity will be presented below. This chapter offers a series of vignettes that make evident the meaningful experiences that Mexican American children have with music in a bilingual school.

### **Code-Switching Between Two Cultures**

Children at Riverview Elementary School were adapting to the multiple musical and cultural spheres of their daily interactions at school and in their homes. They demonstrated signs, or codes, that could be interpreted as resulting from their understandings of their Mexican American families, even as they were gaining on the expressions and meanings of mainstream American school culture. Often, they switched codes, moving in and out of the English-language to the Spanish-language, mentioning their extended families in Mexico, consuming Mexican and American-style school cafeteria food, adapting ways of dress and grooming that reflected Mexican and popular youth culture, and quite naturally mixing the music to which they listened and in which they participated.

Research has attributed code switching to a marker of in-group identity (Myers-Scotton, 1993). It was evident that the children were marking their American and Mexican identities, and that they were code-switching daily. Davies and Bentahila (2006) studied code switching and the globalization of popular music, and noted that,

It has been observed that within bilingual communities code switching back and forth between the community's two languages may be the natural, unmarked medium for communication in many everyday settings, the proponents of such switching often seeming almost unaware of the fact that they are switching at all. (p. 367)

Musical and ethnic identities were influenced through their interactions within these spaces and their ability to successfully navigate through them. Children revealed that they negotiated between these two musical and ethnic identities through their use of language, their musical interests and experiences, through the food they ate, the countries they crossed, and through the dress that expresses their own personal identities that may reflect their identities of both cultures.

***Language.*** One day early in my experience at Riverview Elementary School, I entered the front office and was greeted with a warm hello (in English) from the secretary and then from other teachers who were floating by. As I sat waiting for Mr. Flores, the principal, to finish up a meeting, I watched a scene unfold before my eyes that was to be repeated many times over the course of my fieldwork there. The secretary greeted kids in both the English- and Spanish-language and would switch back and forth in both languages within a conversation, or even within a single sentence. She would answer the phone in English, but sometimes would quickly switch back to Spanish in her dialogue with the caller, inserting a couple of English words in between the Spanish. The young students sauntering in the halls were talking to one another in either the English- or Spanish-language, or with a mixture of both languages in a mode of mixed communication known as *Spanglish*. The children and the teachers were also switching between the languages depending on whom they were talking to. As I flipped through the school calendar and brochures that were on

display, I noticed that they were both printed in the English and Spanish. Signs, posters, and information posted in the hallways, in classrooms, and at the front office included the English and Spanish versions (see Figure 5). The library and many of the classrooms had bilingual posters. (I could not help but be reminded of home in Mercedes, Texas, in the Rio Grande Valley, where similar acts of blended languages were present. The accents and the rhythms of speech were familiar to me, because they were similar to the environment in which I grew up.)

**Figure 5.**

*Examples of Bilingual School Signs, Class Schedule, Spanish Alphabet, and Student Class Work Comparing the Differences and Similarities of Mexico and California.*



Students mixed their the English-and Spanish-language words during their informal conversations with each other and within their formal conversations with teachers in and out of the classroom, with administrators, and during our interviews. During their interviews, they would ask, “¿Como se llama?” (What is your name? Or What is it called?) or call their

father, “*papi*” or their uncle, “*tio*.” They would say “*Mexico*” with the Spanish-language way of sounding a windy “h” for “x”, refer to the corner convenience store as “*tiendita*”, and commonly use “*si*” for “yes.” Spanish words were often used during music class to describe the instruments of various Mexican-based ensembles. The survey of musical instruments given to children and their parents at the Parent’s Night included Spanish-language words, too. Students would say “*guitarra*” for guitar, “*trompeta*” for trumpet, “*arpa*” for harp, “*maracas*” for shakers, and would say violin using the Spanish pronunciation (vee-oh-leen). Jasmine, a first grade student, struggled to explain that at home she spoke both the English- and Spanish-language, “I speak the two of them. My parents speak the two of them, but mostly in English.”

***Traveling Between Countries.*** Children recalled their travels to visit their extended families in Mexico, often making the long trip in the family car over the winter school break, extending the vacation to three or four weeks rather than the standard ten days to two weeks. A third grade student named Adrian explained with nonchalance that “My family’s from Mexico. I visit during Christmas time every year.” Adrian’s story was similar to those of many children who drove with their families to Mexico in December-January or for the summer months. Children were literally crossing borders as they crossed back and forth between the United States and Mexico. They switched from their American identity to their Mexican identity where they were fully immersed in the language, cultural customs, music, and food. These visits allowed them to solidify their Mexican traditions and customs, be influenced by the dress and behaviors of friends and family members, and to improve their Spanish-language skills. Children were also provided opportunities to have more musical experiences in listening, playing, or dancing to Spanish-language Mexican music.

**Food.** The children of Riverview Elementary School were, in a sense, “code-switching in a culinary fashion, as they dined on their favorite foods at school and at home. The children loved eating Flamin’ Hot Cheetos, which is the spicy version of popular Cheetos cornmeal snack produced by Frito-Lay, and popular in the Mexican and Mexican American community. They also snacked on a variety of Mexican candies of different spices and lemon flavors. They switched between American and Mexican food at lunch. The school cafeteria menu was filled with the usual hamburgers, pizza, and chicken nuggets, but Mexican food like enchiladas, tacos, chicken fajitas, and burritos were also on the menu every other day. The Cinco de Mayo BBQ offered selections of carne asada and hotdogs and chips. Children spoke passionately of their mothers, fathers, or grandparents making homemade flour or corn tortillas, carne guisada, and their willingness to eat *menudo* (which is a soup made with beef stomach seasoned with chilies, lime, onions, and cilantro).

**Appearance and Behavior.** Children sported Mexican-heritage and American mainstream (popular media) fashions, sometimes mixing one with the other. One of the young girls in a social group that had gathered in the cafeteria, Kimberly, was wearing gold earrings. She was eight years old, typically deemed too young by many American groups for pierced ears. But hers were not the clip-on earrings that others her age might wear. I asked her when she got her ears pierced and she replied, “I don’t know. I don’t remember when. When I was a baby?” It is common for Mexican, Hispanic, or Latino girls to have their ears pierced several months after the child is born (Gage, 2012). (My ears had been pierced when I was a baby, too, and I wore earring studs all the years when I was growing up.)

I noticed that the third girl in the group with Kimberly (and another friend, Katieri), Axicalli was wearing a brown t-shirt with *High School Musical* written across the front. It

was brown with short sleeves and it contained the words in bold print on the top left part of the shirt with the remaining of the shirt covered with the six main characters of the show with stars shooting out in front and behind the characters. Axicali was proud of her shirt and she confessed that she loved *High School Musical*. Katieri jumped in to tell me, “Well, I have a *Camp Rock* backpack. Look!” She then brought her hot pink, red, silver, and black backpack onto the table. It was covered with stars and had the four *Camp Rock* characters posing on the front main pocket. The pack had one main compartment with two smaller side compartments, all spaces for carrying little-girl things to and from school. *Camp Rock* is a Disney Channel original movie about a young girl who is accepted into a prestigious and very competitive summer music camp and hones her talent as a musician while encountering and engaging in various experiences with her inspiring music teachers and fellow camp students.

Many of the young girls wore their hair very long and often in braided fashion with colorful bows in their hair. This style is standard wear by folkloric dancers in Mexico. Some of these young girls had colored hair, or highlighted hair, probably treated at home by their mothers, or aunts, or grandmothers. A good many of the girls also wore nail polish.

Many of the boys in grades three, four, and five wore their hair in a buzz cut with different designs etched in their hair. They often wore rings, too, or gold chains around their necks. At recess, there was always a game of soccer rather than football, even though they played football during their physical education classes. Quite possibly, they were following in the footsteps of televised soccer stars of Mexico.

The children of Riverview appeared to be flexible and fully comfortable switching back and forth between the different cultural and musical American and Mexican spheres.

They were switching back and forth in the English-and Spanish-language in their daily conversations with school personnel, friends, and family. Jiménez (2010) noted that Mexican Americans are afforded more opportunities to solidify their ethnic identity by speaking Spanish.

Even if Mexican Americans strive for bilingualism for purely “rational” purposes (i.e. higher pay, improved hiring opportunities, more job promotions, etc.), their ability to speak Spanish provides opportunities to form friendships and make acquaintances with Mexican immigrants and gives them access to other forms of Mexican culture through Spanish-language media, all of which help to “thicken” their ethnic identity. (p. 131)

Clearly, while children were reading and writing in the English-and Spanish-language through the school day, they were mixing their experiences in two cultures into what they said, ate, wore, and played during their recess period. Code-switching between Spanish and the English-language, demonstrated the manner in which they lived at the borders of two worlds as they were defining their bilingual and bicultural identities.

### **The Bilingual Program at Riverview Elementary School**

Mrs. Sanchez remarked in a Spanish accented, “As you can see, we are ‘little *Mexico*’ (in Spanish accent).” Mrs. Sanchez is the reading specialist at Riverview Elementary School, in charge of lending support to the classroom teachers responsible for the English- and Spanish-language literacy program. As a testament to their commitment to the dual language program, the school’s mission statement is as follows: “In partnership with families and the community, the Riverview staff creates a positive bilingual learning environment, with high expectations, and guides students in becoming lifelong learners.” The vision statement of the

school speaks to the long-term benefits of the dual language program, claiming “The Riverview Elementary School community will empower students to achieve their potential as learners and members of society” (Riverview Elementary School Home Page, n.d.). When students enter the school’s kindergarten, they are tested so that their “literacy language,” the primary language with which they have greater familiarity, can be determined. Mrs. Sanchez acknowledged that most of the students are bilingual when they arrive at Riverview Elementary School at age four to five years of age, having heard both languages from family members and the media that surrounds them. If Spanish is considered their literacy language, students will then receive their reading and science/social studies in Spanish and their math instruction in the English language; if the English is considered their literacy language, they will receive their reading and math instruction in the English and their science/social studies in Spanish. This dual language program offers children in kindergarten through second grade two-thirds of their instruction in Spanish, and begins to even out to about fifty-percent each of the English-and Spanish-language by third grade.

There are different reasons for parents’ appreciation of the dual language program. Even while some children are more fluent in Spanish than English-language at entrance to school, some parents request that they be placed in the English-language classes in the belief that they will learn the English-language well and excel in school. Also, Mr. Castillo had spoken to many of the parents about the dual language program and acknowledged that parents appreciated the ability for their child to learn both the English-and Spanish-language. Mr. Castillo stated:

They appreciate it because they want their kids to still know and learn Spanish-language and also the English-language. I felt that they don't want their kids to forget

about their language and culture. Some parents want their kids to learn the English-language and they feel that they are getting behind. There are different opinions. Most parents feel that it is important to learn both and to continue learning about Spanish. That is why they stay in this school and here in Toppenish.

The dual language program, as implemented at Riverview Elementary School, does not focus on language alone. This two-way bilingual education and two-way immersion develops first- and second-language proficiency and then promotes cross-cultural understanding (Christian, 1996). The music classes and school curriculum made Riverview Elementary School a place where children learned to be bilingual, bicultural, and bimusical, of which all contributed to the development of their bimusical identity.

Regarding the success by bilingual children in their musical development, Abril (2003) had remarked that, “Facilitating students in their language development can enhance both musical and nonmusical learning” (p. 42). Music instruction has been utilized in bilingual and dual language programs to assist with language acquisition. Lowe (1995) found that a group of students exposed to music instruction in French language acquisition performed significantly better than the control group who had received regular language drills without music. Those students with music instruction performed well in their music, oral, grammar, and French reading comprehension assessments. Moreover, this dual language instruction made its way into the music instruction offered by the music teacher at Riverview Elementary School.

Mr. Smith, the music teacher, had classified his instruction as “English Day” or “Spanish Day” music classes. On alternative days, he featured English-language songs in Western genres and styles or Spanish-language songs from the mariachi genre of Mexico.

He employed classroom instruction and music vocabulary in both the English-and Spanish-language, depending upon the designated language day. He taught Orff-based lessons that utilized recorders, xylophones, and hand percussion coupled with Anglo- and Euro-American folk songs on English day. Mr. Smith's English Day song repertoire included *The National Anthem* (The Star-Spangled Banner), *My Country 'Tis of Thee*, and the *Washington, My Home* (the Washington state song). Additionally, he incorporated a limited amount of solfège (sight-singing) syllables and taught basic music theory fundamentals in his classes as he prepared the students to pass state standardized test in music. His "Spanish Day" curriculum included singing standard mariachi tunes and teaching the various mariachi strumming patterns on guitar. He taught guitar, vihuela, guitarrón, trumpet, and violin during the mariachi rehearsals that he offered in special classes, especially in the early mornings prior to the beginning of the first class. In order to clarify Mr. Smith's approach to music on these designated English- and Spanish-language days, several vignettes follow, and are joined by descriptions of his elementary school mariachi rehearsal.

### **The English-Language Music Class for Second Grade Children**

After taking attendance, settling up children's seating assignments on the three-tiered choral risers (on which they were requested to stand and not sit), and bringing the second grade class to attention, Mr. Smith began singing *Hello, Everybody, Hello*, (see Figure 6). We were assembled in the music room, a space originally intended as a storage closet situated at the side of the school's gymnasium. Alongside the risers were an upright piano, a teacher's desk, file cabinets, and boxes of instruments.

**Figure 6.**

*Hello, Everybody, Hello Transcription and Lyrics*

Hello, Everybody, Hello

trans. by A. Soto

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. It consists of three staves. The first staff is labeled 'Voice' and contains the first line of the song: 'Hel - lo e - very bo - dy hel - lo Hel - lo e - very bo - dy hel -'. The second staff is labeled 'Vo.' and contains the second line: 'lo We're going to sing and play and have a nice day'. The third staff is labeled 'Vo.' and contains the third line: 'Hel - lo e - very bo - dy hel - lo!'. The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across notes.

At Riverview Elementary School, children in kindergarten, first-grade and second grade classes came to expect this opening song ritual. The children had learned to clap twice after the first and second phrase. The second-grade children repeated the song, singing from the beginning and then snapping their fingers twice after the double clap, thus extending the rest time period. The children added a double lap pat in the third revolution of the song and a double stomp on the fourth run-through. They sang and employed the percussive effects smoothly and with confidence, a clear indication that they knew the routine quite well. Mr. Smith called for another repetition, and the children sang the song with the four body percussion maneuvers and then said “hello” in different languages. The children enthusiastically sang “hello” in foreign languages such as Spanish, French, German, Japanese, and Swahili. Mr. Smith selected out a quiet and attentive little girl Monica, to play a triangle, and then a boy to play tambourine, and then another girl for the hand drum; these

instruments were intended to sound out the rhythm of the earlier body percussion. This opening activity to the music lesson lasted six to ten minutes, and was a standard part of the lesson. All children were singing and employing their claps, snaps, pats, and stamps, and between five to eight students participated with instruments. Mr. Smith had struck gold in his fashioning of this lesson segment, as the grade children knew by heart the ‘Hello’ song and all of its sequence of body percussion, and over the course of many lessons showed excitement and earnest effort in singing, rhythmicking, and playing *Hello, Everybody, Hello*.

After this introductory class ritual, Mr. Smith pulled out his trumpet and played a starting pitch for the second grade children. He started singing an ascending major scale with solfège and pitch-designated hand signs. The children were singing along with solfège syllables while also imitating Mr. Smith’s hand signs. Soon into the scale activity, children were falling out of interest, talking to one another, and squirming in the way that restless children do. Children were clearly uncomfortable with the need to stand for the entire thirty-minute lesson, and some of them were unhappy with the very crowded spaces they held on the small three-step riser. Mr. Smith clapped a standard classroom clapping rhythm [ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ], trying to reign in the children; most were immediate in their response back to him, clapping the pattern. He announced: “We just sang a major scale and I now want to sing a scale and a half.” Again in an attempt to get the children’s attention, Mr. Smith boomed, “Eyes on me. ¿Listos? That means “Ready” in Spanish. Are you ready to sing? If your arm is up like this (he pulls his right elbow up in the air imitating a child who is moving around), then you are not ready. In a mariachi group, when “Listos” is mentioned, that means that everyone needs to be ready to play.” In his typical approach, Mr. Smith was long on verbal discourse with the young children. He then put his trumpet to his lips and played a

major scale and five pitches (from do to sol) up into the next highest register. The children started singing the ascending the major scale with solfège, and quite naturally struggled to sing the upper part of the scale. Mr. Smith turned to me to explain the function of the exercise: “This is the warm-up so that we can sing the national anthem, which we will do on Veteran’s Day.” He rose from his chair and ambled slowly over to an overhead projector that was sitting high up on the four-drawer filing cabinet. He turned on the machine and up popped the lyrics to the United States national anthem on the brick wall. He then walked over to the door, turned off the lights, and returned to his chair that was positioned in front of the group with his back to the projection on the wall. “Let’s chant the words first.” Mr. Smith started chanting “Oh, say can you see,” and the children immediately joined in. They did so successfully, revealing that this was not the first time they had read these words.

Halfway through the chanting, there came a very loud roar from just outside the gym closet in which we were assembled (in the gym the sound of children playing dodge-ball soared through the lyrics of the anthem). A few of the children stopped singing and registered surprised, but most seemed not to notice. Mr. Smith explained and with my subsequent observations, that the children were accustomed to having all sorts of noises intrude on their music time, from children running and screaming in the gym, to music playing just outside the music room on the gym speakers, to the sounds of basketballs hitting the gym floor. Clearly, the Riverview school music program was not located in a pristine place well-suited to listening, and yet most of the children appeared to have adjusted to the point of ignoring sounds from outside the door of the music space.

Immediately following the last chanted words of *The Star-Spangled Banner*, Mr. Smith started to play the anthem’s melody on this trumpet. The children followed the

melody as they sang (some so vigorously as if trying to drown the sound of the trumpet), some loudly chanting, and many off-pitch. Then the vocal sounds started to fade, while others struggled to reach the high-register pitches, at the point of “And the rockets’ red glare, the bombs bursting in air.” The pitches were too high for their limited range and untrained voices, and there was little accommodation by way of a modified melody nor a suggestion for taking a deep breath, opening the mouth and relaxing the throat. Instead, there was the harsh and unmatched sounds of the trumpet and a scattering of screeching voices. After the song was complete, Mr. Smith pointed to one girl and boy standing in one corner of the room and (without any apparent reason) dictated: “You two can be violin players for the mariachi group next year. You need to have ears, and you listened and sang very well.” The small boy, Carlos, squealed in delight, and jumped with glee at the recognition and promise for his musical involvement. Mr. Smith led the class in singing the national anthem twice more before turning off the projector and turning on the lights. He then proceeded to announce to the class, “You see, we used all the notes in the scale in the song but in different order,” referring to the diatonic pitch content of *The Star-Spangled Banner*.

Mr. Smith transitioned to the next song the children would sing: “Do you remember *Hop Old Squirrel?*” (see Figure 7). The children responded with a “Yes!” and then started to sing. Mr. Smith jumped in, suggesting that they sing “With me...Shhh...the trick is can you sing it in tune?” He started playing the song on the trumpet, and the children sang in full voice. Those who remembered were adding hand motions as they sang. Mr. Smith spoke over them, announcing, “I need a player...a xylophone player. Who remembers how to do a crossover bourdon?” All the children eagerly raised their hands, and he immediately responded, “Show me!” inviting children to pantomime the crossing over of one hand to the

other side. He started the crossover bourdon pattern on his lap while he sang the pitch letters, and encouraged the students to imitate him. He then kept the students moving the bourdon part on their laps while singing *Hop Old Squirrel* (see Figure 7).

**Figure 7.**

*Hop Old Squirrel Transcription and Lyrics*

### Hop Old Squirrel

trans. by A. Soto

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of three staves, each labeled 'Voice' or 'Vo.' on the left. The first staff (Voice) contains the first line of music with lyrics: 'Hop Old Squirrel ei - dle-dum ei - dle-dum Hop Old Squirrel'. The second staff (Vo.) starts at measure 4 and contains lyrics: 'ei - dle-dum, dee! Hop Old Squirrel ei - dle-dum ei - dle-dum'. The third staff (Vo.) starts at measure 7 and contains lyrics: 'Hop Old Squirrel ei - dle - dum, dee!'. The music features a mix of quarter, eighth, and half notes, with some beamed eighth notes.

**Figure 8.**

*Hop Old Squirrel Crossover Bordun Transcription*

Hop Old Squirrel (Crossover Bourdon)

trans. by A. Soto



The children performed well, the obvious result of having practiced this song many times before. Mr. Smith selected a boy named Marcelo to play on the soprano xylophone. Marcelo jumped up and ran over to the xylophone on the floor, took the mallets from Mr. Smith gave him the mallets, and began to play. Mr. Smith stopped him to demonstrate the bouncing technique of striking the bars and then quickly moving the mallet away so that the bar would ring. Mr. Smith then selected two other children to play a soprano and alto xylophone sitting alongside the xylophone Marcelo was playing. The class sang *Hop Old Squirrel* while the three children played the xylophones. Mr. Smith called the xylophone players back to their seats and then dismissed the class to their classroom teacher who was waiting at the closet door.

It was evident that the children of Riverview Elementary School were learning of the Western classical tradition through instrumentation and tonalities. They were performing Euro-American folk songs and dances in Mr. Smith's music classroom and accompanying themselves on the diatonic Orff xylophones and hand percussion instruments. A few children were studying piano, violin, flute, and guitar in private lessons outside of school. Collectively, the Riverview children were learning songs and solfège skills in their English

day music classes, as well as staff notation and Western theory fundamentals—concepts that comprised the standardized Washington state music test that was administered at the end of the year.

### **The Spanish-Language Music Class**

Spanish Day music classes encompass different activities for the various grade levels. The younger children in grades kindergarten through second grade learned and sang songs from the mariachi genre. They also learned, danced, and played popular Mexican folk songs. The older children in grades three through five learned how to play guitar in the mariachi style and sang the lyrics to popular mariachi tunes. The following segments showcase different types of learning in the younger and older grades on Spanish Day.

*Las Mañanitas.* Mr. Smith typically featured the Mexican birthday song, *Las Mañanitas*, in his classes (see Figure 9). It was also one of the first songs to be learned by children in the school mariachi. Earlier, when I had observed a kindergarten group’s music class, the verses for “Las Mañanitas” appeared on the overhead for the children to read (although few children of this early age were reading). I recalled the extent of time it took for these young children to move into the music room in an orderly fashion, and to find their way across the floor and onto the small three-step riser, many of them showing excited arm-waving gestures and a few hops and skips. Following the standard *Hello, Everybody, Hello* as introduction, Mr. Smith shifted their attention to *Las Mañanitas* on the overhead projector. I was expecting challenges of words and melody from the children but was proven wrong when the children’s strong voices carried through the six verses of the song. I pondered how these children, most of whom could not yet read one-syllable words, had come to memorize the lyrics to this familiar song. *Las Mañanitas* contains an advanced vocabulary

of words far beyond conversational Spanish, and is lyrically challenging for young singers. It appeared that these children have had considerable experience with it at home because they were singing with confidence, enthusiasm, and musical accuracy of the sort that two class sessions could not possibly have allowed them to develop. These young children had come to school with full knowledge of the Mexican birthday song.

As I interviewed the children of various ages and grade levels about *Las Mañanitas*, I wondered aloud with them as to their primary source of the song. One second-grade girl, Claudia, responded, “We sing it in our music class with Mr. Smith.” A second girl, Sarah, added that “We sing it in church and we sing it when we have a birthday.” Claudia smiled and said, “Yeah, what she said.” I asked, “When is this song sung?” Claudia responded, “I remember seeing my dad sing it for my mom. He was outside her window with his guitar.” Thus, the presence of this song in other outside-school contexts, and its function as a romantic tribute of a husband to his wife on the occasion of her birthday. For these girls, and others like them, *Las Mañanitas* surfaced outside the Spanish-language music class and Mr. Smith was featuring but not really teaching the song to many of the Riverview Elementary School children coming from Spanish-speaking families. Children claimed that *Las Mañanitas* was a key feature at the peak of a family birthday celebration, just before the cake and presents. Often, *Las Mañanitas* (in Spanish) was juxtaposed with *Happy Birthday* (in English). Some children reported that their families would sing *Happy Birthday* in the English-and Spanish-language. But typically, *Las Mañanitas* retained its principal place as a songful family tradition.

## Figure 9.

### *Las Mañanitas Transcription and Lyrics in English- and Spanish-Language*

#### Las Mañanitas Verse 1

trans. by A. Soto

Voice *Es-tas son las ma-ña - ni - tas que can - ta ba..el Rey Da - vid, Hoy por ser día de tu*

Vo. *san-to te las can - ta-mos a qui. Des - pier-ta mi bien des - pier-ta, mi - ra que ya..a-man-e - ció Ya los*

Vo. *pa - ja - ri - llos can - tan, la lu - na ya se me - tió*

#### Las Mañanitas Lyrics

##### Spanish

Estas son las mañanitas, que cantaba el Rey David,  
Hoy por ser día de tu santo, te las cantamos a ti,  
Despierta, mi bien\*, despierta, mira que ya amaneció,  
Ya los pajarillos cantan, la luna ya se metió.

Que linda está la mañana en que vengo a saludarte,  
Venimos todos con gusto y placer a felicitarte,  
Ya viene amaneciendo, ya la luz del día nos dio,  
Levántate de mañana, mira que ya amaneció.

El día en que tu naciste nacieron todas las flores  
En la pila del bautismo, cantaron los ruiseñores

Quisiera ser solecito para entrar por tu ventana  
y darte los buenos días acostadita en tu cama

Quisiera ser un San Juan, quisiera ser un San Pedro  
Para venirme a cantar con la música del cielo

De las estrellas del cielo tengo que bajarte dos  
una para saludarte y otra para decirte adios

##### English

This is the morning song that King David sang  
Because today is your saint's day we're singing it for you  
Wake up, my dear, wake up, look it is already dawn  
The birds are already singing and the moon has set

How lovely is the morning in which I come to greet you  
We all came with joy and pleasure to congratulate you  
The morning is coming now, the sun is giving us its light  
Get up in the morning, look it is already dawn

The day you were born all the flowers were born  
On the baptismal font the nightingales sang

I would like to be the sunshine to enter through your window  
to wish you good morning while you're lying in your bed

I would like be a Saint John I would like to be a Saint Peter  
to sing to you with the music of heaven

Of the stars in the sky I have to lower two for you  
One with which to greet you and the other to wish you  
goodbye

***Snapshots of a Fifth Grade Music Class.*** Fifth grade students at Riverview Elementary School were not losing their grip on Spanish-language (nor Mexican cultural understandings), despite 5-6 years of schooling in a bilingual curriculum that became increasingly English-dominant over the grade levels three through five. From observations of Mr. Smith with children of various grade levels in their Spanish-language music classes, there emerges clear evidence of children developing a bimusical identity. Children exhibited a familiarity and confidence in Spanish-language song repertoire, singing styles, traditional instruments of genres such as mariachi, conjunto, and musica norteño. They were fluent in Spanish so as to understand their teacher's instructions in Spanish, and could respond to questions about music in Spanish as well. They sang easily the Spanish-language songs, and they responded to nuances of the music in the ways of a cultural insider. The five scenarios ahead offer views of the bimusical skill set of fifth grade students in their Spanish-language music class.

***Vamos a Cantar! Familiarity with Mariachi.*** The children of Mrs. Welch's fifth grade class began to put their books and pencils away on the entrance of Mr. Smith. There was nervous chatter among the students as Mr. Smith distributed just six guitars to four boys and two girls, leaving about twenty children watching them with unconcealed envy. It was Spanish Day at Riverview Elementary School, in the music class for these children, and Mr. Smith was reviewing the song, *Y Ándale*, for the second time (having introduced it in the previous lesson). He placed the lyrics on the overhead projector and the children let out small squeals of joy, indicating that it was an obvious favorite to them (see Figure 10). After reviewing the chords for the song and tuning the guitars, the children were ready to perform.

Mr. Smith opened with a short musical introduction on his trumpet, and then cued in the guitarists and the singing children.

**Figure 10.***Y Ándale Transcription and Lyrics in English- and Spanish-Language*

## Y Ándale

trans. by A. Soto

Voice

Qué di - rán los de tu ca - sa cuan - do me mi - ran to - man - do pen - sar - sán

Vo.

que por tu cau - sa yo me vi - vo embor - ra - chan - do án - da - le...

Vo.

pe - ro si vie - ras co - mo son lin - das es - tas bor - ra - che - ras án - da - le...

## “Y Ándale” written by Minerva Elizondo

Qué dirán los de tu casa  
 Cuando me miran tomando,  
 Pensarán que por tu causa  
 Yo me vivo emborrachando,  
 Y ándale...

What will they say those in your house  
 When they see me drinking,  
 Will they think that it's on account of you  
 That I live my life drinking  
 Get on with it.

Pero si vieras  
 Como son lindas estas borracheras  
 Y ándale...

But if you could see  
 How pretty these binges are  
 Get on with it

(Coro)  
 Pero hasta cuando  
 Dejan tus padres de andarte cuidando  
 Y ándale...

(Chorus)  
 But until whenever  
 Your parents stop protecting you  
 Get on with it.

Cada vez que vengo a verte  
 Siempre me voy resbalando;  
 O es que tengo mala suerte  
 O es que me está lloviznando  
 Y ándale...

Each time that I come to see you  
 I'm always slipping;  
 Is it that I have bad luck  
 Or is it that it's drizzling on me,  
 Get on with it.

Pero si vieras  
 Seco mi chaco en mi higuera floreando  
 Y ándale...

But if ever  
 I dry my chaco in my flowering fig tree grove  
 Get on with it.

(Coro)  
 Me dices que soy un necio  
 Porque me ando emborrachando,  
 Y a pesar de tus deprecios,  
 Yo quiero seguir tomando, y ándale

(Chorus)  
 You say that I'm a fool  
 Because I'm always getting drunk,  
 And in spite of your scorn,  
 I want to keep on drinking, Get on with it.

Pero si vieras  
 Como son lindas estas borracheras...  
 Y ándale...

But if you were to see  
 How pretty these binges are,  
 Get on with it.)

The children were familiar with the song, as all but two were immediately singing enthusiastically along with the strumming of the guitars. The singers were fixing their eyes on the guitar players, and many were miming the strumming patterns, practicing their rhythms and the upward and downward gestures. When one boy, David, began singing louder than the others, several children looked to one another and grimaced. David was exaggerating his words as he sang, “*Pero si vieras, Como son lindas estas borracheras, Y ándale,*” emphasizing “*borracheras*” meaning “drinking binges”, singing loudly and more slowly than the others. Using an expressive singing quality typical of mariachi singers, David opened both of his hands and spread his arms in front of him as if singing to an imaginary audience. Some students began to laugh; David continued his wide-armed stance, even as several students then joined him. They were singing with an over-the-top expressive quality with hand motions to accompany their singing. *Y Ándale* is a *canción ranchera*, a rancher’s song from rural Mexico that expresses “strong feelings written in two or more stanzas...The ranchera song has an undeniable influence of the Italian opera, particularly regarding the chanting of lamentations” (Mendoza, 1998, p. 28). The young Riverview Elementary School students seemed to have internalized the singing style of *canción ranchera*, and many acknowledged that they heard songs like *Y Ándale* in their home. Thus it was no surprise that the children came to life when a song style of considerable familiarity to them would surface in the Spanish-language music class.

***Strumming Patterns in Music Class and Mariachi Rehearsal.*** *Guitarrón, vihuela,* guitar, and trumpet are the principal instruments in the typical modern ensemble known as the mariachi. While one or more of these instruments may be present in other Mexican (and Mexican American) genres as well, the combination of their timbres and the style in which

these instruments are played create the essence of the mariachi sound. Based on instruments brought from Spain, the guitarrón and vihuela first arose in various ensembles of western Mexico, particularly in the state of Jalisco. Furthermore, the playing styles of the guitarrón and vihuela are unique within the mariachi, with particular strums all their own that are distinguishable from the performance of the standard guitar. The vihuela, a small five-string guitar that is tuned A-b-g-B-e (see Figure 10), is played with downstrokes of the right hand across the five strings. In more complicated and faster *sones*, *huapangos*, and other repertoire a complicated strumming pattern called *maniocs* is required (Sheehy, 2006). Sheehy refers to this performance style:


These patterns, called *maniocs* by the musicians (from Mano ‘hand’), are sequential combinations of downstrokes, upstrokes, stopping the strings with the strumming hand, drawing the fingers more slowly across the strings to produce a flourish, and so fourth. (p.25)

The guitarrón of six strings is the largest lute-styled instrument in any of the Mexican musical traditions, and functions as the bass of the mariachi, the guitarrón’s six strings are tuned to A<sup>1</sup>-D-G-c-e-A (see Figure 11). The guitarrón, vihuela, and guitar create the chordal rhythmic section or “*las armonias*,” the harmony instruments of the mariachi (Sheehy, 2006). *Guitarrón* players typically pluck two strings at a time. The guitarrón sound is amplified by plucking two strings at the same time, while the vihuela is played similar to a guitar and utilizes a combination of down and up strokes and stopping of the strings with the strumming hand.

**Figure 11.**  
*String Note Names of the Vihuela and Guitarrón*


String Note Names for Vihuela

trans. by A. Soto

Vihuela  A musical staff in treble clef with a 5/4 time signature. It contains five quarter notes on the lines of the staff, representing the notes G, A, B, C, and D.

String Note Names for Guitarrón

trans. by A. Soto

Guitarrón  A musical staff in bass clef with a 6/4 time signature. It contains six quarter notes on the lines of the staff, representing the notes G, A, B, C, D, and E.

Children of Riverview Elementary School were drawn to the appealing sounds of the strummed rhythms of the string instruments. They would imitate the strumming patterns as they listened to the guitars, imitate the plucking motion of guitarrón performance, and gesture a slower, separated four-finger flicking of the fingers across imaginary strings of their imaginary vihuelas. During music classes in which Mr. Smith featured mariachi instruments, it was also common for class leaders to show (and show off to) the less skilled and beginning students just what they knew on the guitar, guitarrón, and vihuela. These students modeled the position of the left hand fingers for the guitar chords and strummed the rhythms in the right hand across the sound holes of the instruments.

During a mariachi rehearsal I watched Marco, a fifth grade boy, teach a fellow classmate how to play the correct chords and how to strum on the guitar (see Figure 12).

**Figure 12.**

*Marco, a Fifth Grade Boy Playing His Father's Guitar*



I asked who taught him how to play guitar and he answered: “My father plays guitar and I have watched him play since I was a baby. He has been teaching me guitar for a year. I am playing on his guitar right now.” Marco looked with pride to his black-bodied guitar that was embellished with colorful flowers. He immediately launched in the melodic entrance to *Iron Man*, a classic hard rock song by the 1970s band, Black Sabbath. This he followed with a rendition of *Malagueña*, an impressive picking of strings for the well-known melody. Until Mr. Smith asked for silence and attention from the students to his instructions, Marco was enjoying the small audience he had drawn to his musical repertoire. In these opening moments of a mariachi rehearsal, sometimes in the midst or at the close of them, children like Marco were playing the riffs they had acquired from family members and from watching mariachi on TV and on videos. Even early on in the mariachi sessions, these young students were playing some of the more common strumming patterns found in triple-metered ranchera songs (see Figure 13).



In the mariachi rehearsals at Riverview Elementary School, and in Spanish-language music classes of the various grade levels, the mariachi musical endings made their appearance. Depending upon the musical style and even the particular selection, a mariachi song will close with one of a half-dozen endings (Sheehy, 2006). The six standard mariachi endings are (1) fast duple-meter ranchera ending, (2) slow duple-meter ranchera ending, (3) slow common time ranchera ending, (4) moderate tempo common time bolero ending, (5) moderate place free rhythm son ending, (6) fast triple meter son ending. Children could sing several of these typical endings and they did in time and in tune without cue from the teacher, because the tunes were familiar to the students, the endings were spontaneous.

This was clear in the case of Mrs. Thomas's fifth grade music class. Mr. Smith introduced the song *Tú Sólo Tú* (You, Only You), a popular canción ranchera. A canción ranchera is a country (or "ranch") song, which is often about love, lost love, and songs that may involve love for their local or national locations or environment. It is often a simple a two-part song sung by a soloist "in an extroverted, emotional style" (Sheehy, 2006, p. 94). Mr. Smith strummed a chordal progression on his guitar, and sang through a verse, while the children listened, swayed in their seats, and tapped on their desktops. Then at the end of the song, about three-fourths of the class sang the typical slow tempo canción ranchera ending -- without any assistance from Mr. Smith. They sang with full voices, most of them using the syllable "doo" (see Figure 14). Mr. Smith did not comment, which indicated that their sung mariachi endings were just "par for the course." (This he verified in a follow-up conversation.)

**Figure 14.**

*Mariachi Ending For A Slow Canción Ranchera*

Canción Ranchera Ending with a Slow Tempo

trans. by A. Soto



*El “Grito” in the Classroom.* After gathering the guitars so that the fifth grade children might strum together, Mr. Smith introduced the song, *Y Ándale*. A truly standard mariachi tune, singer Linda Ronstadt also helped to popularize this song through her album, *Canciones De Mi Padre* (Songs of My Father), released by Asylum Records in 1987. (Even today, her renditions of mariachi songs are the gold standard for many cultural insiders and outsiders as well.) As soon as Mr. Smith put the lyrics up on the overhead projector, the children began to rustle in their seats and show smiles of recognition. Mr. Smith drew a breath and then launched into a few measures of introduction on his trumpet. With no clear kinesthetic, visual, or even audible cue whatsoever, the students began to sing the words. At the end of a phrase, just as there was a break in the lyrics, one boy, Juan, belted out a loud, high-pitched cry, “Aaaaay ha ha ha aye,” which I immediately recognized as a grito, all in the right time in the song, in the typical high-pitched register. This took me by surprise, for there was no cue from Mr. Smith to do so. George, another fifth grade boy, joined in with his friend, Juan. The other children giggled but did not lose their place and continued singing as the third verse rolled around.

A *grito* is a yell that marks an emotion-packed moment in mariachi music, especially during *sones* (songs) and *canción rancheras* (Sheehy, 2006). Listeners or musicians may spontaneously let out a *grito* when moved by the music (or by the musician), which adds a dramatic effect to the musical setting at large. Sheehy claimed, “While *gritos* may be spontaneous and varied in sound, they nevertheless tend to fall within certain culturally determined stylistic parameters” (p. 95). Those parameters include inserting the *grito* at a tense moment in the song (either musically or lyrically) or inserting a *grito* in an intended pause, made by the musician, usually at the high point of a song. Furthermore, *gritos* can either be short or long depending on the context of the song and are usually (not always) inserted in songs with slower tempos.

In many music classes and festive celebrations at the school in which Mexican music was played, children were not afraid to express themselves in a *grito*. Several children felt quite comfortable and proud to shout out a *grito* while the Riverview Elementary mariachi was performing as demonstrated in the opening vignette. In conversations with children across the grade levels, I would ask them about a “cry” that is commonly given off during mariachi performances. Sometimes I would perform a mock *grito* for the children to clarify my meaning. Many children would respond with “Yeah, I know what that is.” Then they would perform it in full voice. Some would respond “Es un *grito*” (“It is a *grito*”), and would proceed to clarify that the *grito* sounds, “when the mariachi plays.” From the first to the fifth grades, children were well aware of the *grito*, and many admitted performing it at some point in time, and/or that they were accustomed to hearing their family or community members perform *gritos*. Children who performed the *gritos* appeared unhampered in their nearly

natural and automatic emission of gritos--in large assemblies or in class during mariachi selections.

**“Si Señor” (Yes Sir).** During one Tuesday morning rehearsal, children of the mariachi began singing the song, *Y Ándale*. The four boys and three girl guitar players were strumming in sync with one another, the violin players were fingering and bowing their parts (with a minimal modicum of success), and one fourth grade girl was strumming away on the guitarrón. Mr. Smith was playing the interspersed melodic components on trumpet and five girls, from grades two through five, were singing along in a spirited manner. At the close of the song, three of the boys who were playing guitar shouted out the phrase, “*Si Señor*.” The phrase, “Si Señor” (Yes Sir) was born out of staged performances in Mexico. It functions as a verbal cadence at the close of mariachi songs, and is voiced by players and audience members alike (see Figure 15). It is as if to insert “Yeah” or the comment, “That’s the way,” verbally, just after the final chord is struck. Mr. Smith acknowledged the boys’ shout-out of “Si Señor,” and then proceeded to correct several of the guitar chords and violin patterns. He nodded his approval to the singing girls. He then started up the small group of musicians again, and they performed, *Y Ándale* from start to finish. This time, about six students (a full one-third of the ensemble) shouted out “Si Señor” at the finish. As the students packed away their instruments and cleaned up the rehearsal space, I asked Mr. Smith, “Did you teach them to say ‘Si Señor’ at the end of the song?” He responded that it had not needed to be taught because, “They learn that from watching mariachi performances.” He was aware that his young students had entered into the school mariachi already well-conditioned to identify and produce the signature phrase as a verbal means of finalizing the performance of a mariachi piece.

**Figure 15.**  
*Si Señor Transcription*

Si Señor (Yes, Sir!)

trans. by A. Soto



Some months later, I heard the children’s mariachi at the school’s Cinco de Mayo celebration, and noted that they had incorporated “Si Señor” into their performance for all children (and their parents) to hear. Then, following, the next performance act by the professional ballet folklorico dancers who moved in synchrony to a recording of mariachi, again I heard children shouting “Si Señor” at the close of the performance. When I queried the children on the phrase, they offered that they had heard “Si Señor” shouted at events such as weddings, quinceañeras, and at other family functions at which mariachis played.

### **Mariachi Rehearsal**

Mariachi classes at Riverview Elementary School begin several months after the start of school, in late October. Mariachi classes were held on Tuesday and Thursday mornings for one hour, beginning at 8:00 a.m. in Mrs. Mendoza’s fourth grade classroom. She understood the importance of the mariachi ensemble, and offered her room for instruction and rehearsals as well as for storage of some of the violins, vihuelas, and guitarrón the instruments in cabinets that she had in class. Guitars stayed with Mr. Smith as he traveled with them to the music room ‘closet’ and to classrooms.

The mariachi class during the time of the study consisted of twenty children, eight girls and ten boys, drawn from grades three through five. At any given time, there were six to eight guitar players, two trumpet players, five to six violins players, and several singers. Occasionally, Mr. Smith recruited Sheila, who was in his mariachi ensemble several years ago and was attending the Heritage University located five miles away. Shelia volunteered to help teach the guitar and the guitarrón parts. Since the mariachi was relatively new to the Riverview Elementary School (established only in my last year of fieldwork there, following several years of preparation), there was yet uncertainty among children and their families that it was a “go.” Student attendance was inconsistent, and there were missed rehearsals by children because of the arrival of buses to the school campus, children’s needing to eat their free breakfast in the school cafeteria, and their forgetting of rehearsal altogether.

Mr. Smith taught the mariachi the way he himself had learned to play. He first learned to play his trumpet parts and then the other instrumental parts, by rote. Sometime later, he found notation or transcribed parts to use as memory aides. In the Riverview Elementary School sessions, the first steps were taken up in leading children into ways of holding the instrument and producing single pitches or chords that would solidify the relationship of the young player to the instrument. Mr. Smith quickly ramped up to delivering to children additional chords on the guitar, vihuela, and guitarrón, and led them into a synchronized practice of correct strumming patterns (see Figure 13). He gave the children practice time so that they could build up their hand and finger strength. He turned to the violinists, teaching them finger and bow placements. Although the children had music sitting on stands in front of them, many were learning by listening and in imitation of Mr. Smith or of other children that seemed to be “getting it.” Children were just beginning to

learn the muscle coordination and control for playing an instrument, but they were also being encouraged to sing at the same time. From my vantage point, rehearsals appeared to be chaotic, partly because of the sounds of Mr. Smith's instructional remarks to children on particular instruments that were mixed with the sounds of instrumental practice (which Mr. Smith encouraged because the instruments could not be taken home).

During one of the rehearsals, Mr. Smith worked with the guitars, vihuela, and guitarrón while the violin players worked on their own parts. He played the melody on his trumpet and the guitar section began to play the chords he had taught them. The children were having trouble with the rhythm of the strumming pattern. He stopped them and said, "We are playing a ranchera and its 'oom pa pa, oom pa pa.'" given a strong accent to the first of every three beats. The violins still scratched along in the background, continuing to do so even as Mr. Smith stopped to address the guitar players on their chordings and strumming patterns. They rehearsed the song one more time and Mr. Smith recognized that the guitarrón player was not producing the correct rhythms and tempo. He asked two of his best guitar players to sit next to the guitarrón player, so as to play the strumming rhythm close up. Later, I asked Celina, "Why are you interested in learning how to play the guitarrón?" She responded without hesitation; "Well, because it looks like fun and my father used to play (guitar) in the mariachi and I thought he could help me."

Mr. Smith then returned his attention to the violin players, but before he did, he put Mario, a fifth-grade guitar player, in charge of leading the guitars through the song. He had him sit in front of the group so that he could demonstrate and/or explain how to strum or play the correct chords. It took a while for Mario to get the group under control. Many of the guitar players were talking and messing around on their instrument. After a few minutes of

chaos, Mr. Smith yelled over, “Mario, you need to make sure that the guitar players are playing *Y Ándale* and you need to sing it so you will know where you are.” Mario called the guitar players to attention and said, “Let’s go” and started playing. The guitar players followed and some started to sing. Mr. Smith then interrupted them because he wanted the whole group, including the violins, to start together from the beginning. He yelled, “*¿Listos?* (Ready?)” and then began playing the introduction with his trumpet and then sang with the group. They got about halfway through the song and they fell apart.

Mr. Smith was giving instructions by switching back and forth in English and Spanish “uno, dos, tres, uno, dos, tres,” some of the students were practicing the pattern while singing the lyrics. He addressed one of the boys named Marco because he was strumming with an advanced playing technique. The boy was strumming on beat two and three and hitting the strings with the back of his hand on beat one. Mr. Smith said, “You don’t hit with the back of your hand. That is a technique that you will do later on and I will show you later how to do it.” They went through the song a couple more times until time ran out and they had to pack up and get ready to start the school day.

This mariachi rehearsal represents the impact of the cultural and musical agents that allow the students to demonstrate and acquire their bimusical skills. Mr. Smith, the musical agent, and Mrs. Mendoza, the cultural agent, created a space for the children to learn and rehearse the mariachi music. Mrs. Mendoza allowed her classroom to be used for rehearsal and to store instruments and sent the message to the students that mariachi is a valuable and worthwhile endeavor. Mr. Smith was not only teaching both the Western music and European folk songs, he was teaching them the mariachi genre in a traditional mode of transmission that mimics the way mariachi is taught in Mexico (Boss Barba & Soto, 2007).

With mariachi being a very big presence in their out-of-school lives, this class was validating the music that was associated with their ethnic identity. Through interviews with the children, many had family members who participated in a mariachi ensemble, which became a reason to participate in this ensemble. Several students demonstrated that they were skilled with varied strumming techniques on the guitar or several children could easily sing in the some of the mariachi songs that were rehearsed. Mr. Smith utilized the children's knowledge to help teach others during rehearsal. Furthermore, Mr. Smith taught the class using both the English- and Spanish-language and used some common mariachi terms and vocabulary.

### **School Music Interests**

The children of Riverview were often very vocal about the music that they enjoyed listening to either in the car ride to school, at home, or in the privacy of their own room. They would often speak passionately of the songs from the Hannah Montana films, different Selena albums, or the dances that accompanied Soulja Boy's songs. A large portion of our interviews centered on the musical repertoires that they were familiar with and interested in. Even though I was fascinated with their musical repertoire out of class, I was interested in learning about the music that they would prefer to learn in their music class. Because of national, state, and district music curriculum, students do not often have a choice in what they learn within their music lessons at school.

The mariachi had a positive effect on those children who gave their time to it. Teachers shared their surprise at the capacity of children to focus on the music, especially in that there were some who were struggling with their studies of various classroom subjects. They did not expect that some of the children could focus long enough to participate in or even remember to attend rehearsals. During a conversation with Mrs. Sandoval about the

purpose and effect the mariachi ensemble had on the children of Riverview, she commented, "Si (Yes), I think it is because that gives them some kind of pride. I was surprised. I was really surprised to see some students who are actually doing it. Like one little girl. I was like, 'Wow,' I was really surprised to see her doing it...good for her. I was so surprised for the girl because I couldn't see her doing that but it is a good outlet for a shy student."

Children were asked if they preferred songs in either the English-or Spanish-language during the formal interviews. The majority of students mentioned that they would prefer a combination of both the English- and Spanish-language music. Jaclyn was a first grade student who spoke both languages, but learned the English-language first and started to learn Spanish formally at Riverview. I asked if she would prefer to learn the English-language or Spanish language songs in her music class. She responded, "Equal. I would like to learn both songs in English and Spanish. It is easier to learn in English and it is harder to learn in Spanish." I asked, "What else would you like to learn in your music class?" She said: "Spanish music or from different countries. From Mexico, a lot of countries." Jaclyn's response replicated many of the other children's answers to this question. Children would comment that it was easier to learn a song in the language that they first learned to speak or that they used more frequently. Even though it was a challenge to learn a song in another language, many of the children remarked that they wanted a chance to improve their second language skills through songs in music class. A fourth grade student, Esmeralda, whose primary language is English mentioned: "For me it is both. I want to learn how to speak Spanish." Several children who were not as strong in Spanish appreciated being able to use a song to better learn the language. This applied to very few students interviewed, because the majority of the students mentioned that Spanish was their primary language.

Many of the children responded without prompts that they would enjoy learning music from the different countries outside the United States and Mexico. Elizabeth, a fourth grade student, remarked on songs I have introduced from a multicultural repertoire: “I like the ones that you do with us with the different language.” The Riverview children were exposed to a variety of musics from different countries sung in different languages because of myself or through interactions with the university students from the Music Alive! University – school partnership. Teachers and students alike had known positive experiences through these exchanges. These responses demonstrated that children had a firm understanding of who they were culturally and felt that students were comfortable learning about different people’s music and their musical practices, especially since they lived in a very secluded rural area with very little diversity in terms of ethnicity and race.

In addition to asking the children about which songs they preferred to learn in the classroom, I asked if it was easier for them to study music in the English-or Spanish-language. One kindergarten boy, Thomas, was English-language dominant but also spoke and understood Spanish. He jumped in to clarify his choice in songs; “Spanish. Spanish is easy. It helps me to learn.” Armando, a Spanish-language dominant kindergarten boy, chimed in, “Yo tambien (Me, too).” Two third grade students, Ruben and Victoria (who were Spanish-speaking on entrance to school but were facile in English, too) claimed an interest in Spanish-language music. To the question of what language they wished to be the prominent one in their music class, Victoria responded, “Like both of them, but I prefer Spanish.” “What is easier to learn?,” I asked, and both responded without hesitation, “Spanish.” This was a common response from students whose primary language was Spanish.

I raised a further question to several children, wondering whether they appreciated songs in music class with which they were familiar or which represented their home and family language and culture. To a ‘T,’ they responded “Sí,” “Yeah!” or “Uh huh.” One second grade girl, Angelica, noted, “It makes me feel good when you sing songs from Mexico. I like them and it reminds me of home and daycare.” She appeared to speak for others, too, who conveyed their interest in singing songs from their culture in the music classroom.

### **School Music Performances**

A typical day at Riverview Elementary School allowed children to weave through two different cultures as they spoke two different languages, selected their Mexican food choices, modified their appearance and behavior, and even as they learned music in the classroom. The children of Riverview Elementary School were participating and creating a bimusical identity through the musical activities that included Western and European folk traditions, as well as from the Mexican folk and mariachi traditions in their music classes. These musical activities extended past the music classroom into school wide performances for parents and surrounding community. The following musical performances showcase the various opportunities that the children of Riverview Elementary had to practice and perform across the different musical cultures learned at school: through a (a) Winter concert, (b) Spring Talent Show, (c) Cinco de Mayo presentation, (d) musical experiences and concerts performed in conjunction with the unique university-school partnership that was present on campus during the research period.

***Winter Concert.*** The children of Riverview Elementary School worked their way through the autumn term in preparation for an annual winter concert. Scheduled prior to the

winter break, children of each grade level performed two songs for the all-school concert. Performances were spaced out so parents could watch their children perform, but allowed them to leave after their child's performance. The classroom grade teachers selected and prepared the children and spent class time to make props that the children either wore or performed with. Mr. Smith prepared the fourth grade students on two recorder pieces and prepared the mariachi ensemble to perform *Las Mañanitas* at the end of the concert. I spent many of my teaching visits working with the children and their teachers to prepare the children for the musical selections that they would sing and perform. I assisted the children in memorizing the songs, in singing in tune, in creating and learning body motions and gestures, and to practice stage etiquette. Mrs. Stern, the physical education coach, organized the concert logistics, set up the risers, and created the backdrop for the concert. She allowed concert rehearsals during her class time as well.

It was a Thursday afternoon and the school was buzzing with nervous energy. The winter concert was about to begin. Children were excited, teachers were nervous, and parents were waiting anxiously to see their children perform. There was a long black backdrop that spanned the entire back wall of the gym opposite of the bleaches where the parents sat. The back butcher paper was at least seven feet high and was beautifully covered in white, blue, and grey mountains that were covered in snow and glitter adding to the festive mood. There were different size snowflakes and snowmen sprinkled throughout the mountains that the children had created the week before in their classes. There was a set of three risers in the middle in the gym for the students to stand on while performing. The second grade was the first group and they sang a song in the English-language called *All Want for Christmas is My Two Front Teeth* and they sang a song in Spanish called *El Niño de*

*Tambor* (The Little Drummer Boy) (see Figure 16). A recording of the songs on the gym speaker system were accompanying the children in their singing. The first grade children walked out next sporting Santa hats made of red construction paper with their names spelled out in glitter. The children then turned to singing *Must be Santa* in the English-language. Next, they chanted as a group, “*Feliz Navidad, Feliz Navidad, própero año y felicidad, I wanna wish you a Merry Christmas, I wanna wish you a Merry Christmas, I wanna wish you a Merry Christmas from the bottom of my heart.*” This popular song, *Feliz Navidad*, was written by José Feliciano in 1970 and is often sung at Christmas time in both English and Hispanic communities.

**Figure 16.**

*El Niño del Tambor (The Little Drummer Boy) Lyrics in the English- and Spanish-Language*

El Niño del Tambor

El camino que lleva a Belén  
baja hasta el valle que la nieve cubrió  
Los pastorcillos quieren ver a su Rey,  
le traen regalos en su humilde zurrón  
ROPO PON PON, ROPO PON PON  
Ha nacido en un portal de Belén el Niño Dios.

The road that leads to Bethlehem  
goes down to the valley covered by the snow  
The little shepherds want to see their King  
they bring him presents in their humble leather bag  
ROPO PON PON, ROPO PON PON (drum sound)  
The Child God has been born in a hall in Bethlehem.

Yo quisiera poner a tus pies,  
algún presente que te agrade, Señor.  
Más Tú ya sabes que soy pobre también,  
y no poseo más que un viejo tambor,  
ROPO PON PON, ROPO PON PON  
En tu honor frente al portal tocaré,  
con mi tambor.

I would like to put at your feet  
any present that pleases you, Lord  
But You know that I am poor as well  
and I have nothing but an old drum  
ROPO PON PON, ROPO PON PON (drum sound)  
Paying tribute to you, in front of the hall I will play  
with my drum

El camino que lleva a Belén,  
yo voy marcando con mi viejo tambor.  
Nada mejor hay que yo pueda ofrecer,  
su ronco acento es un canto de amor,  
ROPO PON PON, ROPO PON PON  
Cuando Dios me vió tocando ante el,  
me sonrió.

The road that leads to Bethlen  
I am signaling with my old drum  
There is nothing better taht I can offer  
its hoarse/husky accent is a love song/hymn  
ROPO PON PON, ROPO PON PON (drum sound)  
When God saw me playing in front of Him,  
he smiled to me.

Kindergarten children performed next, arriving with brown construction hats with reindeer antlers on them (which were actually a cut-out of their own hands). They also made their own individual jingle bells and sang, *Jingle Bells* and *Jolly Old St. Nick*. Because it was difficult to get the fifth grade students to sing and perform, they decided to recite the poem, *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* with a twist (see Figure 17). This version included comedic elements in both the English- and in Spanish-language. Students were doubled up and spoke their parts into a microphone. The fourth grade followed with a simple rendition of *Jingle Bells* and *Jolly Old St. Nick* on their Yamaha recorders. Mr. Smith sat in front of them to conduct them and to help out with the fingerings. The third grade sang two songs on their own: *One Christmas* that was sung in a round and which featured children presenting

the letters that spelled out “*Christmas*’ and the traditional tune, *Deck the Hall*, that was sung in a modern arrangement.

**Figure 17.**

*5<sup>th</sup> grade Christmas Poem With English-Language Translation*

Author – Anonymous

‘Twas the night before Christmas y por toda la casa,  
Not a creature was stirring-Caramba! Que pasa (What is going on)?

Los niños (little children) were tucked away in their camas (bed),  
Some in long underwear, some in pijamas (Spanglish for Pajamas),

While hanging the medias (stockings, also referred to women’s stockings) with mucho cuidado (with care)  
In hopes that old Santa would feel obligado (obligated to put something in there)

To bring all children, both Buenos (good) y malos (and bad),  
A nice batch of dulces y otros regalos (candy and other gifts).

Outside in the yard there arose such a grito (yell)  
That I jumped to my pies (feet) like a frightened cabrito (little goat, also served as common Mexican food).

I ran to the window and looked out afuera (outside)  
And who in the world do you think that it era (was)?

Saint Nick in a sleigh and a big red sombrero  
Came dashing along like a crazy bombero (firefighter).

And pulling his sleigh instead of venados (deer)  
Were eight little burros approaching volados (flight).  
I watched as they came and this quaint little hombre  
Was shouting and whistling and calling by nombre (name):

"Ay Pancho, ay Pepe, ay Cuco, ay Berto,  
Ay Chato, ay Chopo, Macuco, y Nieto!"

Then standing erect with his hands on his pecho (over his heart)  
He flew to the top of our very own techo (roof).

With his round little belly like a bowl of jalea (jelly),  
He struggled to squeeze down our old chiminea (chimney),

Then huffing and puffing at last in our sala (living room),  
With soot smeared all over his real suit de gala (formal suit),

He filled all the medias with lovely regalos (presents)-  
For none of the niños (children) had been very malos (bad).

Then chuckling aloud, seeming muy contento (very happy),  
He turned like a flash and was gone como viento (like the wind).

And I heard him exclaim, and this is verdad (truth),  
Merry Christmas to all, y Feliz Navidad!

The concert ended with the fledgling mariachi that had only been rehearsing for two months. Mr. Smith tried to speak to the audience in the English- and in the Spanish-language and had some trouble finding the correct words. He introduced the song selections and asked the crowd to sing along with the group, but mixed up some of the words. Some of the audience laughed in response, but it felt that they were at least appreciative that he was trying to communicate with them in their language. There were eight guitar players, three vihuelas, one guitarrón, two trumpets (including Mr. Smith), and five violin players. There were fifteen singers who lined up in front of the group. Students were from the third through fifth grade level. Mr. Smith was dressed in his mariachi outfit and sombrero and was singing with the group in between his trumpet parts. The young instrumentalists stumbled through the song, sometimes got off tempo, and the singers were partly singing and shouting because the audience was very loud and they were trying to hold the group together. Everyone in the group sang or played their parts by memory. Even though this was a rough first performance, a strong applause arose from the audience.

Teachers were not required to incorporate both languages and cultures within the musical selections presented at the Winter concert, but many of them did so. Mr. Smith was in charge of preparing the fourth grade recorder students and the mariachi ensemble, but he was not in charge of selecting the music for the other grade levels. The teachers incorporated a bilingual music program because of the increase in attendance by parents when it was changed from all the English-language selections to selections in both the English- and Spanish-language. Several teachers noted that as many of the parents do not speak the English-language and cannot always understand the performance if it is rendered entirely in the English. All the grade level teachers were both the cultural and musical agents as they

prepared their students for performances in both the English- and Spanish-language Christmas songs that were popular in the United States and in Mexico. The Winter concert displayed the children's bimusical and bicultural sensibilities as they performed in both English- and Spanish-language songs and as they played the Western tunes played on recorder. They sang with Western harmonies and styles familiar with the popular Christmas tunes and as they played the mariachi tunes containing instrumentation with specific tunings and playing and singing styles, lyrics, and stylistic nuances. The student's language and culture was validated with these school wide performances that allowed for the expression of the American and Mexican musical identities.

***Talent Show.*** The end of the year brought special celebrations to mark the close of classes. Past celebrations have included a school carnival or a school wide performance and dance. Teachers and students decided to celebrate with a talent show that took place during the afternoon school hours on the day of the Cinco de Mayo celebration. Children volunteered to perform for the talent show and their teachers helped them prepare during their lunch time, recess time, and before and after school. The talent show started with a group of fourth and fifth grade students that included four girls and one boy hovered around a single microphone and stand. They sang along to the music, *You Are the Music in Me* (a single released from the Original Disney Channel Movie film, *High School Musical 2*, that had been popularized by singers Zac Efron and Vanessa Hudgen) playing on the gym public address (PA) system. Three of the four girls were dressed in their Mexican dresses because they were going to perform dances later in the show, which visually revealed how they were presenting and participating by singing songs from their American identity, while dressed to perform songs from their Mexican identity. They were followed by Angelica, Mrs.

Sanchez's second grade daughter, who dressed in her Mexican dress played a couple of simple piano selections that she had been working on during her piano lessons. Linda, a fifth grade student, came out by herself and sang, *A La Nanita Nana* in Spanish. This song was on the movie and album, *Cheetah Girls 2*, which was another Disney Channel movie set in Spain. This is the only song that was sung in Spanish on the album and in the movie. *A La Nanita Nana* is actually a Colombian Christmas carol that is commonly sung in Mexico and the United States during the novenas sung right before Christmas in Catholic ceremonies. These novenas start on December 16<sup>th</sup> and go through till December 24<sup>th</sup>.

Melinda, a fourth grader and her sister, Melissa, who was in fifth grade, followed Linda's performance. They were dressed up in light blue spring modern dresses and sang along to the track called, *No Air* by Jordin Sparks and Chris Brown. This is a modern popular tune that was at the top of the charts at the time. Jordin Sparks was a contestant on the game show, *American Idol*, and Chris Brown was a very popular R & B singer. The next performance included by two third graders who sang, *Nobody's Perfect* by Hannah Montana/Miley Cryus. Dressed in their Mexican dresses, they sang along to the track playing on the gym speakers. There was also a fifth grade girl named, Maria, who also sang by herself to the song, *If Everyone Cared* by Nickelback. This Canadian hard rock band was also very popular in the United States. The show culminated with a comedy skit performed by a group of fourth fifth grade boys who followed with a break dancing performance to the popular hip-hop song, *Pop, Lock & Drop It* by Huey from the *Notebook Paper* album released in March 2007. The boys were in a circle and took turns break dancing in the middle.

The talent show allowed children to broadcast the music that was favored by and familiar to them. It was evident by the selections performed at the talent show, that the children had been exposed to the American mainstream media and were interested in performing and recreating the popular music found on the radio and on television. Angelica's performance on the piano is representative of the population of students who were involved with Western classical music and instrumentation. These children were able to enact their American musical identity and who later would switch to their Mexican musical identity later that day with their performances in mariachi and through their dance performances in the Cinco de Mayo celebration.

*Cinco de Mayo at Riverview Elementary School.* There is an annual Cinco de Mayo celebration at Riverview Elementary School. The festivities include a BBQ, children's performances, and a presentation by a professional dance troupe, *Bailadores del Sol*. This next section will offer a glimpse of this celebration in full effect. While I observed the event as standard and typical over the course of three years of association with the school, this description emanates from the period of my fieldwork.

The Cinco de Mayo celebration opened at 5:00 p.m. with a barbeque. Parents, children, teachers, family, and community members were in attendance. Many walked from their homes to the celebration, and the school gym, halls, and campus grounds swelled to 800 in all. The principal, who donated all the meat, began the cooking *carne asada* (roasted meat), hot dogs, and warmed tortillas at 4:00 p.m. with the help of parents and teachers. They cooked on a six-foot long barbeque pit outside the cafeteria, while sitting about ten feet from the barbeque pit was a local high school student blasting Spanish language music on his disc jockey equipment. Banda tune *El Camaleon* by Diferentes de la Sierra and a mariachi

tune *El Ultimo Beso* by Vicente Fernandez were emanating from the speakers while children and parents sang along. The music teacher, Mr. Smith, stood alongside the DJ with his own group of mariachi CDs consisting of his favorite mariachi tunes within the more modern tunes of banda, pasito duranguense, and Spanish rock and hip hop that he would ask the DJ to play in between every other song selection.

Teachers had been asked to bring the side items that included rice, beans, salsa, chips, hot dog buns, and drinks. Everyone ate in the cafeteria and then headed outside or to the gym to wait for the festivities to begin. Children ran around with friends or siblings outside while children scheduled to perform got into their uniform practiced on their instruments. Girls who were performing folkloric dances helped one another by applying makeup, braiding each other's hair with ribbons, bows, or flowers weaved in the braids. The smell of barbeque floated through the gym and hallways of the school. Flags of the United States and of Mexico, tissue paper flowers, and pictures of musicians and dancers all lined the walls of the gym and the school hallways.

Once the meal ended, the celebration officially started with an instruction from the principal. Mr. Flores announced from the microphone: "This is our fourth year that we are celebrating Cinco de Mayo here in Riverview and we are really excited that it is growing every year. We will start (the program) with your children (in performance) and then we will have the folkloric dances." He then translated his statement in Spanish. Mr. Flores thanked all the teachers and staff for their assistance with the festivities. He gave special thanks to Mr. Smith for directing the new children's mariachi, which elicited a big roar from the crowd.

The eight hundred people, filled the bleachers and the left sidewall of the gym. Several of the Hispanic and Anglo American teachers were wearing their Mexican dresses coupled with braided hair decorated with flowers for the celebration. Mr. Smith was dressed up proudly in his mariachi outfit. There was a lot of talking and commotion with parents, students, and community members coming in and departing from the gym. The barbeque continued during the program, with people eating and mingling with other friends or relatives while student performers lined up against the wall of the gym waiting anxiously for their turn to perform. The Cinco de Mayo concert was not required, but the majority of students were there with their parents.

The annual celebration included the children's dance presentation, grade level performances, culminating with the *Bailadores del Sol* (from Yakima, WA), presentation. The boys and girls from grades one through five performed eight different traditional folk dances to recorded mariachi music played on the gym PA system. Several of the mothers who had experience in folkloric dancing worked with the children during and after school hours teaching them the steps and maneuvers, which the children then practiced during class time, PE, and/or during music. Each grade level then performed one selection in this evening program.

The first grade children performed *La Raspa*, a dance that originated in Veracruz. It is a simple dance in 6/8 meter that is often found in educational materials about Mexico, and it is frequently performed at Cinco de Mayo celebrations (see Figure 18). The young children were dressed in black pants and shoes, a white shirt, and a red bandana. They were situated in two lines facing one another, all with their hands behind their backs. As the music

played and children began to dance, the crowd of parents and children cheered and clapped to the beat of the music.

**Figure 18.**  
*La Raspa Transcription*

La Raspa

trans. by A. Soto



The second graders were called down to the gym floor and there was a moment of chaos as students rushed about. The mariachi ensemble, arranged by Mr. Smith in their rehearsed playing positions, stood alongside the second grade students ready to perform *Las Mañanitas*. The second grade children whole-heartedly sang the entire song without the assistance of lyric sheets. The mariachi tempo dragged, the violins were out of tune, and the children singing in their tempo, but the crowd erupted in a loud cheer to show their appreciation for this traditional Spanish-language number.

The mariachi remained on the gym floor to accompany the rest of the grades. While the third and fourth grade students were getting in place, Mr. Smith shared with the audience (in English) his own enjoyment in working with the mariachi students, who were all in his estimation “fast learners.” He attempted to invite the crowd in Spanish to sing along with the children, but he jumbled the words. The third and fourth grade sang *Y Ándale*, Linda Ronstadt’s well-known song, with Mr. Smith directing the mariachi and singers while also

playing the trumpet parts. The final student performance was the fifth grade class. They performed *Amor de Los Dos* by Vicente Fernandez. The song began with a long and very loud grito performed by a fifth grade student named Julio (with the aid of a microphone). The crowd cheered, clapped, and whistled in response to his grito. Julio appeared slightly embarrassed and surprised, by the look on his face that he had pulled off that very long grito. The students sang expressively and the emulation of the familiar Ronstadt recording, and the audience began to sing along. The crowd showed their appreciation of the young performers with a long round of applause. The show then culminated with the *Bailadores del Sol* (Dancers of the Sun), a dance troupe from nearby city of Yakima, WA, who performed a variety of Mexican folk dances to the music played on the gym speakers.

Students performing at the Cinco de Mayo celebration were shifting between their cultural and musical spheres. They were ready performers of the folkloric dances, and they sang and played in the school mariachi. Teachers, the cultural and musical agents created this space for the children to express and experience Mexican cultural customs associated with the mariachi and the ballet folklórico, which were grandly celebrated by both school and family communities.

***Artwork for Cinco de Mayo.*** During the weeks preceding the Cinco de Mayo celebration, students who had been regularly meeting with Mrs. Stern, the physical education coach (during reading intervention time), were also working on coloring and glittering a variety of figures pertinent to the Cinco de Mayo celebration (see Figure 19). There were pictures of mariachi musicians, dancers in elaborate dresses, the Mexican flag, and dancers in the traditional dress from the Mexican states of Yucatan, Jalisco, Puebla, and Tamaulipas. As part of their learning process, Mrs. Stern explained what the pictures represented, as well

as the locations as the dances that hailed from the different regions or states of Mexico. The completed artworks were then posted around the school and gym as decoration for the Cinco de Mayo celebration.

**Figure 19.**

*Decorated Photos of Dancers and Musicians for Cinco de Mayo Celebration*



The Cinco de Mayo decorations adorned one large bulletin board opposite the front office, greeting students and school visitors on their entrance. Another large bulletin board opposite the cafeteria displayed three mariachi musicians singing, one woman dancing, several kids aiming at a piñata, glitter balloons, and the words “*Bienvenidos!*” (Welcome); the display was bordered by American and Mexican flags. Still another bulletin board displayed more flags, traditional Mexican dresses, shirts from Mexico, and two types of sombreros. The school glass cabinets near the front office contained colorful traditional dresses, sombreros, pottery, and other artifacts of Mexican culture (see Figure 20).

**Figure 20.**

*Cinco de Mayo Wall Bulletin Board and Glass Cabinets of Mexican Cultural Artifacts*



Children’s involvement in the Cinco de Mayo celebration and their participation in preparing the material artifacts allowed them to assert their cultural and musical identity with

the encouragement of teachers, staff, administrators, parents, and community members. As Teicher (1995) had stated, “The importance of music in the lives of immigrant and second generation children, and of being recognized and appreciated members of the musical subculture, cannot be underestimated” (p. 82). If in Teicher’s study, minority and immigrant students from India needed their cultural self-esteem (an important part of identity formation) to be boosted and preserved so that the children’s cultural and musical experiences did not “become marginalized” (p. 83), so too were the children of Riverview Elementary School supported and celebrated their strong Mexican musical and cultural identity.

*University –Community Partnership.* The Riverview Elementary School children participated in an annual school-wide concert related to activities of the university-community partnership. This partnership had been set up by the university’s music education department as a means of offering experiences in musical and cultural diversity for the student’s teacher certification. University students prepared children in their individual classrooms to perform a selection of songs at a culminating school-wide concert. The partnership project allowed the university students “opportunities for positive social contact between communities via music performances, participation, and training experiences and to provide for validation of a diversity of music expressions in the Valley,” (Soto, Lum, & Campbell, 2009, p. 340) even as it also provided the Riverview children with further sources of musical stimulation. In addition, the experience allowed children to know more of the world through singing, dancing, and performing of mariachi and traditional Western music.

As the coordinator for this project, I was the faculty liaison to both graduate and undergraduate university students. I prepared and followed up on the visits of university students, arranged for student transportation from the university campus to the Toppenish

community some three hours distance by car (and van). I arranged transportation, accommodations for hotels and homestays, and site teaching and performance experiences. In between visits by the university students to the school, I was posted there to facilitate children's listening to a wide array of the world's music and to engage children in singing, dancing, and playing some of the music they would learn in lessons offered by the visiting university students. The university site visits culminated in a concert performance that featured the university students performing (piano, violin, trumpet, flute, saxophone, and vocally) for the children, and the children singing and moving to the music taught to them over the course of the partnership program.

The Riverview children were keen to have the university students on their campus. According to the published research on the work of this partnership, Soto, Lum, & Campbell (2009):

The Riverview children appeared to enjoy the novelty of having youthful student teachers with them in their classrooms and were enthusiastic about having learned songs from selected world cultures that had been introduced by the graduate student coordinator and the university music students. Based on comments made by the teachers and children in the interviews, it was apparent that the children were recalling the songs from the continent of Africa as well as from Japan, Mexico and elsewhere in the world. Mrs. Stage, a fifth-grade teacher, expressed that the period music experiences had so stimulated her young students that they 'can't stop singing the songs' and that 'while we were getting in line, one kid asked if we could sing' on the way to the bus...They were also thrilled to be introduced to instruments they had

never previously heard live, including flute, saxophone, trumpet, and viola, and were intrigued with the sounds of operatic voices that needed no amplification. (p. 343)

The children learned music, and about culture through music, in the lessons designed for the partnership. Children of the various grade levels performed “a combination of Spanish-language folk songs, an Anglo-American play party song, and a South African freedom song (Soto, Lum, and Campbell, 2009, p. 348). In all classes of all grade levels, children learned and sang an all-school song titled *While We’re Here, We Will Sing!* (with piano and instrumental accompaniment by the university students). Children were curious to hear band and orchestral instruments played for them by the university students, and their teachers strongly supported the partnership visits, apparently perceiving valuable learning experiences offered. Mrs. Martinez spoke for a number of the teachers with her comment that

....the ‘Spanish songs’ were beneficial to her children, along with the exposure to different languages and cultures that occurred through the world music excursions that the university students had designed for the children...Several teachers pointed out that the Riverview children had not had many opportunities to experience live music performances, with skilled musicians singing and playing for them and with them. (Soto, Lum, & Campbell, 2009, p. 351)

The university-community partnership allowed the children of Riverview to learn more Spanish language music, in addition to exposing them to more Western music and instruments and musics from across the globe, thus expanding their American musical identity.

## Summary

This chapter showcased the various ways in which children displayed and developed a bimusical identity. Because of the encouragement from the music teacher, children were able to learn and participate within the Western music system while incorporating the Mexican mariachi system. They learned (a limited extent of) Western classical music theory and aural skills, played basic songs or chordal patterns on Western instruments such as recorders and xylophones, sang a few Anglo- and European- folk songs, and national songs from the United States on their “English” music class days. Children were enveloped in the Western tonalities, theory, instrumentation, and song through class and through their interaction with the university-community partnership activities, as well as through private instrumental lesson instruction (for a limited amount of students).

Children sang and played guitar to mariachi tunes, displaying their knowledge of the mariachi repertoire and singing styles, improvisational elements of the music and typical song endings and specific mariachi guitar strumming techniques. They could improvise a grito or add a contextually appropriate shout out to a mariachi song (*Si Señor*) during their “Spanish” music class days or in mariachi rehearsal. These children who were more experienced on the guitar demonstrated their skills as they assisted their fellow classmates during class and in mariachi ensemble rehearsals. They were surrounded by the music of the Mexican mariachi in school and at home, which contained distinct timbres found in the singing styles, unique timbre qualities within the instrumentation, and of the differentiated rhythmic guitar strumming patterns. They perfected their performance of *Las Mañanitas* in class, even though it was sung frequently at home in their birthday celebrations. The children learned about the different dance styles that accompanied the mariachi tunes, which

was depicted in the artwork posted around the school for the Cinco de Mayo celebration. Jiménez (2010) found that participation in ballet folklórico groups taught children about their culture where they could celebrate their ethnic origins and with their cultural roots, which resembled the experiences of the children of Riverview Elementary. Furthermore, cultural knowledge of Cinco de Mayo was disseminated by teachers and by the Cinco de Mayo bulletin boards and glass cases that contained elements of the Mexican culture.

Children were fully enveloped in the American mainstream media music presented on radio and television in both the English- and Spanish-language as seen through their Talent Show selections. They also exhibited a bimusical identity as children performed songs and dances of American mainstream popular music at the Talent Show, when there were performances of Western Classical music on the piano, and mariachi music and dance. Their participation in music classes and school wide performances allowed for the expression of different musical identities while receiving positive support from teachers, administrators, and parents. They were encouraged to learn about their cultural roots in Mexican genres through their participation in the Cinco de Mayo celebration, the Winter Concert, and the Talent Show as well as within the Spanish-language music activities in the music classroom. Children grew an understanding of the contextual matter that surrounds Western classical music. Bimusical identity was reinforced and furthered through their school-side experiences in American mainstream popular music, Western classical music, Mexican mariachi, and Spanish-language music from the United States and Mexico.

## Chapter Five: Music Close to Home and Family

Beyond the music that the children learned of and participated in at Riverview Elementary School, they knew music from what they heard live and mediated, and occasionally from what they themselves sang, played, and danced—in their homes and within their families. Children were developing a bimusical identity even as they developed their cultural identities, through activity in the local community and in the “imagined” communities found through radio, television, and recordings. This chapter features children’s principal musical interests and activities, emanating from experiences in mainstream English-language music (particularly popular and mediated genres) and in Spanish-language (mainly Mexican) genres. Instances of children’s musical interests as they emerged in an informal music survey administered at Parents’ Night, through a Spanish-language Christian album (by two Riverview Elementary School children), in the making, through informal songs and games learned at home and which were played in the schoolyard, and in the dance styles children demonstrated associated with regional Mexican genres and American Hip hop.

### Influential Musical Artists

Throughout my conversations with the Riverview children, two influential musical artists surfaced repeatedly: a Mexican American woman singer, Selena Quintanilla, popular almost a full generation earlier and a currently popular teen singer, Miley Cyrus, a fair-skinned girl of Anglo-American parentage. Many young girls, and more than a few boys, described their keen interest in their songs, their ways of dancing, and their personae, and were clearly smitten by each of these star-singers and their glamorous lifestyles.

*Selena Quintanilla.* Named the “Queen of Tejano Music,” Selena Quintanilla (1971-1995) was one of the most famous Tejano singers of all time. She brought the regional

Tejano music of South Texas international recognition (including acceptance in Mexico), and was a favorite performer across the entirety of the Latin American music market. Her heyday of concertizing began in 1980 and was peaking in the mid 1990's until her untimely death when she was murdered at the age of twenty-three. In a review of her musical output and identity, she was described for her broader cultural merits, "Not only did she represent success for Tejanos (Texans of Mexican Ancestry) and Tejano music, but her achievements also symbolized advancement for la *raza* (the people)" (Liera-Schwichtenberb, 1998, p. 206). Selena's popularity was still strong among the young Riverview students, surprisingly so despite Selena passing's almost ten years before the birth of the children. Every child, of every age (7 years through age 11), knew about her, and expressed excitement when I mentioned her name. Many children proudly noted that they owned her compact discs or had her songs on their mp3 players. I was interviewing a fifth grader named Brenda, and the subject of Selena came up. Brenda responded: "Yeah, I love her. My parents love her. The movie is pretty cool." I mentioned that I had seen her in concert, and had been to her burial place in Corpus Christi, Texas, and Brenda's eye's widened as she exclaimed, "No way! Lucky!" Brenda's adulation of Selena was evident, and it was shared by other children with whom I spoke.

Selena was adored by children and adults of the Mexican American community for a variety of reasons. She crossed physical and language borders through her successful hits like *Como La Flor*, *Bidi Bidi Bom Bom*, and *Dreaming of You*. Selena was raised in an English-dominant home, but learned Spanish to sing Mexican and Tejano songs with her family band. Mexican immigrants find the connection to her through the language, the conjunto music she sings (including genres like ranchera and cumbia that have seeped into

the style), and the song topics of love, hard work, and hard times. Selena was a beautiful and energetic young woman, and had communicated personal stories in her songs to which generations of Mexican Americans could relate. She won twenty-two Tejano Music awards and was named the Female Entertainer of the Year (1988-1996) for nine consecutive years. She was easily the role model for young Mexican American women who were raised in Tejano (as well as Mexican-American at large, and Mexican) cultures. Selena's horrific death brought her music to an even broader national and international awareness and enabled the music to cross over to the English-language popular music realm. Shortly after her death, in 1995, the wide release of the movie (starring the actress-singer Jennifer Lopez) helped to further fan the flames of the "Selena" phenomenon. Selena's music gained widespread popularity because of "Selena's trademark sound, combining Mexican cumbia rhythms with hip-hop, reggae, polka, tropical, country-western, R & B, and techno-pop- synthesizers (and samples) types of music, each with its own complex genealogy" (Liera-Schwichtenbert, 1998, p.214).

Featured in an article in *The Monitor*, a local newspaper in McAllen, Texas (not far from the region of Selena's early popularity), were tributes to the artist's music and her Tejano identity. One seventeen-year-old girl expressed that "She inspired us to be proud of our heritage and express it in the best way possible." Another woman simply mentioned, "She's our music" (Liera-Schwichtenberb, 1998, p. 215). This same article offered an explanation for the "Selena Phenomenon" as suggesting:

...the complicity of a migratory reading in which location is literal as well as figurative. The borderlands of South Texas/Mexico is a place of historical oppression and migration, but it is also the space of a people's music. Selena's music invokes

the complexities of Mexican American identity as a pop-version of Tejano, imprinted with the migrant *conjunto* of 150 years ago, crosses over the metaphoric space of the dominant- the “mainstream.” Thus, from the outset, we are confronted with the metaphor “mainstream” commonly used to describe the demographic of the dominant culture: amorphous, whitewashed, blended, middle class, and above all, assimilated (Liera-Schwichtenberg, 1998, p. 208).

Selena’s personal and musical story continues to give voice to a young Mexican Americans today who seek to understand where they have come from, and who unite under the musical tonalities of a traditional music that is mixed with the contemporary mainstream popular music styles. Selena’s music reflects the complexity of their own unique identities, as young Mexican Americans are shaped by who they are and from where they (and their families) came. Furthermore, Selena is a positive role model of adapting to the mainstream culture, as she explored and preserved her roots even while also fusing new musical forms into the Tejano sound that thus created a new generation of music, musicians, and music listeners. Jiménez (2010) posited that popular musicians like Selena are signposts to which young Mexican Americans have looked “to see reflections of their ethnic origins in popular culture”, and that they are avenues that Mexican immigrants as well as second-generation Mexican-Americans take “for engaging in the practice of ethnicity” (p.132).

Selena’s bicultural, bilingual, and bimusical identities are in interesting ways reflected within the lives of many of the children in Riverview Elementary School. Through their own home and school experiences, they, too, are living in parallel cultures, negotiating in two languages, and getting an earful of music emanating from more than a single source.

***Miley Ray Cyrus (Hannah Montana)***. In March of 2006, the Disney Channel debuted the children's television series, "Hannah Montana." This series tells the story of a girl named Miley Stewart who lives a normal life during the day but is secretly a famous pop singer named "Hannah Montana" by night (all the while concealing her real identity from the public). Because of the popularity of the television series, *Hannah Montana: The Movie* was released by Disney in the Spring of 2009. Miley Ray Cyrus, daughter of the country singer Billy Ray Cyrus, played Miley Stewart (aka Hannah Montana), and has become a teen pop icon due to the success of her television series. Miley Cyrus produced two albums in 2006 and 2007 that were associated with the Hannah Montana brand. Her album, *Breakout*, released by Hollywood Records in 2008, was the first to be void of any reference to Hannah Montana. It rose to the number one spot on the U.S. Billboard 200 chart when it was released, and was certified Platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA).

Miley Cyrus is a pop-star phenomenon mostly due to the Disney Corporation and its vast media holding. Disney provided Miley with a television series in 2006, had her music played on the Radio Disney network, and allowed her to record albums for Disney Music. Disney created the musical documentary film, *Hannah Montana & Miley Cyrus: Best of Both Worlds Concert* released in 2008 and the *Hannah Montana: The Movie* released in 2009. This allowed Miley to appear on Disney-owned shows in public and private television (Poniewozik, 2007). In addition, Disney has created a plethora of paraphernalia of Hannah Montana products that includes music, dolls, apparel, jewelry, school accessories, and other merchandise.

Early in the show's career (June 2007), Hannah Montana was viewed by an average of 10.7 million viewers, breaking the record to that time television series episode (Hannah Montana, 2008). She skyrocketed to popularity with children around the world, particularly young girls between the ages of five and twelve. I would often see Riverview Elementary School girls through the primary grades with Hannah Montana backpacks, t-shirts, purses, hair clips, pencils, and notebooks. As we visited in the school cafeteria or in the hallways leading to recess, second- and third- grade girls would sing, *Party in the U.S.A.*, *I Miss You*, *Nobody's Perfect*. They knew every word, and sang with exuberance, all in a collective (and quite voluminous) sound. If they were less inclined to sing her songs, the young boys at Riverview nonetheless were fully familiar with Hannah Montana and her brand. Hannah Montana's character on the weekly show was that of a conservative and proper young girl who was thus approved by parents and teachers for the message she sent of a sweet, obedient, and ordinary teen. Elementary school-aged girls daydreamed of having the confidence and cool of Hannah Montana (and also the private life of a rock star), and of being quite ordinary (but beautiful) while also staying loyal to her family and friends (Anderson, 2009). Riverview children enjoyed Hannah Montana regularly on the Disney Channel, radio, and as they listened to her on their compact discs or mp3 players.

### **Notable English- and Spanish-language Genres and Artists**

Children's exposure and interest in various English- and Spanish-language musical genres became increasingly clear over the months of observations and conversations with the children at Riverview Elementary School. Table 2 lists the musical genres that emerged with answers from the interviews, radio scans, and through observations (and occasionally sung or danced to by them in my presence). The Riverview Elementary children were familiar with

the English-language genres that were being played on the radio stations in the area. Most common responses of their favorite type of English-language music included Hip Hop, Pop, and Christian genres. The children were also enveloped by the sounds of popular music and hip hop in both the English- and Spanish-language that was coming out of the radio, their mp3 or CD players, or through the television sets at home. They performed to some of their favorite tunes at the Talent Show and would mention their favorite musicians in our interviews. (see Table 2, 3, 4). Children were listening to a wide variety of genres on the local radio stations such as the Spanish radio station (KDNA 91.9), the rock station (94.5 KATS), contemporary popular music (107.3 KFFM), and hip hop music (99.7 FM). They listened in the car and on the family radio at home that was typically set to one of the stations all day long. Children mentioned that they owned a personal radio, CD player, or mp3 player that was not shared with the rest of the family in which they could select the music of their choice.

Songs originating from the Disney Channel or Disney Radio are considered to be popular music, since many of the songs are categorized in under pop with music purchasing sites such as iTunes. Children often sang several of the popular tunes in interviews or performed them for the talent show. Children acknowledged that they listened to a wider variety of Spanish-language Mexican and Mexican American regional genres (banda, pasito duranguense, conjunto, Tejano, & norteño) at home, in the car, or at family and community events (parties, weddings, quinceañeras). These Mexican genres were blaring loudly at the Cinco de Mayo celebration. The children were well versed in the Mexican folk music that was often featured on the El Viejito radio program, played in class by the teachers, or were taught in music class. Mariachi, pasito duranguense, banda, conjunto, and Tejano were the

most mentioned genres when discussing favorite types of Spanish-language music or music that they would dance to. Radio KDNA programming included the majority of these Spanish-language genres. Furthermore, children said they were listening to this same type of music on television.

**Table 2.**  
*English- and Spanish-Language Musical Genres in Alphabetical Order*

---

<b>English</b>	<b>Spanish</b>
Christian	Banda
Country	Christian
Folk	Conjunto
Hip Hop	Folk
Latin	Hip Hop
Pop	Mariachi
Jazz	Norteño
R & B	Pasito Duranguense
Rap	Pop
Rock	Rap
Soul	Reggaeton
	Rock
	Salsa
	Tejano

In addition to the genres listed above, favorite artists (see Table 3) surfaced in interviews, observations and in the informal music survey. Even though the children mentioned that they listened to more Spanish-language genres than English-language genres, they could name more English-language artists than Spanish-language artists. Several of the English-language artists were pop musicians who originated from the Disney channel or from the Nickelodeon channel, suggesting that television had a major role in the development of the children's musical identity. In addition to the Disney Channel, children were also watching Spanish language television programming that included telenovelas such as *Rebelde* (RBD), produced by Televisa (Kjeldgaard & Nielsen, 2010). Similar to the Disney

concept of incorporating musicians as the main characters of the show, this soap opera featured actual band members of the group *RBD* as main characters; they play high school boarding students who created a pop band. Several of the Riverview Elementary children mentioned that they owned CDs originating from the show. The diversity of genres in both languages reveals the impact on the children's bimusical identity of the larger cultural spheres that they were exposed to through the media. Even though the different genres of “Mexican” or “Spanish” language music represents different geographic and musical distinctions, the children were categorizing them into one section, suggesting that they view these musics as part of a larger “Mexican” or cultural community that can be defined by language (or other characteristics) (Appadurai, 1998; Green, 2011). This can also be attributed to the local musical groups that may play various types of regional Mexican musics (i.e. conjunto, Tejano, norteño, banda, and pasito duranguense) in order to expand their performance and employment opportunities (Cottrell, 2007).

**Table 3.***English- and Spanish-Language Musical Artists in Alphabetical Order*

---

<b>English</b>	<b>Spanish</b>
Alicia Keys	Chayito Valdéz
Camp Rock	Cepillin
Chris Brown	Diferentes de la Sierra
Daddy Yankee	Enrique Iglesias
Hannah Montana/Miley Cyrus	Flex
High School Musical	Gloria Trevi
Huey	Linda Rondstam
Jesse McCartney	Kumbia Kings
Jonas Brothers	MC Magic
Katy Perry	Prima J
Jordan Sparks	Juanes
Kidz Bop 21	RBD
Lil' Wayne	Rebelde/RBD
Mariah Carey	Ricky Martin
Naked Brothers Band	Selena
Nickelback	Tatiana
Pussy Cat Dolls	Vicente Fernandez
Rihanna	
Soulja Boy	
Taylor Swift	
Young Bird	
50 Cent	

Furthermore, many of the English- and Spanish-language artists mentioned are considered to be popular or hip hop musicians (often with some falling into both categories), thus demonstrating the importance of mainstream American popular music in their creation of their musical identity. Children did not name as many Spanish-language artists as they did English-language artists, which suggests that even though the children listened to more genres in Spanish, they may not have been able to recall as many of their favorite or familiar artists. Children often mentioned that they listened to Spanish-language music at home, or in the car, or at family and community events in which the parents or community agents may have chosen the music and children may have been passive or active (dancing or singing)

listeners. Their favorite Spanish-language artists consisted of a sampling of the different genres mentioned above. They were enamored with *Cepillin* (children's folk music), *Diferentes de la Sierra* (banda), Selena (Tejano), Vicente Fernandez (mariachi), and Enrique Iglesias (Spanish Pop).

Table 4 is a list of English- and Spanish-language songs named (and often sung) by the children of Riverview Elementary School. The list of songs materialized from interviews and observations of the songs that were introduced in music lessons, sung at school performances, or heard during recess. The selection of songs represents the bimusical identity of the children of Riverview Elementary school. Their bimusical identity contained songs that could be delineated by an overarching language and/or by a shared culture, but still contained musical complexities representative of the children and families from different regions of Mexico and the United States, from the different generations of Mexican American children represented in the study, and of their unique personal and cultural experiences they received at home and through their imagined communities.

**Table 4.***Songs in the English- and Spanish-Language in Alphabetical Order*

---

<b>English</b>	<b>Spanish</b>
All I Want For Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth	A La Rueda de San Miguel
Blessed Assurance	A La Nanita Nan
Christmas	A Que Linda Dia
Christmas Tree	Amor de Los Do
Crank That (Soulja Boy)	Baby Te Quiero
Deck the Halls	Besitos de Chocolate
Don't Cha	Bidi Bidi Bom Bom
Dreaming of You	Cielito Lindo
Happy Birthday	Chocolate
Hop Old Squirrel	Como La Flor
I Kissed a Girl	De Colores
I Miss You	El Camelon
I'm Really Lonely	El Niño del Tambor
If Everyone Cared	El Patio de Mi Casa
Itsy Bitsy Spider	El Ultimo Beso
Jingle Bells	Feliz Navidad
Jolly Old St. Nick	Hablando Claro
Leavin'	La Camisa Negra
Must Be Santa	La Gasolina
My Country 'Tis of Thee	La Llorona
Miss Sue	La Rana
National Anthem	La Raspa
No Air	Las Mañanitas
Nobody's Perfect	Los Diez Perritos
Old McDonald Had a Farm	Los Pollitos
One Christmas	Mexico Lindo
Party in the U.S.A.	Pelo Suelto
Pizza, Pizza	Pin Pon
Pop, Lock, and Drop	Quatro Pollitos
Rudolf the Red Nose Reindeer	Que Llueva
Shake, Rattle, and Roll	Sansón
Star Bangled Banner	Si En Verdad Eres Salvo
Star Light, Star Bright	Si Nos Dejan
This Land is Your Land	Si Tu Texas
Washington, My Home	Tengo Una Muñeca Vestida De Azul
We Will Sing Our Song	Tu Solo Tu
You Are The Music in Me	Viene Por Mi
You Really Got a Hold of Me	Vivir del Mundo
	Y Ándale
	Yo No Fuí
	Zapatitos Blancos

The Disney Channel's Television series "Made for Children" was unduly influential of and commonly noted by the Riverview Elementary children. No child was unaware of the actor-musicians on these programs, and some children could not help themselves in wanting to share a song from the series or to tell of how captivated they were of the shows. Several students went so far as to prepare Disney Channel songs for performance at the all-school talent show (From Hannah Montana and The Cheetah Girls).

One afternoon in October, I was coming to the close of an interview with Anita, a third grade student. We were sitting in the computer lab by ourselves, as she and I frequently did. Anita would often sing for me in the halls with her friend, and she was always interested in my recording devices because she wanted to hear herself sing. I asked, "Are there any songs that you would like to sing for me?" She squirmed in her seat, smiled, and took another long pause and took out this sheet of paper and started to sing: "Sha la la la, You use to call me an angel. I miss you. I miss your smile. You're still here somehow. I miss you-sha la la, I miss you." She sang the entire song called, *I Miss You*, by Miley Cyrus that was released in 2007 to promote the dual disc album titled, *Hannah Montana 2/Meet Miley Cyrus*.

Riverview students frequently listened to radio programs, often with their parents and siblings. All children were aware of the radio program, El Jardin de los Niños (El Viejito), as they had listened to this radio show since toddlerhood. They had been exposed to a wide variety of Mexican children's folk songs featured on the program. In addition, children were listening to these folk songs at home while learning them at school. Many children knew, *Pin Pon*, a featured song about a little doll that likes to wash her face and brush her teeth.

Many also knew *Los Pollitos*, as demonstrated by first and second grade children who sang wholeheartedly when it was featured –supposedly, introduced to them – in one of the music lessons I offered to them, and they enthusiastically played an Orff accompaniment for it on xylophones and boomwhackers. Still another song, *Que Llueva*, brought children to attention when I first sang it to them in a lesson, and they immediately pleaded for the associated game. This game entailed the children walking in a circle while holding hands and dropping down quickly to the floor and shooting back up when the song reached the low “do” note twice towards the end of the song. Interviews with children confirmed their knowledge of these songs from radio, and sometimes from family members, as well as through friends at school. Monica, a third grade student, asked to sing a chant that she learned from her older sister, *Quatro Pollitos* (see Figure 21). She began to chant at a moderate level of volume gradually decreasing the volume until she was whispering on the last line.

**Figure 21.**

*Quatro Pollitos Transcription and Lyrics in the English- and Spanish-Language*

Quatros Pollitos

trans. by A. Soto

Chant  $\text{H} \frac{4}{4}$

Qua-tro Po-ll - it - os ten - goa - qui pic-co te - an pic-co te - an que lo ha - ce así

3

Tres Po-ll - it - os ten - goa - qui pic-co te - an pic-co te - an que lo ha - ce así

5

Dos Po-ll - it - os ten - goa - qui pic-co te - an pic-co te - an que lo ha - ce así

7

Uno po-ll - it - o ten - goa - qui pic-co te - an pic-co ten - an que lo ha - ce así

Spanish

English

Quatro pollitos tengo aquí  
Pico tean pico tean  
Que lo hace así

Four little chicks that I have here  
Pico theon pico tean (simulating the chicks pecking the floor for food)  
That they do it like this

Tres pollitos tengo aquí  
Pico tean pico tean  
Que lo hace así

Three little chicks that I have here  
Pico tean pico tean  
That they do it like this

Dos pollitos tengo aquí  
Pico tean pico tean  
Que lo hace así

Two little chicks that I have here  
Pico tean pico tean  
That they do it like this

Uno pollito tengo aquí  
Pico tean pico tean  
Que lo hace así

One little chick that I have here  
Pico tean pico tean  
That they do it like this

*Hand Directions:* Take the four fingers of the right hand and tap the rhythm of (pico tean, pico tean) into the palm of the left hand to simulate the chicks pecking the floor for food.

*Voice Directions:* Start off in normal voice and decrease volume with each change in number until you are whispering on the last line.

Often, children owned compilation CDs of many Spanish-language songs. Some of the teachers, including Mr. Castillo and Mrs. Sandoval, played these CDs in their classrooms during “busy work,” art projects, class parties, and as transitions from one activity to the next (see Figure 4). Mrs. Molina taught her kindergarten children the singing game, *Que Llueva*, and it had become a favorite part of the playful repertoire on the playground.

Children had considerable knowledge of the mariachi song repertoire and knew by heart many of the lyrics of the songs that were presented in Spanish-language music class or through the mariachi rehearsals and performances. They were able to sing songs like, *Y Ándale, Tú Sólo Tú, Se Tu Tevas, Amor de Los Dos, Vivir del Mundo, Yo No Fui, La Llorna, and Las Mañanitas*. Children reported that they or their parents listened to mariachi music on the radio, saw it on television, or were exposed to live music at weddings, quinceañeras, or other celebrations.

### **Other Musical Interests and Influences**

*A Music Survey.* During the month of October, all “activity teachers” (physical education, music teacher, the librarian) sponsored a monthly Parents’ Night. I assisted the music teacher in preparing music activities for Parents’ Night (focusing on music) that parents and students could participate both in English- and Spanish-language. An informal music survey was one of various activities available. Parents assisted their children in filling out (writing answers for children who have difficulties writing in print) the survey and did so with a crayon, marker, or pen in both the English- and Spanish-language. Children were not required to fill out the survey and those who did volunteered to complete it. Even though the survey was aimed at the children’s musical interest, parents may have inserted their own musical preferences such as listening to the “oldies.”

The music survey featured four questions (written in the English- and Spanish-language) for children and their parents: (1) What is your favorite type of music?, (2) What music group/band do you really like?, (3) What is your favorite song?, and (4) What is your favorite instrument? (see Appendix E). While only twenty-two parent-child surveys were collected, there were patterns and shreds of the following genres among them. Seven surveys were answered in the English-language, ten in the Spanish-language, and five in both the English- and Spanish-language. Table 5 reveals the various answers from the surveys. (Several completed music surveys can be found in Appendix F).

**Table 5.**  
*Informal Music Survey Results*

Favorite Type of Music	Favorite Music Group/Band	Favorite Song	Favorite Instrument
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ranchera</li> <li>• Mariachi</li> <li>• Musica pop (Spanish pop)</li> <li>• Jazz</li> <li>• Pop</li> <li>• Christian music</li> <li>• Hip hop</li> <li>• Rock-n-roll</li> <li>• Soul</li> <li>• R &amp; B</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Los Bokis</li> <li>• Juanes</li> <li>• Chayán</li> <li>• Lots of Mariachis</li> <li>• Enrique Iglesias</li> <li>• Selah</li> <li>• Taylor Swift</li> <li>• Elvis Presley</li> <li>• Smokey Robinson</li> <li>• Banda</li> <li>• Flez</li> <li>• Los Diferentes de la Sierra</li> <li>• Chayito Valdéz</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mexico Lindo</li> <li>• Y Andale</li> <li>• Las Mañanitas</li> <li>• Hablando Claro</li> <li>• Si Tu Tevas</li> <li>• El Camaleon</li> <li>• Blessed Assurance</li> <li>• Shake, Rattle, and Roll</li> <li>• You Really Got a Hold on Me</li> <li>• Teardrops on my Guitar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accordion</li> <li>• Guitar/guitarra</li> <li>• Trompeta (trumpet)</li> <li>• Piano</li> <li>• Violin</li> <li>• La bateria (drum set)</li> </ul>

Several of the listed songs are mariachi tunes that had been featured in music class (*Si Tú Te Vas, Las Mañanitas, Y Ándale*). Parent’s musical tastes were revealed through the early 50s and 60s such as *Shake, Rattle, and Roll* and *You Really Got a Hold on Me*. The English- and Spanish-language popular artists and genres were also included as well as an interest in Christian music with the song *Blessed Assurance* by Fanny J. Crosby. The genres

listed correlated with many of the responses given by children at the interviews and observations of the children at school and around the community. Just like their parents, the children were constantly code switching as they surfed through the radio stations from the English-language to the Spanish-language and even in *Spanglish* (a combination of the English- and Spanish-language) and as they surfed through the various English- and Spanish-language television shows. This code switching was also demonstrated in the surveys that were completed with both the English- and Spanish-language answers (Appendix F).

***Christian Songs in Spanish.*** Over the course of many interviews with children, a common thread of singing or listening to church music was revealed. Riverview Elementary children were participating in musical activities within their local churches. Children spoke of singing at church or at Sunday school with a choir or band in both the English language and Spanish language. They proudly recalled that they were a part of the choir for a *Las Posadas* celebration or were part of the procession during the *Virgen de Guadalupe* ceremony on December 12<sup>th</sup>.

Rosa was delighted to tell me that she was making a CD of Christian songs in the Spanish-language with her older sister, Lillia, who was in the sixth grade. She had helped Rosa with singing and recording the Christian songs in both the English language and the Spanish language over synthesized tracks created by family members. The title of the album was *Viene Por Mi* (Come For Me) and had a total of seven Spanish songs and three English-language songs that were religious in nature (see Figure 22). Rosa mentioned that her sister loved to sing in the church choir and that the choir director encouraged her to make an album of devotional tunes. Lillia and Rosa were always singing together at school and church. They would sing often with their family at home and in their car on the way to church.

Because Lillia and Rosa were always performing together, Rosa was naturally included on the CD. Mr. Yolo, a third grade teacher, had both the girls as his students, encouraged and fostered their singing abilities. He was thanked in the acknowledgment section of the album cover. Furthermore, the creation of this album demonstrated the family and community in supporting children's bilingual and bicultural musical endeavors. This album showcased Rosa and Lillia's musicianship skills in being able to play piano and sing the Western style (with the use of Spanish language), as well as recording the instrumental parts with a synthesizer.

**Figure 22.**

*Liner Notes For English- and Spanish-Language Christian Album, Viene Por Mi (Come For Me)*



During our interview, Rosa sang one of the Christian songs that she learned at church that she included in the album (see Figure 23). The title, *Sansón* is based on the great and powerful Biblical character, Samson. The tune is quite colorful and announces that *Sansón* is very powerful and includes words that represent his punches and powerful hits. The song is a children’s tune that is popular among Spanish Christian children. There are even recordings and cartoon videos of the song with different words.

**Figure 23.**  
*Sansón Christian Children's Song Transcription*

Sansón  
 (Samson)

trans. by A. Soto

Voice

San - són era un much - cha - cho a - sí a - sí a - sí Tie -

Vo.

nía - a muc - ha fuer - za a - sí a - sí a - sí y cuan - do los fi - lis - te os vie -

Vo.

nie - ron a pe - lear y pun y pun y pun pa - pa san - són los de - ri - bo

Spanish Christian songs were very much a part of the children's musical identity. The songs that the Riverview Elementary children sang were composed and sung in Western tonalities, replicating the English-language version of the Christian song in words, melody, and singing styles. Some of the Spanish language church songs parody common children's folk tunes to deliver Christian messages. This was also the case with the Spanish-language versions that children were singing and performing.

I was in the library one afternoon and struck up a conversation with Mrs. Garcia about some books that I needed for a music lesson. I asked her about a song I was unable to recognize that Rosalia, a first grade student, had sung in the hallway for me earlier that day.

I then asked Mrs. Garcia if she could help me identify the tune of Rosalia's song. Halfway through singing the first line, Mrs. Garcia said, "Yes I know that one." She started to sing, "*Si en verdad eres salvo apladue así!*" She clapped twice and continued singing "*Si en verdad eres salvo apladue así!*," and clapped twice again. After singing several verses and performing "actions" to the song, she put her right hand in a fist and pumped up in the air on the word "*Amen!*" (see Figure 24). The tune of the song was exactly the same tune as *If You're Happy And You Know It*. Mrs. Garcia shared that, "It is a song that many of the children learn and sing in church."

Almost all the children attended church with their family members on Wednesday, Saturday, or Sunday. Our channel surfing together through the radio sections during informal interviews conjured up many Christian radio stations broadcasting music or devotional sermons. Jiménez (2010) found that Mexican Americans' participation in religious organizations can be a vehicle to reconnect to or establish Mexican Americans' culture, which could explain why so many Toppenish residents were church members.

Religion is a key dimension of social life through which individuals experience their ethnicity, and the changes in religious celebrations meant to attract immigrants allow Mexican Americans to reconnect with aspects of their ethnic identity that begin to atrophy in their own families with the passage of time. (p. 120)

Even though most children spoke of attending a Catholic church, some attended services at the local Methodist and other Protestant churches in the area. Many of the young children in kindergarten, first, and second grade were often unaware as to which faith their family adhered to, but spoke of "going to church" and singing frequently (during mass) in both English- and Spanish-languages.

**Figure 24.**

*Si En Verdad Eres Salvo (If You're Truly Saved) Lyrics in the English- and Spanish-Language*

**SI EN VERDAD ERES SALVO**

Si en verdad eres salvo aplaude así  
Si en verdad eres salvo aplaude así  
Si en verdad eres salvo testifica con tu vida,  
Si en verdad eres salvo aplaude así

Si en verdad eres salvo brinca así  
Si en verdad eres salvo brinca así  
Si en verdad eres salvo testifica con tu vida,  
Si en verdad eres salvo brinca así

Si en verdad eres salvo di amen. Amén!  
Si en verdad eres salvo di amen. Amén!  
Si en verdad eres salvo testifica con tu vida,  
Si en verdad eres salvo di amen. Amén!

Si en verdad eres salvo haz así  
Si en verdad eres salvo haz así  
Si en verdad eres salvo testifica con tu vida, Si en  
verdad eres salvo haz así

**IF YOU'RE TRULY SAVED**

If you're truly saved clap your hands  
If you're truly saved clap your hands  
If you're truly saved testify with your life  
If you're truly saved clap your hands

If you're truly saved jump like this  
If you're truly saved jump like this  
If you're truly saved testify with your life  
If you're truly saved jump like this

If you're truly saved say Amen. Amen!  
If you're truly saved say Amen. Amen!  
If you're truly saved testify with your life  
If you're truly saved say Amen. Amen!

If you're truly saved do this (all three)  
If you're truly saved do this (all three)  
If you're truly saved testify with your life  
If you're truly saved do this (all three)

*Music During Recess.* I entered the cafeteria one noontime in May, and glanced over to see the children in the third, fourth, and fifth grade ravaging through their hamburgers, fries, bananas, salads, and cartons of chocolate milk. They eagerly finished lunch so they could partake in climbing the jungle gym, playing soccer, or hanging out with their friends. I struck up a conversation with Maria, Sandra, and Jessica, who are all third grade students. Sandra asked, "Are you coming to our class today?" Today was not a teaching day for me, and she pouted in mild disappointment on hearing my response to her. That pout quickly changed to a smile when I told them I would visit their class tomorrow. I asked if I could accompany them to the playground after they have finished their lunch and they shouted, "Yes." After a brief discussion about the food served for lunch, they threw their leftovers in the trash and we headed outside. The screams and noise were getting louder as we turned the

corner to the playground that was situated towards the end of the school (see Figure 2). The group of girls I was with immediately headed for the jungle gym.

As I hurried in the direction of the younger children, a colorful cohort of fourth and fifth grade girls came careening towards me and I was immediately surrounded, even by the girls from the cafeteria whom gathered around me. A fourth grade girl, Marissa, excitedly announced that she had a song to show me. I responded that I was interested in hearing it and asked if I could record it. I turned on my digital voice recorder and she proceeded to get her friend Maria to perform a hand clapping game (what she called a song) (see Figure 25). I asked Marissa where she learned the “song” and she said, “She teaches me (pointing to Maria).” Maria then said, “I learned from a friend named Melody.”

**Figure 25.**

*Children's Handclapping Game Transcription and Lyrics*

Miss Sue - Children's Handclapping Game

trans. by A. Soto

Chant  $\text{H} \frac{2}{4}$  | x | x | | x x | x | x | | x | x | | x x | x | x | |  $\frac{4}{4}$   
Ms. Sue Clap Clap Clap Ms. Sue Clap Clap Clap

Faster

5  $\text{H} \frac{4}{4}$  | x | x x | x x x x | | x | x x | x x x x | | x | x x x x | x x x x | | x | x x x x | x x x x | |  
Ms. Sue from Al - a - ba - ma they cal her Su - sie an - na She's sit - ting in her rock - ing chair

8  $\text{H}$  | x x | x x | x x | x x | | x x | x x | | x x | x x | x x | x x | |  
eat - ting ber - ry crack - ers while she watch the clock go

9  $\text{H}$  | x | x | x | x | x | x | | x | x | x | x | x | x | | x | x | x | x | x | x | |  
tic - toc tic - toc ba - na - ña rock tic - toc tic - toc ba - na - ña rock

11  $\text{H}$  | x x x x | x x x x | x x x x | x x x x | | x x x x | x x x x | | x x x x | x x x x | |  
Sing Alphabet Song  
A B C D E F G I just got my plas - tic sur - ger - y ka - boom ka - boom ka - boom - boom freeze!

This complicated and popular African American handclapping game has many versions, as it has been recorded across the world (Michels, White, & Pinkney, 1983). This contemporary version features the phrase “I just got my plastic surgery.” The handclapping included polyrhythm and meter and tempo changes when combined with the clapping patterns. “Eating berry crackers” was once “eatin’ Betty Crocker” (regarding the cook of 1950s and 1960s).

I decided to head over to the concrete slab and meet up with the girls who were jumping rope. I proceeded to question the group of young girls if they sang any particular songs while jumping rope. A fourth grade girl named Mirella said, “Let’s show her the

*Teddy Bear* game.” (see Figure 26) The other girls shouted “alright” in response and two fourth grade girls named Sonja and Jessica ran to the center of the jump rope. The group started singing loudly the *Teddy Bear* song as ropes began to circle around the two girls in the center. The two girls did not perform the motions of the song (like it is traditionally taught in the music classroom), but increasingly sped the tempo of the song and culminated by counting out loud (starting at number one) to see who could go the longest before tripping on the rope. Sonia was the first person to trip on the rope, which made Jessica the winner who was then challenged by another girl who wanted to play the game.

**Figure 26.**  
*Teddy Bear Transcription and Lyrics*

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear

trans. by A. Soto

Voice

Ted-dy Bear Ted-dy Bear Turn Ar-ound Ted-dy Bear Ted-dy Bear Touch the Ground

Teddy Bear Song Lyrics:  
 Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn around.  
 Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the ground.  
 Teddy bear, teddy bear, tie your shoe.  
 Teddy bear, teddy bear, that will do.  
 Teddy bear, teddy bear, say your prayers.  
 Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn off the light.  
 Teddy bear, teddy bear, say goodnight!  
 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, etc...

After a few rounds of this game, I heard some chanting from a group of three fifth grade boys who were in a circle near the tetherballs. They each had placed one knee on the ground and the other knee bent allowing one foot to point in the circle. I heard, “Zapatitos

Blancos, Zapatitos Azul, Dime cuantos años tienes tu” (see Figure 27). As Carlos was chanting, he was pointing to the other boy’s shoes on the beat of the chant. When the chant ended, Carlos landed on Mario’s foot and he became “it”. Max, the other boy, moaned, “Oh no.” Mario had just been chosen to be the one to compete against Carlos in the tetherball game and Max had to wait for another round before he could play. I asked him where they learned this chant. They responded they learned it from either a family member or friend. They said it was used it to find out who is “it” in a game of their choosing. It is very similar to the chant and game called *Bubble Gum, Bubble Gum* that is also used to find the person who will play next or become “it.”

**Figure 27.**  
*Zapatitos Blancos Chant Transcription and Lyrics in English- and Spanish-Language*

Zapatitos Blancos

trans. by A. Soto

Za-pa-ti-tos Blan-cos      Za-pa-ti-tos azul      Di-me cuan-tos año-s      tien-es tu!

<i>Spanish</i>	<i>English</i>
Zapatitos Blancos	Little White Shoes
Zapatitos Azul	Little Blue Shoes
Dime cuantos años	Tell me how many years
Tienes tu!	You have (or how old are you)

The children of Riverview Elementary utilized their time during recess in a variety of ways. With much energy to burn off, the children played on the jungle gyms, soccer, tag, tetherball, four square, hopscotch, marbles, and other created games. The children were musically active through these various games like jump rope, finding out who is “it,”

handclapping games, and in their social groups where they often sing songs together as a group. Children also used recess time to practice their recorders or to prepare for the Cinco de Mayo talent show.

Kathryn Marsh had observed that musical play includes songs that may be “owned, spontaneously performed, and orally transmitted by children and usually involve text, movement, and rhythmic elements” and may be derived from an ongoing children’s culture or from their cultural environment (2008, p. 4). The children were demonstrating knowledge of common American singing and clapping games like *Miss Sue* and *Teddy Bear*, as well as Mexican games found in an informal play like *Zapatitos Blancos* contributing to their development of a bimusical identity.

***“I know how to dance!”***. Students were exhibiting their bimusical identity in a myriad of ways through their singing, instrument playing, and knowledge of the cultural and musical context for English language and Spanish language music. Children were familiar with the dance styles associated with their preferred musical genres usually surrounding the musics of hip hop and many of the regional Mexican musics. It was clear that the children were immersed in the folkloric dances of Mexico, which was evident at the Cinco de Mayo celebrations, but children were also cognizant of the dances that accompanied the conjunto, Tejano, pasito duranguense, and hip-hop genres. Conjunto, Tejano, and pasito duranguense are specifically dance musics with performances always involving dance. Children’s participation in these dances at school, at home, or at community events allow the children to connect and participate in a cultural event that becomes a part of their musical identity. As they partake in these dances at weddings, quinceañeras, and parties, they are active participants in creating and displaying their ethnic and musical identity. Hutchinson (2007)

remarked that this music can be used to help immigrants adjust to a new life and as a resource in dealing with negative responses to their ethnicity. She commented that this music, “speaks to the immigrants” recontextualizing experiences by taking older Mexican songs and revamping them through the use of electronics. And for the children of immigrants, duranguense serves literally to map an identity” (Hutchinson, 2007, p. 196). Regardless of whether children were immigrants or not, participating in these Mexican dances allows the children to learn the repertoire, to understand the song structure and form (necessary to be able to dance properly), and to understand the contextual cues and performance styles as they not only dance, but watch and listen to the performers on stage. Furthermore, to understand and be able to move to the subtle nuances, rhythms, and structures of the music, children are revealing their musical knowledge of the Mexican genres.

During my radio scans, I became aware that the children could dance to conjunto and Tejano music. During an interview with four third grade students in the computer lab during their music class, three girls, (Sonya, Marta, and Linda and one boy named, Jesus) talked about their favorite music. I then scanned the radio for some musical selections that they could recognize or identify. The first recognizable selection that they recognized was a song by Selena, titled *Bidi Bidi Bom Bom*, which is a Tejano song played with a cumbia beat. As soon as the song started playing, the four children’s faces lit up and they all raised their hand enthusiastically, indicating that they knew the song. Sonya shouted, without waiting to be called, “Oh!” Sonya, and Marta shouted “Selena!” Linda said with a smile “I like this!” I asked the children again if they knew Selena and they all nodded in agreement. Marta started moving her arms in a swinging motion in her chair and the other Sonya started giggling. I

asked, “Do you know how to dance to this?” Sonya replied, “Yeah,” as she was getting up from her chair. “It’s *cumbia*.” She started to describe what cumbia was, and agreed to teach it to me. At this point, Marta was out of her chair too. Although she was embarrassed and laughing, she started to do the basic cumbia step of moving her feet back while twisting her body from side to side as she kept the beat with her arms bent and tucked close to her body. The girl next to her started to move as well, but then stopped because she was afraid to dance in front of the camera. I asked Jesus, who was singing along with the music, and Linda, who was still sitting in her chair, if they knew how to dance to cumbia and Linda replied, “I know, but I don’t want to go up there” (referring to the fact that she was also embarrassed to dance in front of the camera).

In addition, to understanding the dances of conjunto and Tejano, many of the students were also knowledgeable of the relatively new dance called the pasito duranguense. The second grade teacher, Mr. Castillo mentioned that the dances were changing among the younger generation. Being a native of Mexico, he commented,

I try to go back to Mexico every year. Things are changing. Even the dances that they are doing in school are changing and I use to dance a lot. Kids are learning something new. When I was a teenager in Mexico, I use to listen to oldies in Spanish – like Romantic music you know. The stuff right now is pure noise and jumping for dances (he is referring to pasito duranguense). It is totally different.

Dancing pasito duranguense involves lots of energy and is quite a work out because of the fast tempo and intricate moves. People dance in partners face-to-face or separately side-by-side. They step side to side like *merengue*, but use more of their hips like if they are marching or dancing a very fast hopping polka step that incorporates elements of swing

dancing. Personalized movements and turns can be added to the movements and there are several ways to dance to this music.

In a step called *la campana* (the bell), the dancing couple keep their upper bodies mostly still as their legs, wide apart, move in an arc from one side to the other like the clapper of a bell. They seem barely to touch the ground as they spring from one foot to the other; as one toe touches the ground, the other leg may accent the step by executing a small kick in the air. (Hutchinson, 2007, p. 56-7)

This dance was more familiar to the older students in fourth and fifth grades. Even though I was unable to observe students dancing to this music, they mentioned that they were familiar with the music and the dance steps in passing conversations at lunch, recess, or in the halls during school. This was evident as I interviewed two fourth grade students. I played a pasito duranguense selection and Samantha commented: “I like duranguense. It is a music that is in Spanish. It is a band. It is like...” Then Elizabeth interrupted, “It is like when we usually go to parties and we dance to it.” Samantha said, “Oh yeah. I know how to dance to it. With a partner. I use to dance with my cousin Patty. I can only dance with people cause if don’t dance with anyone, I feel weird.” These two girls demonstrated that they were aware with this genre of music is played and the appropriate form of dancing is. It is not a dance that you would dance to alone, but with a partner.

Children were also cognizant of the dances related to a mainstream popular music that was performed on the MTV or on the Disney Channel. One very popular dance tune that was discussed in many of my interviews was a hip hop song *Crank That*, sung by Soulja Boy; this song is also known informally as the *Superman* Song according to the children. As I was interviewing a couple of third grade students, I played the song *Crank That*. Monica

mentioned, “My cousin over there in Mexico, she knows the Superman”. The other girl, Celina, interjected, “Soulja Boy.” “Yeah that, she know the moves.” (she demonstrates the dance while moving her hands in the style of the dance). Celina remarked, “Yeah, me too.” I asked her to show me and she replied, “ I’m shy. It goes like this....” She then proceeded to show and talk me through the dance moves and Monica responded by telling me what her cousin does during the “Superman” part. This dance was performed on videos showcased on television shows. Children, adolescents, and adults perform this dance at parties, clubs, and other celebrations in North America.

During an interview for a couple of fifth grade students named Melissa and Sonja, I played *Crank That*. Melissa she started to sing along, “Soulja Boy off in this oh, watch me crank it, watch me roll, watch me crank dat, Soulja Boy, Then Superman dat oh.” When asked if she recognized the song, she responded, “Yes, I know how to dance it.” I replied, “Can you show me?” She was not comfortable dancing on camera, but Sonja urged her on. She arose from her chair and I played the song again. She began to jump and cross her legs twice and then she touched her foot behind her with her opposite hand. She did this twice and then did the “Superman move” in which she put her arms out in front her, leaned forward, and then swung her arms to either side and jumped several times to the beat. She did this a couple of times before we started laughing, and she then sat down so we could continue the interview.

The children of Riverview were learning to dance from their family members, friends, or from the television shows that they were exposed to. They were familiar with dance styles associated with the English- and Spanish-language music such as conjunto, Tejano, pasito duranguense, break dancing (as performed at the Talent Show), and of mainstream American

popular music such as hip-hop. In addition, some of the children practiced Mexican folkloric dances that they intended to perform during the Cinco de Mayo celebrations held at Riverview Elementary School. The children of Riverview Elementary School were developing their dancing moves in a style that reflected that they knew something of these performance traditions.

### **Summary**

Children were developing their bimusical and bicultural identities through the music they actively participated in and through the music they passively listened to at home, in their local community, and within their “imagined” community, supported through media and technology. Green (2002) posited that there are informal music learning practices that can supplement formal music education. She suggested that within informal learning

young musicians largely teach themselves or ‘pick up’ skills and knowledge, usually with the help or encouragement of their family and peers, by watching and imitating musicians around them and by making reference to recordings or performances and other live events involving their chosen music. (p. 5)

The Riverview children acknowledged that they learned many of the songs, games, and dances from their parents, grandparents, siblings, extended family and friends. Through their participation in family ensembles and through their imitation of their elders and their participation at home and community events, the Riverview Elementary children were developing a bimusical identity in Western classical music (church music), folk songs and clapping games. They were singing Mexican folk songs (*Zapatitos Blancos*) and delving deeper into the sonic structures through their dances of Mexican and Mexican American Spanish language music. Family and community members supported these musicking

behaviors by providing the children with instruments, radios, CD players, mp3 players, CDs, satellite or cable television. Parents encouraged children to participate in cultural community events or to record a music album. They also encouraged their children to learn ballet folkloric dances by allowing them to participate in the Cinco de Mayo celebration. Parents and family members largely impacted the children's bimusical identity. The informal music learning experiences for children enriched and supplemented the formal music learning that took place at Riverview Elementary School.

## Chapter Six: Conclusion

Research on children's development of musical identities (Bennett, 2000; Hargreaves, 2005; Hudson, 2006; MacDonald, Hargreaves, and Miell, 2002) indicates that musical identity is multifaceted with many different layers and levels of complexity that may be present in one individual. Turner & Onorato (1999) found that the different components of a person's identity may resonate more or less in different social contexts. Schwartz, Luyckx, & Vignoles (2011) contended that, "multiple aspects of identity are not independent of each other-- rather, they intersect and interact with each other (e.g., Amiot, de la Sablonnière, Terry, & Smith 2007); Crenshaw, 1991)" (p. 4). Particular attention has been paid to the ethnic identities of minority children (Bernal et al., 1990; Jasinskaja-Lahti & Liebkind, 2001; Phinney, 1990; Villa, 2000; Padilla, 2006; Rodgers et al., 2012), but there has been little study to date on children's musical interests and familiarities as it intersects with ethnic identity (O'Hagin & Harnish, 2001). Examination of the bimusical sensibilities of minority children, in relationship to the school and community culture has been minimally addressed by Clements (2008) and Teicher (1995), but questions remain of the musical identities among children of particular ethnic-cultural minority groups. Of particular interest in this research are the following matters? (a) how multiple identities arise, (b) what older and newer layers of musical interest there may be in families working their way into contemporary American way of life, (c) how the juxtaposition of a second musical culture (music learned at school) fits with home- and community- cultures, (d) how a school music program fares within the framework of bicultural curriculum, and how children seem to absorb live and mediated musical experiences and take them into their lives. Research on questions of the complicated matrix of children's understanding of music, language, and culture, in home and

school settings, learned informally and informal educational encounters, is yet in an early stage of development, and ethnographic studies of the complexities of these intersecting dimensions are nearly nil.

This ethnographic study of the bimusical identity of Mexican American children in a bilingual elementary school revealed various ways in which children performed, responded to, or articulated their knowledge of expressive musical practices. In the historic ways of American schooling, children are enrolled in schools by their families to gain standard knowledge and skills in language arts, math and science, the social sciences, the humanities, and the arts. When children arrive to American schools from homes in which Spanish-language and culture (including music) is integral to their family life, they experience the typical crunch-down period of learning valued mainstream and historic perspectives in the English-language. Thus, Mexican American children know their home and school cultures as separate and distinctive “territories.” There are academic and social challenges for the children, as well as for the teachers who facilitate their learning. With the support of parents who understand the importance of survival and success in mainstream culture, children are turned over to professional educators who guide them towards knowing mainstream American culture and school standard values. Parents and teachers alike are sensitive to the transformation that occurs, and many are in agreement that the most favorable result of schooling is that children will gain new perspectives, necessary knowledge and skills, while retaining all that is learned and valued at home and in the local community.

The children of Riverview Elementary School demonstrated their knowledge of two different languages, cultural traditions, and musical identity representing their home and school cultures. Questions of their identities were taken into account through a period of

fieldwork encompassing 37 weeks (along with two additional years spent onsite in a university partnership project serving as facilitator, teacher, and in the last months exclusively as a researcher). This process allowed for the collection of numerous insights, personally expressed and/or demonstrated by 60 children in the course of their time in their bilingual school. (A broader view of the school and community at large was taken into consideration in the fieldwork process, but focal attention quite naturally emerged as I engaged in observations, conversations, and even intentional interviews with some children over others). Various members of the teaching staff were essential in their scope of attention to the goals of the bilingual program and in enriching an understanding of children's participation in music-making through song, musical instruments, and dance.

The purpose of this study was to learn of the bimusical identity of Mexican American children who were living in a community and attending a bilingual-bicultural elementary school and whose majority population was Mexican American. Dimensions in the development of Mexican American children's musical identities were examined, including the influential roles of musical and cultural agents (including parents, classroom teachers, the music teacher, and variously members of the school support staff), the impact of mediated (often mainstream) popular culture, and the influences from within the school and beyond into the community. Children's various degrees of bimusical skill sets and their musical preferences (contributing to their bimusical identity) for listening and learning were ascertained through observations, informal conversations, and personal interviews.

Bimusical identity is a descriptor applied to an individual whose identity is rooted in two musical cultures. This emerges with the knowledge and/or participation of each musical culture which can be demonstrated through listening, singing, playing, or dancing and is

accompanied with the music's context, function, and meaning within the culture. This can lead to the ability to function as a participant in each musical culture.

This chapter presents the principal findings in accordance with the research questions, pertaining to the bimusical identity among the Mexican American children enrolled in an elementary school in the rural town in Washington state's Yakima Valley. The ethnographic research gave way to descriptions as to the nature of the children's musical identity, with some perspective on their bicultural and bilingual experiences, too. A bimusical identity model related to the findings of the research is offered as clarification of the manner in which children may owe their allegiance to two large-order musical categories. Finally, recommendations will be offered for further research and implications for music education practice.

### **Principal Findings Relevant to the Guiding Questions**

A set of guiding questions gave structure to the research fieldwork and methodology. The multiple musical identities of the children at Riverview Elementary School are summarized and woven into the principal findings of the guiding questions.

**Question One:** *What are the musical identities of Mexican American children living in a community (and educated in a school) whose majority population is Mexican? What musical styles and genres are most familiar to the children? What songs do the children know, and how have they learned them? What is the children's involvement with instrumental music, listening, and dance?*

The children at Riverview Elementary School showed themselves to have two distinct musical identities that were connected to the culture of home, school, and the media. MacDonald, Hargreaves, and Miell (2002) advanced a position pertinent to this research that:

“music is a fundamental channel of communication, and we argue that it can act as a medium through which people can construct new identities and shift existing ones in the same way as spoken language” (p. 10). This bimusical identity of the children of Riverview was rich and complex, thus representing the various ways in which they were developing their identity as being Mexican and American as they gained more interaction with musics at home, in the community, and at school. The creation of this bimusical identity paralleled the language acquisition as children expanded their knowledge of the musical repertoire and language as they switched back and forth, sometimes merging the two. Even though the children developed two musical and cultural identities separated by language, each included an array of different musical genres that demonstrates the fluid and muddled nature of our musical and cultural identities (Cottrell, 2007; Green, 2011; Riley & Ettliger, 2010). Cook (2000) expressed that music encompasses cultural identities and that musical selections announce an individual’s true sense of self to the surrounding world. The musical identities of the children of Riverview Elementary School clearly exposed their bimusical sensibilities, as well as the complexities of their cultural identities.

Children demonstrated or explained their interest or experience in Mexican and Mexican American music. They revealed their knowledge of Spanish-language songs widely popular in Mexico and in the United States. Children were familiar with traditional children’s songs such as *Los Pollitos*, *Pin Pon*, and *Que Llueva*, all common songs among children of Mexico or of Mexican descent (Stier, 2009). They had learned these songs from parents, other family members, at their daycare, on the radio, and in music instruction at Riverview Elementary School. Teachers such as; Mr. Castillo, Mrs. Sandoval, and Mrs. Molina played and taught these Mexican folk songs in their classrooms. Many children

recalled having listened to the radio program, *El Jardín de los Niños*, to request favorite Mexican folk songs that they would sing along to at home or at daycare. They also knew the traditional song *Las Mañanitas* because it was sung at birthday celebrations at home and was taught and performed in school music class and concert performances.

It was evident that the national Mexican identity genre (Sheehy, 2006), the music of the mariachi, resonated with the children. Children claimed that they heard mariachi music at home, at family and community celebrations (Cinco de Mayo), and some were drawn to learn to play instruments in the Riverview Elementary mariachi ensemble. Mr. Smith was actively teaching children to sing the melodies to mariachi classics (*Si, Tu Tevas, Las Mañanitas, Y Andale, and Tu, Solo Tu*) on Spanish-language music class days. They could imitate the expressive singing qualities of a canción ranchera, sing the correct musical endings for the various types of mariachi songs, and were not afraid to improvise and belt out a grito at the appropriate moment. Several students (like Marco, a fifth grade student) were knowledgeable of the different types of mariachi strumming guitar patterns and assisted in teaching other students how to play during mariachi rehearsal.

The children were listening, singing, and dancing to a variety of musical genres in Spanish such as folk, pop, hip hop, rock, rap, Christian, Tejano, banda, pasito duranguense, and conjunto music. In addition, children spoke about Spanish telenovelas particularly *Rebelde* (RBD), and were proud to own CDs from the same-named musical groups of this program. Children spoke of their ability to dance to traditional music, or being present being when regional musics of Mexico and of the United States were being played and danced at parties, weddings, community events, and quinceañeras. This familiarity with dance was particularly evident when children (such as a third grade student, Sonya), demonstrated the

Tejano cumbia dance moves. Children were able to name banda, norteño, conjunto, Tejano, and pasito duranguense, hip hop, and pop music as familiar and/ or important music in their experiences. Furthermore, the majority of children at Riverview Elementary School participated in the ballet folkloric dances performed to mariachi tunes at the Cinco de Mayo celebration. They learned many dance variations representing the different regions of Mexico, and then decorated artwork with dancers in clothing and dance styles from these regions. Children's involvement with instrumental music included their instruction or experimentation with the instruments of mariachi and conjunto genres (guitar, violin, vihuela, trumpet, accordion, and guitarrón).

The children of Riverview Elementary School showcased a mainstream American musical identity that encompassed music from the mainstream media, traditional English-language Anglo American children's folk songs, and limited exposure to Western classical music and instruments. They were also learning a modicum of traditional English-language Anglo-American children's songs commonly found in music education programs via Orff-Schulwerk and Kodaly approaches, such as *Hop Old Squirrel* and *Teddy Bear*. Their musical experiences in standard English-language children's songs was limited due to their lack of experience with such songs at home, through the limited home media sources (especially radio and television) that were tuned to English-language music, and because of the part-time music teacher's limited time for featuring English-language children's songs (and only on days when English-language music classes were scheduled). The fourth grade music curriculum was devoted to learning how to read notation and play the soprano recorders, and children sang solfège and imitated Mr. Smith's hand signs in learning basic music fundamentals in preparation for taking the state music exam in fifth grade.

Children were listening, singing, and dancing to songs by current popular mainstream American musicians at the time like Hannah Montana, Selena, Katy Perry, Chris Brown, and Soulja Boy as they tuned to the various radio stations in the Yakima area. When asked to sing a song they commonly selected songs by Hannah Montana, (such as, *Nobody's Perfect* and *I Miss You*). Children also chose to sing *No Air*, by Chris Brown and Jordan Sparks during the Riverview Talent Show. Almost all the children spoke of Hannah Montana, High School Musical, of the Jonas Brothers, and Camp Rock, which are all original programming from the Disney Channel. They were likewise familiar with the hip hop star, Soulja Boy, whose hit *Crank That* was a popular dance that was performed by many of the children. Few children were fortunate to receive private lessons in piano, guitar, and various other standard American-style band and orchestral instruments and piano.

The children of Riverview Elementary School were surrounded by English- and Spanish-language musical expressions from the United States and from Mexico that they preferred to listen to at home, on the television or radio, or that they were performing and experiencing at school. These experiences defined their bimusical identity. Interviews and observations of school culture supported the notion that the children were encouraged to develop skills in and knowledge of the valued musical styles. In support of this observation, Teicher (1995) found that bimusical children develop a primary cultural identity as they participate in musical activities laying a foundation for learning a second musical system and cultural identity. Since the majority of children were most familiar with Mexican song forms prior to school, their primary musical identity in Mexican music laid the foundation for students to be receptive to learning a new musical system based in American mainstream media, Western classical art music, and traditional Anglo-European children's folk songs.

Teicher posited that “Neither primary musical system nor primary cultural identity were compromised. Similar to second language acquisition, bimusicality appears to be an advantage to the children’s psychological well-being as well as development” (p. 86). Even though children revealed limited bimusical skills, this study found that their primary musical identity (Mexican) allowed the Riverview Elementary children to be receptive to the secondary musical identity (American mainstream) while developing positive a bimusical identity that encouraged children to be more active in the musical activities at Riverview Elementary School and more receptive to musical cultures beyond the two.

**Question Two:** *Who were the musical and cultural agents within the school and how are they influential of Mexican-American children’s musical and cultural identities? What roles do administrators, school teachers, and staff play in children’s musical and cultural development? Are there efforts at school to recognize and develop children’s bimusical sensibilities (alongside bicultural and bilingual efforts)?*

The actions of the musical and cultural agents at Riverview Elementary enabled the children to develop a bimusical identity. They assisted directly or indirectly in providing opportunities for children to develop musical skills, practice, and perform both musical cultures within the school environment. These cultural agents provide the contextual information and experiences that allow children to inform themselves and others of their cultural/ethnic identities of being American or Mexican. These agents included teachers, administrators, and school staff.

As an important agent of children’s learning, Mr. Smith was intent in working to develop children’s skills and repertoire. He was a long-time professional music educator, and thus he selected out methods and materials for achieving music education aims. He

spent most of his professional career of some 20 years as a high school band director, although he also developed an expertise in mariachi over the course of running the high school mariachi for a period of five years. His assignment to teach elementary school children was a more recent experience for him (he had been teaching at Riverview Elementary School for just three years), and it was an adjustment yet in progress at the time of this writing. He pursued some specialized study in Orff-Schulwerk, which offered him a repertoire of songs of largely Anglo-American origin. Mr. Smith seemed sincere in his efforts to teach children to sing, to play simple accompaniments, and to learn fundamental notational literacy, although his experience was limited as an elementary school music specialist. The school curriculum allowed for music instruction to be offered once a week for thirty minutes to each classroom of children at Riverview Elementary School.

Classroom teachers were surprisingly effective agents of children's musical (and cultural) identities. They played recordings of Mexican-based traditional music to accompany children's activity periods, such that recordings of mariachi music and children's Spanish-language songs were played regularly while children worked on math and language arts assignments, and on art projects. Some teachers taught Spanish-language songs, such as, *Chocolate* and *Que Llavea*, to their young students, while others conducted in-class rehearsals of Spanish- (and English-) language songs for various school-wide assemblies such as the Winter Concert, the Talent Show, and the Cinco de Mayo celebration. The teachers accommodated the visits by the university partnership students (and myself, as go-between coordinating teacher) for special in-class music sessions. In all, these teachers were effective agents in the musical education of their children, directly and indirectly shaping their repertoire, skill, and musical understanding.

The Riverview Elementary School principal, Mr. Flores, was key to the school music experiences children could know. On the one hand, he supported the hiring of Mr. Smith as music teacher at the school, and was supportive of the plan to teach both English- and Spanish-language songs. He encouraged the development of the school mariachi, approved the borrowing of the mariachi instruments from the secondary school, and drew from the school budget for additional guitars. He hosted the community's Cinco de Mayo celebration, and served as master of ceremonies for the events. The superintendent and assistant superintendent were indirect musical agents by purchasing new Yamaha soprano recorders for the fourth grade students and allowing Mr. Smith to use the mariachi instruments from the high school campus.

While functioning as musical agents, the principal and classroom teachers were also actively engaged in the shaping of children's identities as Mexican Americans. The superintendent, assistant superintendent, and principal all supported the dual language instruction offered at Riverview Elementary and provided funds for professional development for the teachers and aides to supplement the dual language instruction. Because of the cultural and musical activities that were implemented in the classroom and within the school year, children were able to learn, experience, explore, and develop their bimusical and bicultural identities. All agents played an important role in developing and supporting the children's musical and cultural identity while sending positive messages of acceptance to the children of Riverview Elementary, thus solidifying a strong and secure bimusical and bicultural identity.

**Question Three:** *How do family and community members and experiences influence children's musical and cultural identities? What roles do family members (parents, siblings,*

*grandparents, extended family) play in children's musical and cultural development? How do radio/television, Internet, and other technologies play into children's musical and cultural development?*

The children of Riverview Elementary School were entering the classroom with established musical identities because of the experiences and environment created by the parents, extended family, and community members. Children were learning two languages at home, soaking up cultural identities through their families and their “imagined” communities (located on the radio and television), and were participating in a variety of musical experiences at home and within the community. As supported by Jiménez (2010) his statement supports the findings of this study. He noted that Mexican Americans connect to their ethnic identity in a variety of ways: “Churches, schools, restaurants, and grocery stores, as well as popular culture, also provides access to ethnic raw materials” (p. 135). These community and home spaces provide the musical soundscape offering children a chance to learn the contextual and musical information related to their bimusical identity. The families and the children of Riverview were utilizing their language, music, culture, and cultural resources to define and enrich their musical and cultural identities outside of the school community.

Linda, a student at Riverview Elementary School, told of learning many Spanish-language songs from her father and how she and her little brother would practice with her father's conjunto group in the basement. Jessica recalled attending her mother's mariachi rehearsal when she was very young, which is why she could sing many of the standard mariachi tunes. Marco learned to play guitar from his father, and Anita plucked pairs of strings on the guitarrón just like her mother did when she was in a mariachi group. Children

spoke of learning and experimenting on the guitar, accordion, or the drum set that were purchased by their parents or family members. Other parents, like Mrs. Sanchez provided her child with instrumental lessons in piano. Children noted that their parents or grandparents would purchase CDs of Mexican children's folk songs or favorite musical artists at the *pulga* (flea market). Parents were not only communicating the musical language to their children, but also reinforcing the Spanish-language to the children. Little information was gathered about the involvement of grandparents in the children's musical development, but a few children mentioned that even if their parents did not speak Spanish to them, their grandparents would only speak to them in Spanish to encourage teaching of the native language. Children sang playground chants like *Zapatitos Blancos* and the *Miss Sue* handclapping game from siblings or cousins.

The surrounding community assisted in defining the children's bimusical identity. Children participated in Mexican religious ceremonies (Las Posadas and the Virgen de Guadalupe celebration during the Christmas season) and sung in the English- and Spanish-language at regular church services. Rosa, a third grade child, created a Spanish-language CD with the help of her family, the church pastor, and Riverview Elementary School teacher, Mr. Yolo. With many businesses owned by Mexicans or Mexican Americans, children and families had access to traditional cultural food, clothing, and music in businesses where Spanish-language was spoken and accepted. Children spoke of owning CDs or DVDs that were purchased from the local *pulga* or flea market, where they could buy five CDs for five dollars and/or listen to the music being played in the local Mexican grocery store or restaurant.

Süss et. al. (2001) found that the use of information and communication technology are present in the cultural spaces of children’s daily lives and that there is a need to explore their involvement with these technologies that is rooted in “wider settings of cultural and social processes: the institutional organization of childhood, schooling, family and the different uses of private and public space” (p. 4). The Mexican American children of Riverview Elementary School were keen to use information and communication technology, some of which enhanced their musical experience—especially via radio and television. Radio programs like *El Jardin de Los Niños (El Viejito)*, Disney channel television shows and movies, and Spanish-language telenovelas provided a soundscape for children’s bimusical development.

Media and technology were influential in the homes in which the children were being raised. Parents, siblings, grandparents, and extended family influenced the children’s musical and ethnic identities by providing opportunities to listen, learn, and perform music in both English and Spanish—live and via the media. Children of Riverview Elementary were entering the classroom with an established musical sensibility resulting from their home environment. They were learning two languages at home, soaking up ethnic-cultural identities through their families and their “imagined” communities on the radio, television, and participating in a variety of musical experiences.

### **Bimusical Identity Model**

The musical and cultural agents of Riverview Elementary School and surrounding community encouraged children to become bilingual and bicultural, thus enabling them to develop their bimusical identity. This bimusical identity was influenced by the children’s experiences at home, at school, within the community, and their interactions with technology.

Figure 28 offers a conceptualization of children's musical identities at Riverview Elementary School. A model is provided to show how a child's bimusical identity is created by separate entities that can be combined to form one shared bimusical identity comprised of two overarching musical experiences. The Riverview children held on to two distinctive musical identities: (1) their American mainstream English-language musical identity and, (2) their Mexican or Spanish-language musical identity. The top half of the model displays each musical identity as a separate entity that can stand alone and which is influenced by the factors that surround the children in the top part of the diagram (home, school, media, and community). Because of the nature of the school's dual language program, the Spanish-language and English-language days of music instruction, the presence of the mariachi (and of the ballet folklórico) at school, and the persistence of mediated music through multiple channels, children were constantly alternating from one musical identity to another (which is signified by the arrow between the two spheres). The two overarching musical identities, that of the mainstream American culture and the Spanish-language Mexican expressions, were stable and secure throughout interviews and observations. The children's bimusical identity encapsulated the identity of the dominant culture (American and the identity of the culture of origin (Mexican) enabling them to be bicultural. Yeh and Hwang (2000) summarize this bicultural definition as such:

Bicultural competence is the integration of two cultures without feeling the tension between the two (Domanico et al., 1995)... Bicultural competence differs from notions of interdependent self in that it only recognizes two main cultural identities (dominant and culture of origin.. (p. 423).

Interestingly, the musical identities of the Riverview Elementary School children were not of equal value as they were situated in a school and community whose majority population was Mexican American; this was in fact often the dominant influence on musical identity and interest as it was also dominant in the choice of language and cultural practices at large. The size of each musical identity is different, thus reflecting the strength of each. The Mexican musical identity was stronger and therefore is represented with a larger circle. The children were more greatly skilled in the music of Mexico and Mexican Americans, and had a more thorough-going understanding of its cultural contexts and meanings.

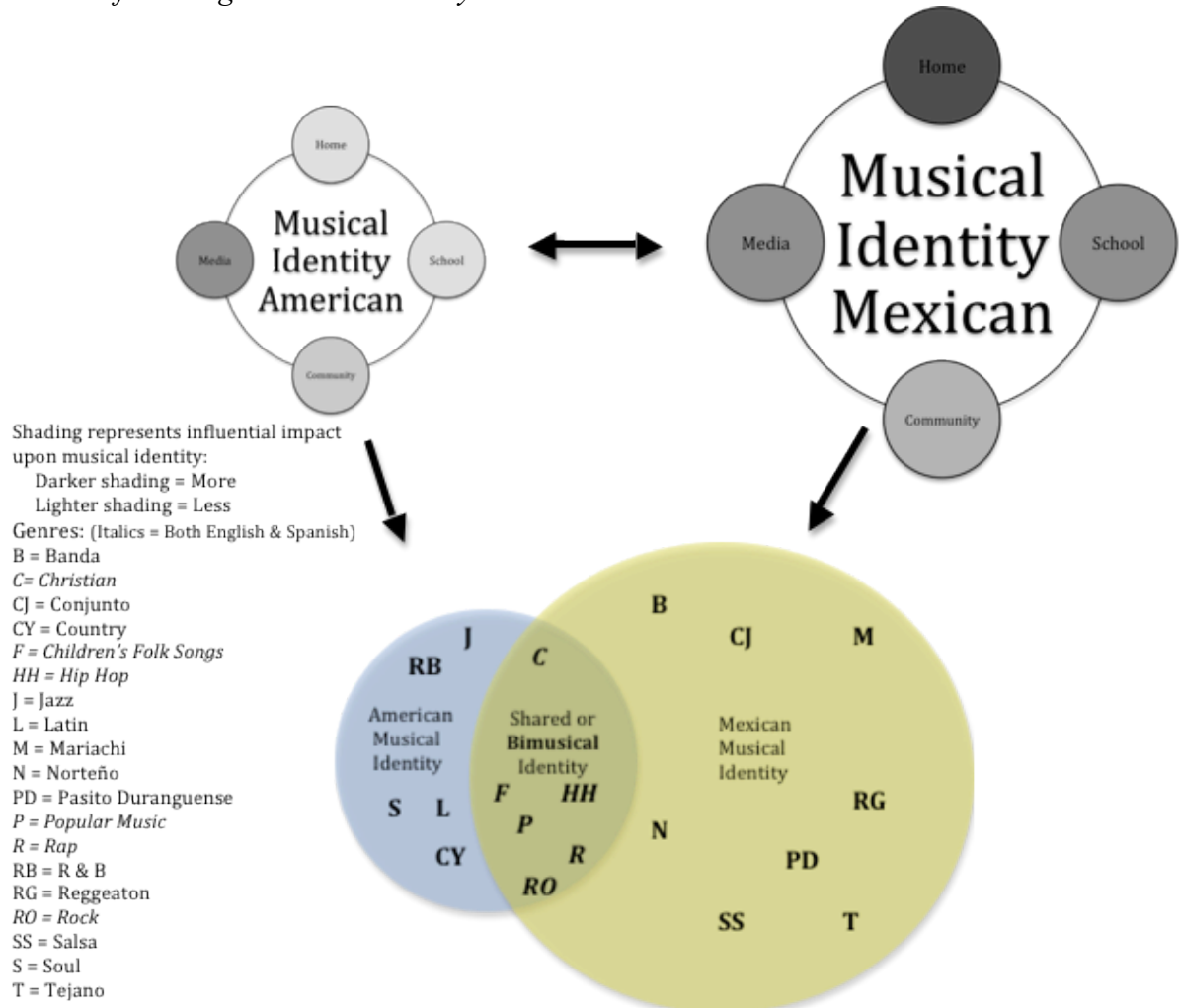
There was equal attention given to both languages and cultures within the school curriculum, and yet this was not the case in the music instruction that the children received. Because of the music teacher's limited training and experience in teaching children (as well as a lack of resources and time within the school schedule), children had only limited exposure to Western art music and performance practices. Their training in Western theory, aural skills, and compositional processes, which are prominent in some school programs, was nearly nil at Riverview Elementary School. Children were enveloped with the sounds of Spanish-language music at home, on "Spanish" music class days, and in school performances throughout the year. Furthermore, family and community influences provided a wealth of information on Mexican music, but there were few experiences in Western music that extended beyond exposure to the mediated mainstream American popular music. Each of the various influences (home, school, media, and community) impacted the musical identity differently. This is represented in the model by the extent of shading in each circle surrounding each identity. Darker shades of each sphere or influence (home, school, media,

and community) signify a stronger impact on the musical identity and lighter shades symbolizes a lesser impact due to fewer experiences or less exposure of the musical culture.

The second half of the model displays the two musical identities that join together and overlap to form a person's bimusical identity in ways that utilize musical knowledge, skills, and contextual information. As per Teicher's research (1995), the Riverview children also benefited from "experience in multiple musical cultures without compromise to the music culture of choice. In addition, the musical advantages of experience with diverse tonalities, rhythms, and contexts, may result in expanded musicality" (p. 87).

Furthermore, these musical identities share an overarching main culture and language, but are comprised by a variety of different genres. The assortment of Mexican musical genres reveals the complexity of the musical and cultural identities of the children of Riverview Elementary School. They are at ease listening, singing, dancing, and describing the different genres that originated in Mexico and in the United States of America that are associated with Mexican and Mexican Americans of different geographic locations and of different generations. In addition, many of the children lumped these musics under one general category: "Mexican" or "Spanish." Each musical sphere contains the capital alphabet letter that corresponds to the various genres that construct their American or Mexican musical identity. Their shared bimusical identity contains the genres from each separate musical identity in addition to in genres that were in both the English- and Spanish-language.

**Figure 28.**  
*Facets Influencing Bimusical Identity.*



It is important for a person's ethnic group to be valued and appreciated or else children can develop negative feelings about their own ethnicity (Phinney, 1990). Acceptance of the Mexican and American musical identities was evident in conversations with children, parents, and staff at Riverview Elementary School. Children were not ashamed or afraid to speak the Spanish-language or to sing, play, or dance to songs from both identities. In fact, they were excited to participate in Spanish-language conversations, music, and cultural events. Through observation, students showed how proud and thrilled they were to dress up in their Mexican dresses and attire, decorate their hair with lots of bows and ribbons, and to dance the Mexican dances. They were ecstatic to participate in the mariachi ensemble or to sing the Spanish-language songs in class.

### **Construction of a Child's Musical Identity**

Social anthropologist Thomas Fredrik Webery Barth's (1969) approach towards investigating ethnicity has been widely used and in which he argues that the notion of culture in a set, bounded system should be discarded because, "categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact, and information, but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained *despite* changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories" (p. 84). In discussing the construction of culture, Nagel (1994) modernized Barth's "vessel" concept in which it is the "ethnic *boundary* that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses" (Barth, 1969, p. 15). He turns this "vessel" into a shopping cart as an analogy for construction of an ethnic boundary.

We can think of ethnic boundary construction as determining the *shape* of the shopping cart (size, number of wheels, composition, etc.); ethnic culture, then, is

composed of the things that we put into the cart – art, music, dress, religion, norms, beliefs, symbols, myths, customs. It is important that we discard the notion that culture is simply an historical legacy; culture is *not* a shopping cart that comes to us already loaded with a set of historical cultural goods. Rather we construct culture by picking and choosing items from the shelves of the past and the present. . . .cultures change; they are borrowed, blended, rediscovered, and reinterpreted (p. 162).

This concept of a *shopping cart* or an ethnic boundary can be applied to the construction of a child's musical identity boundary. Gender, ethnicity, age, culture, language(s), and socioeconomic status will determine what the *shopping cart* will look like. Transfer this notion to a child's musical identity and the *shopping cart* becomes an *mp3 player* (see figure 29). The type of *mp3 player* (a child's musical identity boundary) will be determined by the child's gender (color of mp3 player), ethnicity (brand of mp3 player), age (physical size of mp3 player), language(s) (headphones for mp3 player), socioeconomic status (memory size of mp3 player), and culture (decorations/mp3 cover). A child's musical identity is constructed by the music that is familiar or preferred that gets stored on the *mp3 player*. These musical selections are subject to change over the course of a person's life as they grow and gain new musical experiences. In addition, the type of *mp3 player* may change as a person's characteristics (listed above) changes as well. These musical selections are all stored on one device and can be sorted and played according to genres (separate musical identities), playlists (mixed musical identities), or can be set to shuffle (mixed musical identities) to randomly play.

**Figure 29.**

*Mp3 Player Representing the Construction of a Child's Musical Identity*



As seen with the majority of children of Riverview Elementary School, their ethnicity, family and community culture, and school music experiences impacted their bimusical identity because there were preferences for both English-and Spanish-language music song selections in their *mp3 player*. Although the Riverview Elementary children's *mp3 player* will have many similar characteristics, the individual contents of each player will be unique to each child.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The children of Riverview Elementary School developed a bimusical identity through their musical and cultural experiences at home, school, and within the community. Even though the children of Riverview Elementary displayed instances of bimusicality, children did not fully develop their bimusical competence in two different musical systems. Research

on bimusicality sensibilities of children (Clements, 2008; Teicher, 2008) has found that bimusical skills expands a child's musical fluency (Anderson & Campbell, 2010; Teicher, 1995). An investigation of children exhibiting advanced bimusical abilities and their impact on learning and performing new music could prove the importance of teaching bimusicality within in a music education curriculum.

Musical and ethnic identity is always subject to change based on the environment and personal experiences of an individual (Green, 2011; MacDonald, Hargreaves, & Miell, 2002). Even though this ethnographic research was able to investigate the development of the children's bimusical identity in their elementary years, a longitudinal study that follows the children through middle and high school will serve well to inform music educators of the major influences that affect a person's musical and cultural identity as they transition from childhood to adulthood. Further research could reveal the importance of maintaining musical and cultural connections in learning institutions.

Often times, a dual language curriculum does not extend into the curriculum of a music classroom (Abril, 2003). Even though this ethnographic study examined the children's musical and language preferences in class, future research devoted to the *impact* of music and its effectiveness on a dual language or bilingual curriculum should be conducted.

Children expressed that they enjoyed learning music in both languages, because it often gave them a chance to improve their language skills in their second language. Children also mentioned that it was easier to learn and to retain a song in music class that was taught in their primary language.

The bimusical, bilingual, and bicultural sensibilities of Mexican American children found in this ethnography should provide music educators some insight into the rich and

varied lives of these students who will be in a music classroom. The school classroom demographics are changing rapidly in both urban and rural school districts. “More than half of the growth in the total population of the United States between 2000 and 2010 was due to the increase in the Hispanic population” (Enis, Rios-Vargas, Albert, 2011, p. 2). Hispanics of Mexican origin increased 54 percent from 20.6 million in 2000 to 31.8 million in 2010 (Enis Rios-Vargas, Albert, 2011). Hispanics, the largest student minority population, accounted for 22% of students who were enrolled in public school in the United States for the 2009 – 2010 school year (NCDS). Mexican and Mexican American students are becoming a larger presence in our music classrooms and educators should understand the musical and ethnic complexities of these students.

This study examined Mexican Americans students as they navigated their way in a bilingual and bicultural elementary school. While there is a plethora of research on multicultural curriculum, the study of music within the lives of Mexican American children has been nearly absent from the literature. Understanding the skills and resources that these students are entering our classrooms with, as well as the issues and obstacles that they may face, will allow the music education profession to better serve students in our classrooms through our curriculum and musical offerings, thus hopefully retaining them and enabling them to continue with a life long study in music.

Campbell (2010) remarked that children “live within the surrounds of cell phones and Facebook, of texting and twittering- the stuff of science fiction and fertile imaginations just a few generations ago. They are “digital natives,” born after the emergence of online social digital technologies such as Usenet and bulletin board systems (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008)” (p. 219). Further research on the impact and demonstration of children or adolescent’s musical

and ethnic identity displayed on emerging technological platforms, such as Facebook, could reveal interesting intersections between musical and ethnic identity. Are people able to define and establish their ethnic identity through their connections on social media websites? Does this impact their musical identities as well?

Finally, while many ethnomusicologists and music educators are studying children's musical culture, there is little attention paid to the bimusical sensibilities of children and adolescents in music in and out of the school classroom. Further exploration of what it means to be bimusical and how it may be defined in different cultural and ethnic groups can add to a teacher's understanding of how to teach children of various ethnicities. In addition, bimusical teaching may influence the curriculum offered in a classroom that incorporates or utilizes bimusical talents. Teachers may ignore or fail to recognize bimusical talents because they may be different from the musical skills taught in a Western or American music classroom. This research can be supplemented by an inquiry into the inherent message that children receive about their own culture and identity in relation to the music instruction that is offered at school (Pieridou-Skoutella, 2007). What kind of messages do music curriculums send to children and adolescents that include (or do not include) bimusical sensibilities? Do the children or adolescents receive positive or negative messages about their ethnic identity and how does that impact their musical and cultural identity?

This ethnographic research explored the various ways in which the children's musical identities were created, defined, and impacted by the school, local community, and "imagined" communities existing in media and technology. The findings from this study have produced a number of further questions. It is the hope that the core of this research will enable others to continue investigating questions raised so that the field of music education

can gain a better understanding of the complexities that surround children of various ethnicities in order to better serve them.

### **Implications for Music Education Practices**

It is important for music educators to learn of the bimusical identity that their Mexican American children (or children of ethnicities) may be entering with in their music classrooms. Green (2011) concluded that music educators need to understand the “processes of musical identity formation” and “how varied the contents of musical identity for individuals and groups in different places” because these concepts impact how a student learns or how a teacher instructs (p. 18). Teachers will do best to investigate their student’s musical abilities and interests through personal music surveys, reflections, individual student meetings, or parent/student group meetings. Music educators can also ask students and family members for help in generating lessons, ask them to assist in lecture-demonstrations, and aid in teaching musical instruments and styles of differing musical cultures represented in the classroom.

Mexican American children have complex cultural and musical identities that should not be stereotyped or pigeonholed into one category. Mexican American children may be familiar or unfamiliar with the Spanish language, culture, or music, depending on which generation they may be or what personal experiences they have encountered in their home and community. Educators need to adapt instruction for students who may not speak or understand English so that those children will not fall behind in music class. Offering music activities in the primary language will give students opportunities to excel and participate, while creating a safe, nurturing space. Mexican American children should have their music and culture presented in the classroom as a valid form of musical study, enabling them to

learn about the rich complexities inherent in their music. The more secure these students are with their ethnic identity, the more they will be able to socialize with other children of varying ethnicities.

Because the music teacher was onboard with the school's goals of providing a bilingual and bicultural education at Riverview Elementary School, students learned multiple languages and were able to fully participate in two cultures through their music experiences. Music educators who work in a bilingual and bicultural school should collaborate together with the staff, teachers, and school administration to help carry out the ideals of programs, in which they are situated in. Although working in a bilingual, bicultural school is not the norm, this research does not advocate solely the idea of focusing on the two dominant cultures of a school community. The music curriculum should provide a sampling of musics from different cultures, but attention should be paid to the different musical cultures that students may already be involved with outside of the school music classroom. Music teachers should also work with bilingual or ESL teachers in order to help supplement language acquisition through music. Music teachers should also address and work with ESL students in the music classroom so that those students do not fall behind in their music studies.

Furthermore, Anderson and Campbell (2011) stated that in order for us to carry out the National Association of Music Educators (NAfME) slogan that music is for every child, "school curriculum must be more broadly defined to encompass the ethnic diversity of American schools and society" (p.vii). Just as multicultural education reconceptualizes the curriculum to include diverse ethnic and cultural perspectives, music curriculum should incorporate a diversity of musics and musical practices in all grade levels and categories of

music education (Abril, 2009). Teachers should also diversify their methods of delivery to be on par with the musics that children encounter everyday through the media and through technology.

It was evident that the Riverview Elementary School and surrounding community encouraged the children to develop their ethnic identities through their language and culture that included musical practices. The research suggests that children are entering the music classroom with a set of skills in musics that may not be part of the Western paradigm or that may not be related to the musics that are taught in the common curriculum for general music, band, choir, and/or orchestra. Gloria Anzaldúa (2007) discussed her experiences in dealing with “linguistic terrorism” in which she was made to feel ashamed because language was not validated.

So if you want to really hurt me, talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity – I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself. Until I can accept as legitimate Chicano Texas Spanish, Tex-Mex and all the other languages I speak, I cannot accept the legitimacy of myself. Until I am free to write bilingually and to switch codes without having always to translate, while I still have to speak English or Spanish when I would rather speak Spanglish, and as long as I have to accommodate the English speakers rather than having them accommodate me, my tongue will be illegitimate. I will no longer be made to feel ashamed of existing. (p. 81)

If ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity, then it can be said that musical identity can be twin skin to ethnic identity. Thus, if teachers are not validating children’s musical identity in the music classroom or music education program, are they sending negative

messages to our students, causing them to feel ashamed of their bimusical skill sets or made to feel that music associated with their ethnic identity is illegitimate? Would the exclusion of their favored music make them feel or believe that they are less musical or not legitimate musicians because they are not valued within the school system and as part of everyday life? If children cannot take pride in the music that surrounds them in their everyday lives, can they take pride in being called a “real” musician?

Teachers can best serve their students by learning what bimusical (or multimusical) sensibilities may be in the children that are in their classroom so that they can incorporate musical cultures into the curriculum. This allows for a musical skill set that may encompass a musical and/or ethnic identity to be validated in the classroom and be included in the larger picture of what “real” music represents. Teachers hold the power to send positive messages about the different musics that may define their children’s musical and ethnic identity.

## Epilogue

Over the course of this research, I found myself listening to a variety of different musics similar to those genres of the Riverview Elementary School children. I replayed two albums in particular; a Selena album (as the 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her death passed), and the *Frida* soundtrack (that incorporated a variety of regional musical expressions from Mexico). These albums aided my reconnection and rediscovery of my own Mexican musical roots and heritage. When a favorite tune began to play, I would often stop writing and start singing along.

Although, I grew up dancing and listening to many of the conjunto, Tejano, and mariachi songs, I still did not appreciate the music that surrounded me because I was holding tightly to the American band culture in which I was involved in since middle school. Through the study of my musical culture, conjunto and Tejano, at the University of Washington, I was able to reconnect my musical identity to my own heritage. In a sense, I was adding another playlist to the *mp3 player* of my own musical identity. I was fortunate to have been able to experience *Seattle Fandango*, where I was able to play, sing, and dance to *son jarocho* (the music from Veracruz). Even though it was not the music that I grew up with, it was in some ways the music of my heritage. It was music that utilizes my language and many of the instruments that I had heard before. There were moments at these rehearsals and music lessons that I felt more in tune with the music (and the essence of being a musician) than I had ever felt sitting in a band rehearsal or concert. I was able to witness young children discover their own heritage, who could out dance and out-play some of the adults in the group, thus developing their musical skills in this genre.

These musical experiences and conversations in Spanish would transport me back home and would bring tears to my eyes. I missed expanding my cultural and musical identity because I left my home for college at the age of 18, rarely returning home. I left the Rio Grande Valley, trying to escape my Mexican heritage on this quest in order to become assimilated, educated, and superior to my community. I had always felt that the music of my culture was not important -- not good enough. I was the one who was misinformed. How ironic that it seemed that the farther away I got from my culture, the more I longed for it and appreciated it. I have often felt incomplete as a Mexican American because I am still learning the many traditions of my culture and trying to relearn the language and music. I learn of the changing music scene through my computer or iPod because I am not surrounded with it at parties, festivals, on the radio, or at celebrations in my present-day community. As I come full circle in my journey as a person and music educator, I am now guiding teachers in the incorporation of *conjunto*, *Tejano*, *mariachi*, *son jarocho*, and music of other cultures into their music classrooms even as I gain a better understanding and respect for the music of my culture.

Children who are of a different generation of Mexican Americans are trying to understand their own cultural identity and to assimilate within the mainstream American culture. This can be done in many ways, but it is always done with music. People have the music of "home" and of "family" that represents their personal and ethnic identities. I have held close to my own musical identity throughout this research. The music of my Mexican American youth has lifted my spirits, when I had wanted to quit or give up. It centered me culturally and reminded me of the importance of continuing and completing my study. I would not want Mexican American children to struggle with their identity the way I did

while in school. My desire is for children's music (and language and culture) to be validated in the music classroom and surrounding communities. Music teachers must be guided to identify and understand how integral music plays in the lives of students so children learn to appreciate their heritage music and the music of the world's many cultures. Children deserve every occasion to learn the musical expressions with which they identify as equally important as Western art music. To develop a bimusical identity for Americans with ties to cultures outside mainstream American music, bimusicianship must be encouraged in every music classroom. Like my own adult reckoning with the music of my home and my formal training, Mexican American children can be knowledgeable and skillful with their first home or cultural music and the music they come to learn in school. And so it is that all children may be enabled in the development of their bimusical or multi-musical identity.

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**Appendix A**  
**Observation/Interview Schedule**

<b>Class Period/Time</b>	<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Day 3</b>
8:00 – 9:00 a.m.	Morning Recess	Morning Recess	Morning Recess
9:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Observations in Academic classes/  Reading (Grades 1-5) or  Interviews	Teach	Observations in Academic classes/  Reading (Grades 1-5) or  Interviews
11:00 – 11:30	Recess (2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> )  Observation/Interview	Teach	Recess (2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> )  Observation/Interview
11:30 – 12:00	Recess (1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> )  Observation/Interview	Teach	Recess (1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> )  Observation/Interview
12:00 – 12:30	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:30 – 1:00	Music Class/ Observation	Teach	Music Class/ Observation
1:00 – 1:30	Music Class/ Observation	Teach	Music Class/ Observation
1:30 – 2:00	Music Class/ Observation	Teach	Music Class/ Observation
2:00 – 2:30	Music Class/ Observation	Teach	Music Class/ Observation
2:30 – 3:00	Music Class/ Observation	Teach	Music Class/ Observation
3:00 – 3:30	Music Class/ Observation	Teach	Music Class/ Observation
3:30 – 4:30	Afterschool Recess Observation/Interviews	Teach	Afterschool Recess Observation/Interviews
5:00 – 8:00	Community Observation	Community Observation	

## Appendix B Research Schedule (37 Weeks)

Phase 1: Conducting initial observations and interviews with children, teachers, and administrators to figure out key data collection sites and informants/participants. This includes observations in classes and recess and children in conjunction with initial interviews with children, teachers, and parents who are present at the school.

Phase 2: Conducting observations and interviews with children, teachers, and administrators

Date/Week	Phase 1	Phase 2
August 12 – 14 – Week 1		
August 19 – 21 – Week 2		
August 26-28 – Week 3		
Sept. 2 – 4 – Week 4		
Sept. 9 – 11 – Week 5		
Sept. 16 – 18 – Week 6		
Sept. 23 – 25 – Week 7		
Sept. 30 – Oc. 2 – Week 8		
Oct. 7 – 9 – Week 9		
Oct. 14 – 16 – Week 10		
Oct. 21 – 23 – Week 11		
Oct. 28 – 30 – Week 12		
Nov. 4 – 6 - Week 13		
Nov. 11 – 13 – Week 14		
Nov. 18 – 20 – Week 15		
Nov. 25 – 27 – Week 16		
Dec. 2 – 4 – Week 17		
Dec. 9 – 11 – Week 18		
Dec. 16 – 18 – Week 19		
Jan. 30-Feb. 1 – Week 20		
Feb. 6-8 – Week 21		
Feb. 11-13 – Week22		
Feb. 20-22 – Week23		
Feb. 27-29 – Week 24		
March 3-5 – Week 25		
March 12-14 – Week 26		
March 17-19 – Week 27		
March 26-28 – Week 28		
April 16-18 – Week 29		
April 21-23 – Week 30		
April 30-May 2 – Week 31		
May 5-7 - Week 32		
May 14-16 – Week 33		
May 19-21- Week 34		
May 28-30 – Week 35		
June 3-5 – Week 36		
June 10-12 – Week 37		

## **Appendix C**

### **Interview Protocols**

#### **Riverview Elementary Children**

1. Do you like music?
2. What type of music do you listen to and like?
3. Where do you come from?
  - a. Where do your parents come from? US or Mexico?
  - b. Do you have family in Mexico?
4. Do you listen to music on the radio? TV? Internet/computer?
  - a. Do you own a CD player? Computer? TV?
  - b. Is it yours or the families – Brother, sister, or family
5. Do you listen to the music that your parents listen to?
  - a. What do your parents listen to?
  - b. Do they listen to music on the radio, TV, Internet?
6. What language do you speak?
  - a. What language do you speak most often?
  - b. At home? At school? When you are with your friends?
7. What language is the music that you mostly listen to?
8. What kind of music do you have in your classes?
  - a. Do your teachers use music in class?
  - b. Do you sing or listen to music in class outside of your music class?
9. Do you like your music class?
  - a. What type of activities do you like to do in music class?
10. Can you show me or sing me a favorite song of yours?
  - a. In English?
  - b. In Spanish?
11. Can you sing me all the songs that you know?
12. Do you play any instruments?
13. Do you make/participate in any music other than the music class at school?
  - a. Have you ever played or sang with a music group, at church, at a party, festival, etc...?
14. Do you like songs, dances, or activities that your music teaches you?
  - a. If you were the music teacher which music would you like to teach or learn about?
15. Do you enjoy singing in your classroom?
  - a. Do you enjoy playing/learning an instrument?
16. If it was your birthday would your family sing/say you “Happy Birthday” or would they sing “Las “Las Mananitas?”
17. If you had some friends over to your house to play, what music would you listen to?
  - a. English & Spanish?
18. If your family had a party or family over, what music would be played on the radio/TV/Computer?
19. What kind of music do you listen to in car on the way to school?

20. Do your parents sing?
  - a. If so, what kind of songs? English, Spanish?
21. Do you remember the Cinco de Mayo celebration? (Or in preparation for the Cinco de Mayo) What songs do you think of when you think of Cinco de Mayo?
22. What songs do you think of when you think of Mexico?
  - a. What songs do you think of when you think of the United States?

### **Valley View Elementary Teachers/Administrators/Staff/Community Members**

1. Where are you from? Background history?
2. What ethnicity do you classify with?
3. How long have you taught at Riverview?
  - a. What grade levels?
  - b. Do you teach in Spanish/English/Both?
4. Do you live in the community? If not, how far away?
5. How did you feel about the material being taught in music class to the children?
6. Do you use music in your classroom?
  - a. What kind of music? For what purpose?
  - b. What do the children like? Listen to? Request? Respond to?
  - c. What type of music and cultural activities happen in the school?
7. How do you feel about music?
8. What kind of music do you listen to?
9. What songs do you know?
10. What are your views on music education? What kind of music should children learn or listen to?
11. Are many of your students Mexican, Mexican-American, Anglo (other)?
  - a. What percentage?
  - b. How many students speak Spanish, Spanish & English, or just English?
  - c. Do you feel that both cultures are represented, validated, fostered at the school and within school functions?
12. What kind of issues do your students face that you are aware? How does that affect their academic performance?
13. What kind of cultural activities do you include in your class? What does the school support?

### **Parents**

1. Where are you from? Background history?
2. What type of music do you listen to and like?
  - a. What kind of music is present in your home?
3. Do you listen to music on the radio? TV? Internet/computer?
  - a. Do you own a CD player? Computer? TV?
  - b. How many? Who uses it?
4. Do you sing to your children or around the house?
  - a. What type of songs?
  - b. In what language?
5. What language do you speak?
  - a. What language do you speak most often?

- b. At home? At school? When you are with your friends and family?
- 6. Do you feel that Riverview elementary supports your culture?
  - a. In what ways?
- 7. What kind of music would you like your children to learn?
  - a. Classical, English, Spanish?
- 8. Can you show me or sing me a favorite song of yours?
  - a. In English?
  - b. In Spanish?
- 9. Do you play any instruments?
- 10. Do you make/participate in any music other than the music class in the community?
  - a. Have you ever played or sang with a music group, at church, at a party, festival, etc...?
    - i. If so, who taught you? How did you learn how to sing or play?
- 11. If it was your birthday or your child's birthday, would you family sing/say you "Happy Birthday" or would they sing "Las Mañanitas?"
  - a. What about Mother's Day?
  - b. Christmas?
  - c. New Years?
  - d. Easter?
  - e. Cinco de Mayo?
- 12. If you were having a wedding, church ceremony, or party/fiesta what type of music would be present?
- 13. If you had some friends over to your house to play, what music would you guys listen to?
  - a. English & Spanish?
- 14. If your family had a party or family over, what music would be played on the radio/TV/Computer?

## **Appendix D**

### **Musical/Cultural Agents**

1. Parents/Family
  - a. Mom, Dad, Uncle, Brother, Sister
  - b. Extended family
2. Teachers/Administrators
  - a. Primary Teachers
  - b. Coaches, Music Teacher, Leaders of different cultural and musical groups
  - c. Principal
  - d. Superintendent
3. Church
  - a. Choir, Singing during the mass
  - b. Church events that involve music
4. Radio & TV stations
  - a. Radio KDNA – main station
  - b. Spanish Language Stations
5. Technology
  - a. Internet/Computers
  - b. Satellite TV
  - c. Radio
  - d. CD/Record players
6. Community
  - a. Businesses that are bilingual and bicultural
    - i. Grocery Stores
    - ii. Panaderias
    - iii. Mexican Restaurants
    - iv. Newspapers, local advertising
    - v. Community classes
7. Cultural Events
  - a. Parades
  - b. Festivals/Concerts
  - c. Parties – Personal/ Community celebrations
  - d. Other

**Appendix E**  
**Parents' Night – Informal Music Survey**

***What I Love About Music***  
*5<sup>th</sup> Grade*  
***Lo Que Me Encanta de La Musica***  
*Quinto Grado*

What is Your Favorite Type of Music?  
Que Tipo de musica te gusta mas?

What Music Group/Band Do You Really Like?  
Que grupo o bando tu gusta?

What is Your Favorite Song?  
Cual es tu canción favorita?

What is Your Favorite Instrument?  
Cual es tu instrumento favorito?

Appendix F  
Completed Parents' Night – Informal Music Survey

*What I Love About Music*  
5<sup>th</sup> Grade  
*Lo Que Me Encanta de La Musica*  
Quinto Grado

What is Your Favorite Type of Music?  
Que tipo de musica te gusta mas?

Jazz POP

What Music Group/Band Do You Really Like?  
Que grupo o bando tu gusta?

Los Boks

What is Your Favorite Song?  
Cual es tu canción favorita?

all of them

luna

What is Your Favorite Instrument?  
Cual es tu intrumento favorito?

GUITAR

Guitarra

## *What I Love About Music*

5<sup>th</sup> Grade

### *Lo Que Me Encanta de La Musica*

Quinto Grado

**What is Your Favorite Type of Music?**

Que tipo de musica te gusta mas?

Mariachi

**What Music Group/Band Do You Really Like?**

Que grupo o bando tu gusta?

Lots of Mariachis or  
Rancheras.

**What is Your Favorite Song?**

Cual es tu canción favorita?

Las de Vicente Fernandez

**What is Your Favorite Instrument?**

Cual es tu intrumento favorito?

Guitarra

**Appendix G**  
**Recruitment Flyer for Teachers**

*A Study of the Musical Qualities in Mexican American Children*

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***What is this study all about?***

I, Amanda C. Soto, a researcher from the University of Washington, would like to examine the musical identities/qualities of Mexican American children who attend Valley View Elementary and observe as they navigate between the different musical spheres in the English and Spanish languages that are present within their daily lives. I would like to observe, take notes, videotape, and ask the children in your classroom about the songs that they sing, dance to, and what music they may be familiar with in English and Spanish. I would also like to interview you (30 minutes) about your expectations, experiences, and additional comments about the study and with your permission audio record the interview. You may also choose to conduct the interview without any recording.

**Taking part in this study is voluntary. You can stop at any time.  
Information about is you is confidential.**

***Dates of the Study (August Through June)***

This project will be carried out in August through the end of the school year. I will visit approximately 2 days each week for a span of 37 weeks. I will not pull students out of your academic class times for interviews. There will be no disruption to your teaching during this study. If you would like to participate, please sign and date the consent form that I have hand delivered to you and return it to me. I will then meet with you individually to set up a time either before or after school, during lunch, or during prep time to conduct an interview and to discuss the possible times that I will come into your classroom and observe.

Please contact me at 206-852-2822 or [sotoa@u.washington.edu](mailto:sotoa@u.washington.edu) (please note I cannot assure the confidentiality of information sent via email) if you should have any questions, comments, or concerns. You are also welcome to call me collect at the number provided above.

Thank you once again for allowing me the opportunity to observe your classroom and to interview you for this study.

## Appendix H Teacher Consent Form

### UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON TEACHER CONSENT FORM

#### *A Study of the Musical Qualities in Mexican American Children*

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Researchers: Ms. Amanda C. Soto, Graduate student      Faculty Advisor: Dr. Patricia S. Campbell,  
Professor  
School of Music (Music Education)      School of Music (Music Education)  
Contact number: (206) 852-2822      Contact number: (206) 543-4768  
Email Address: sotoa@u.washington.edu      Email Address: pcamp@u.washington.edu

**You may call the numbers above collect in the event that they would pose a long distance charge to you. Please note that we cannot ensure the confidentiality of information sent via email.**

#### Researcher's statement

I am asking you to be in a research study. The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether to be in the study or not. Please read the form carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the research, what we would ask you to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear. When I have answered all your questions, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called 'informed consent.' I will give you a copy of this form for your records.

#### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

I, Ms. Amanda C. Soto, would like to observe how children in your class learn music. I would like to observe, take notes, videotape, and ask your students about the songs that your students sing, how they dance to music, and what musical qualities they possess in relation to English and Spanish language music. I may video record teaching segments which may demonstrate the qualities mentioned above. I would also like to interview you about your expectations, experiences, and additional comments about the study and with your permission audio record our interview. You may also choose to conduct the interview without any recording.

#### PROCEDURES

If you choose to participate, I would like to conduct a 30 minute interview about your personal experiences with music as they relate to musical activities that you include in your classroom and the student's musical activities that you have observed in your classroom. For example, I would like to ask, "What is your personal history?," and "What kind of music do you like and listen to?," and "What type of musical activities do you use in your classroom?" You do not have to answer every question. I would like to audio record our interview but you may choose to conduct the interview without any recording. We can either do the interview during your prep time, during lunch time, or before or after school.

I would like to observe your students as well as yourself during music and academic instruction, and during music performances. I will observe your students and you approximately 3 times for about 30 minutes each time, between now through August through

June. I will observe the kinds of singing, chanting, or moving that is done. You can request that I not observe you for a particular session and still be in the study.

I would like to videotape your students and you when I am observing music instruction, for musical performances, and for your interview, so I can have an accurate record. I would like to keep the tapes until February 28, 2011. Then I will destroy the tapes, unless you have given me permission otherwise. Sections of the video records may be included in a presentation at an educational conference. If you are willing to let me show the tapes publicly, I will ask you to sign another consent form specifically for that.

#### RISKS, STRESS, OR DISCOMFORT

Some people feel that providing information for research is an invasion of privacy. I have addressed concerns for your privacy in the section below. Some people feel a little uncomfortable being observed or videotaped. Please do not discuss the citizenship status of your students or of their family members. If there is any evidence of citizenship status that is disclosed by your students or you, the video and audio segments will be destroyed immediately and any knowledge will be kept completely confidential.

#### BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

There is no individual direct benefit from taking part in this study. However, I hope the findings of my study will be useful in the design of primary school lessons.

#### OTHER INFORMATION

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You can stop at any time. Information about you is confidential. I will code study records. The link between the code and your name will be kept in a secured location, separate from the study information. Only I will have access to that information. I will keep the link between the study records and your name until February 28, 2011. Then I will destroy the link. If you give me permission (by signing an additional consent form – as explained above) to use videotapes of you publicly, I will then keep study information linked to your name until I destroy the tapes. This is so I can know which tapes to withdraw in the future, should you decide later that you do not want the tapes to be shown publicly. If I publish the results of this study, I will not use your name. Government or university staff sometimes review studies such as this one to make sure they are being done safely and legally. If a review of this study takes place, your records may be examined. The reviewers will protect your privacy. The study records will not be used to put you at legal risk of harm.

Amanda C. Soto

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Printed name of Researcher

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Signature of Researcher

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject's statement

This study has been explained to me. I agree to take part in this research. I have had a chance to ask questions. If I have questions later about the research, I can ask one of the researchers listed above. If I have questions about my rights as a research subject, I can call the Human Subjects Division at (206) 543-0098. I will receive a copy of this consent form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of Teacher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Teacher

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CC: A copy will be given to you and the researcher, Ms. Amanda C. Soto.

**Appendix I**  
**Passive Opt-Out of Video Recording Form for Parents (English)**

(August 25, 2008)

Dear Parents,

My name is Amanda C. Soto, and I am a graduate student from the University of Washington. I have been teaching music lessons at Valley View Elementary as part of the Music Alive! in the Yakima Valley program (MAYV). As part of my studies, I am going to conduct a research study that will explore the musical qualities of the children in Valley View from the beginning of August through June. My research will involve using a video camera to record the children participating in music class, academic classes, and at recess/play time. This letter is to inform you about this study and to obtain your permission to videotape your child during the school day. Your child's classroom learning and instruction time will not be affected by allowing them to be videotaped and/or by being asked to be interviewed for the study. I will be the only one to view the videotapes and I will use them to check my notes. I will also destroy the videotapes in 2011 so that I will have time to finish my research project.

If I do decide to use a section of a videotape as part of a presentation at an educational conference, I will send another permission form that you will have to sign to allow me to use the video clip. If you are **NOT** comfortable with my videotaping your child during the school day, please contact me through mail, email, or with a phone call to let me know that you wish that your child not be videotaped. **YOU ARE GIVING ME CONSENT TO VIDEOTAPE YOUR CHILD BY NOT RESPONDING TO THIS LETTER.**

During the course of the study I would like to interview some children later and if your child is chosen I will seek further permission from you for this.

Your child **WILL** be included in the observation and videotaping if you do **NOT** contact me by **September 12, 2008**. If you would like more information please contact me at:

**Address:**

Amanda C. Soto

1307 N. 88<sup>th</sup> St.

Seattle, WA 98103

**Email:** [sotoa@u.washington.edu](mailto:sotoa@u.washington.edu)

**Phone Number:** 206-852-2822

***You may call the number above collect in the event that they would pose a long distance charge to you. Please note that we cannot ensure the confidentiality of information sent via email.***

Thank you for your cooperation,

Amanda C. Soto

**Appendix J**  
**Passive Opt-Out of Video Recording Form for Parents (Spanish)**

**(Agosto 25, 2008)**

Amanda C. Soto  
1307 N. 88<sup>th</sup> St.  
Seattle, WA 98103

Queridos Padres,

Mi nombre es Amanda C. Soto, y soy estudiante graduado de la Universidad de Washington. Posteriormente he estado enseñando clases de música en Valley View Elementary como parte del programa Yakima Valley, "Music Alive." Como parte de mis estudios, estaré conduciendo una investigación que explorara las cualidades musicales de los niños en Valley View Elementary. Este estudio se llevara a cabo en el mes de Agosto hasta el mes de Junio del 2009. La investigación requiere el uso de una cámara de video para grabar a los estudiantes durante la clase de música, clases regulares y también durante el recreo. Esta carta es para informarles acerca de la investigación y para adquirir su permiso para grabar a su hijo(a) durante el día. El aprendizaje de su hijo y sus clases no serán afectadas si usted decide dar permiso para que su hijo sea grabado o entrevistado. Yo seré la única que vera las grabaciones y los usare para cuestiones de estudio e investigación solamente. Estos video serán estudiados y usados hasta el año 2011 y después de eso los videos serán destruidos.

Si decido usar algunas de las secciones grabadas para alguna presentación educacional, mandare otra carta para informarle y adquirir su permiso de usar el video clip.

Si usted "no" esta de acuerdo y no desea que su hijo sea grabado tendrá que responderme vía correo electrónico, correo, o por teléfono.

Si usted "no" responde a esta carta asumiré que esta dando el permiso de que su hijo(a) sea grabado e entrevistado.

Durante el curso del estudio escogeré solo algunos niños que serán entrevistados,. Si su hijo es escogido, le dejare saber por medio de una carta para al igual adquirir permiso para ser entrevistado.

Su hijo será incluido en la investigación y en la grabación si usted no responde a esta carta para el día Septiembre 12 de del 2008. Si necesita más información favor de contactarme.

**Dirección:**

Amanda C. Soto  
1307 N. 88<sup>th</sup> St.  
Seattle, WA 98103

**Correo Electrónico:** [sotoa@u.washington.edu](mailto:sotoa@u.washington.edu)

**Numero de Teléfono:** 206-852-2822

**Puede llamar al numero telefónico 206-852-2822 por cobrar si es que tiene una línea de larga distancia. No podremos asegurar la privacidad en caso de que me mande alguna información vía correo electrónico.**

Gracias por su cooperación

Amanda C. Soto

**Appendix K**  
**Cover Letter for Parent Consent Form (English)**

(Date)

Dear Parent,

My name is Amanda C. Soto and I have been teaching music at Valley View Elementary as part of the Music Alive! In the Yakima Valley (MAYV) program. As you know from a previous letter that you have received, I am conducting a music research study on the musical interests of the children of Valley View Elementary. You have received a letter about allowing me to observe and videotape the children during their school day. The form that is attached to this letter is a parent consent form that is asking permission to conduct an interview with your child about their musical interests. This interview will last 20 minutes and will take place during your child's activity, lunch, or recess time.

Please read the form and call me collect at 206-852-2822 or email me at [sotoa@u.washington.edu](mailto:sotoa@u.washington.edu) (Please note that I cannot ensure the confidentiality of information sent via email.) if you have any questions. I have enclosed two copies of the parent consent form. One is for you to keep and the other should be signed and sent back to me. You have several options on returning the form back to me: (1) you can mail it back with the self-addressed envelope, (2) you can drop it off at the front desk of Valley View Elementary school, (3) you can sign a consent form that I will have either before or after school as you drop off or when you pick up your child.

Once again, this consent form is to ask for your permission to conduct an interview with your child about their musical interests. Thank you for all your support and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Amanda C. Soto

**Appendix L**  
**Cover Letter for Parent Consent Form (Spanish)**

(Date)

Queridos Padres:

Mi nombre es Amanda Soto y he estado enseñando música en la escuela Valley View como parte de Music Alive! en el programa de Yakima Valley. Como ustedes saben por medio de la carta que recibieron anteriormente, estoy en proceso de hacer una investigación acerca de los gustos musicales de los niños en la escuela Valley View. Han recibido una carta acerca del permiso que me han otorgado para grabar y observar a los niños durante el día escolar. La forma que esta adjunta a esta carta es el documento del permiso de los padres que les pide su consentimiento para entrevistar a su hijo(a) acerca de sus gustos musicales. Esta entrevista tomara 20 minutos y será durante la hora de actividades, en el almuerzo o en el tiempo de descanso.

Por favor lea la carta y llame por cobrar al teléfono 206-852-2822 o mándeme un correo electrónico a [sotoa@u.washington.edu](mailto:sotoa@u.washington.edu) (por favor sepa usted que no podremos asegurar la seguridad de la información enviada vía Internet) si tienen algunas preguntas. Le he mandado dos copias. Una es para que usted guarde y la otra es para que usted me la devuelva. Tiene varias opciones para regresar la carta. Puede mandarla por correo, puede dejarla en la oficina de la escuela Valley View. Puede firmar una forma de consentimiento que tendré antes o después de la escuela cuando deje a su hijo o lo recoja.

Una vez mas esta carta de consentimiento le pide su permiso para conducir una entrevista con su jiho acerca de sus intereses musicales.

Gracias por su cooperación.

Amanda C. Soto

**Appendix M**  
**Parent Consent Form (English)**

PARENT CONSENT FORM

***A Study of the Musical Qualities in Mexican American Children***

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Researchers: Ms. Amanda C. Soto, Graduate student	Faculty Advisor: Dr. Patricia S. Campbell, Professor
School of Music (Music Education)	School of Music (Music Education)
Contact number: (206) 852-2822	Contact number: (206) 543-4768
Email Address: sotoa@u.washington.edu	Email Address: pcamp@u.washington.edu

- **You may call the numbers above collect in the event that they would pose a long distance charge to you. Please note that we cannot ensure the confidentiality of information sent via email.**

Researcher's statement

I am asking permission for your child to be in a research study. The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether to have your child be in the study or not. Please read the form carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the research, what we would ask your child to do, the possible risks and benefits, your child's rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear. When I have answered all your questions, you can decide if you want your child to be in the study or not. This process is called 'informed consent'. I will give you a copy of this form for your records.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

I, Ms. Amanda C. Soto, have been observing, taking notes, and videotaping during the school day at Valley View Elementary. As noted in a previous letter, I am interested in studying the children's musical qualities such as the songs they sing and listen to in both English and Spanish.

PROCEDURES

I am observing the children during their music instruction and during music performances. I will be observing the children approximately 37 times for 30 minutes each time, between August through June. I would like to conduct an interview with your child at school about your child's musical activities. I am seeking permission to conduct this interview. The interview would last about 20 minutes and would take place during lunch, recess, or music class time. For example, I would like to ask, "Do you like the music you learned?" and "What music do you listen to?" Your child does not have to answer every question. I may also photograph or video record a classroom project/assignment that may be related to their musical qualities and interests of your child. Sections of the video records may be included in a presentation at an educational conference. If you are willing to let me show the tapes publicly, I will ask you to sign another consent form specifically for that.

RISKS, STRESS, OR DISCOMFORT

Some people feel that providing information for research is an invasion of privacy. I have addressed concerns for your privacy in the section below. Some people feel a little

uncomfortable being observed or videotaped. Please do not discuss your citizenship status of yourself or of your family members. If there is any evidence of citizenship status that is disclosed by your child or by you, the video and audio segments will be destroyed immediately and any knowledge will be kept completely confidential.

### BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

There is no individual direct benefit to you or your child from taking part in this study. However, I hope the findings of my study will be useful in the design of primary school lessons.

### OTHER INFORMATION

Having your child take part in this study is voluntary and can be stopped at any time. There will be no negative effects (such as not receiving additional music lessons) if you decide not to have your child take part in this study. Information about you is confidential. I will code study records. The link between the code and your name will be kept in a secured location, separate from the study information. Only I will have access to that information. I will keep the link between the study records and your name until February 28, 2011. Then I will destroy the link. If you give me permission (by signing an additional consent form – as explained above) to use videotapes of your child publicly, I will then keep study information linked to your name until I destroy the tapes. This is so I can know which tapes to withdraw in the future, should you decide later that you do not want the tapes to be shown publicly. If I publish the results of this study, I will not use your name. Government or university staff sometimes review studies such as this one to make sure they are being done safely and legally. If a review of this study takes place, your records may be examined. The reviewers will protect your privacy. The study records will not be used to put you at legal risk of harm.

Amanda C. Soto

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Subject's statement

This study has been explained to me. I agree to let my child take part in this research study. I have had a chance to ask questions. If I have questions later about the research, I can ask one of the researchers listed above. If I have questions about my child's rights as a research subject, I can call the Human Subjects Division at (206) 543-0098. I will receive a copy of this consent form.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CC: A copy will be given to you and the researcher, Ms. Amanda C. Soto.

**Appendix N**  
**Parent Consent Form (Spanish)**

UNIVERSIDAD DE WASHINGTON  
CARTA DE CONSENTIMIENTO

*Estudio de las cualidades musicales en los niños México Americanos*

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Investigadores: Sr. Amanda C. Soto, Estudiante Graduada	Consejero de Facultad: Dr. Patricia S. Campbell, Profesor
Escuela de Música (Educación musical)	Escuela de Música (Educación Musical)
Teléfono: (206) 852-2822	Teléfono: (206) 543-4768
Correo electrónico: sotoa@u.washington.edu	Correo electrónico: pcamp@u.washington.edu

**Usted puede llamar por cobrar a los números mencionados anteriormente si es que usted tiene una línea de larga distancia. No podremos asegurar privacidad si usted manda información vía correo electrónico.**

Comunicado del investigador

Le pido permiso para que su hijo(a) participe en la investigación. El propósito de esta carta de consentimiento es para darle toda la información necesaria para que usted decida fácilmente si quiere o no que su hijo(a) participe en la investigación. Favor de leer detenidamente la información. Usted podrá hacer preguntas necesarias acerca del estudio, como por ejemplo que le pediremos que su hijo haga, las ventajas y desventajas, los derechos de su hijo(a) como voluntario, y cualquier otra información específica que quiera aclarar. Cuando haya contestado a todas sus preguntas usted podrá decidir si desea que su hijo(a) participe. Este proceso se le llama permiso informado. Le daré una copia de este documento para que usted mantenga con sus documentos.

PROPÓSITO DE LA INVESTIGACIÓN

Yo, la señorita Amanda C. Soto he estado observando, tomando notas y grabando durante el almuerzo y recreo pequeños segmentos en los cuales su hijo(a) demuestra cualidades musicales como las canciones que escuchan y cantan en inglés y español.

PROCEDIMIENTOS

Yo observare a los alumnos durante la clase de música al igual que en los eventos musicales. El tiempo de observación será aproximadamente 37 veces por 30 minutos cada tiempo de observación, entre los meses de Agosto hasta Junio. Me gustaría conducir una entrevista con su hijo (a) acerca de las actividades musicales. Para la cual necesitare su permiso antes de hacer la entrevista. Esta entrevista durara 20 minutos y será durante la clase de música. Por ejemplo, las preguntas que podría hacer serian así; ¿Te ha gustado lo que has aprendido en la clase de música? ¿Que tipo de música escuchas? Su hijo no tendrá que responder a cada pregunta. También tomare fotos y video de algún proyecto de clase que sea relacionado con las cualidades musicales e intereses. Algunas secciones de los videos serán incluidas en una presentación educacional. Si acaso usted me da el permiso para el uso de los videos, le pediré que firme otra carta de consentimiento.

## RIESGOS, ESTRÉS O INCOMODIDAD

Algunas personas sienten que proporcionar información para investigaciones es una invasión a la privacidad. Es por eso que en el párrafo siguiente mencionare acerca de su privacidad si es que esta le preocupa. Para este estudio que estaré haciendo, no requeriré saber su ciudadanía ni la de su familia .Si hay alguna evidencia de su ciudadanía que sea dicha por su hijo(a), el video y las secciones de voz serán destruidas inmediatamente y cualquier información quedara completamente confidencial.

## BENEFICIOS DEL ESTUDIO

Su hijo no tendrá ningún beneficio directo o indirecto al tomar parte de este estudio. Aunque, espero que lo que sea descubierto en la investigación sea útil para diseñar lecciones escolares.

## OTRA INFORMACIÓN

Si su hijo toma parte de la investigación es voluntario y puede ser discontinuado a cualquier hora. No habrá efectos negativos (como no recibir mas clases de música) si usted decide no dejar a su hijo participar. Su información es confidencial. Las grabaciones serán codificadas. La conexión entre el código y su nombre será guardada en un lugar seguro separado de la información del estudio. Solo yo tendré acceso a esta información. Me quedare con la conexión entre la información del estudio y su nombre hasta Febrero 28, 20011. Después la conexión será destruida. Si usted me da permiso (si es que firma la carta adicional de consentimiento, como fue explicado anteriormente) para usar los videos de su hijo(a) en publico, me quedare con la información del estudio conectada con su nombre y destruiré los videos. Esto es para yo saber que videos sacare a futuro o si por alguna razón usted decide que no quiere mostrar esos videos en público. Si publico los resultados de este estudio, no usare su nombre. El gobierno o la facultad de la universidad a veces revisan la información del estudio (como esta) para asegurarse que están hechas correctamente y legal mente. Si alguna revisión de este estudio sucede, su información será examinada. La revisión que se realizara protegerá su privacidad. La información del estudio no lo pondrá en ningún riesgo legal o lo pondrá en peligro.

Amanda Soto

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nombre del investigador

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del Investigador

Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

Comunicado del sujeto

Este estudio ha sido explicado. Yo estoy de acuerdo en que mi hijo tome parte del estudio. He tenido tiempo para preguntar dudas. Si es que resultan mas preguntas después, podría preguntar a alguno de los investigadores mencionados posteriormente. Si tengo alguna preguntas sobre los derechos de mi hijo(a) puedo llamar a la división de sujetos humanos al (206) 543-0098. Recibiré una copia de esta carta de consentimiento.

Nombre del niño: \_\_\_\_\_ Año escolar: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nombre del padre

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del padre

Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

PD: se le dará una copia de este documento a usted y a Ms. Soto

**Appendix O**  
**Assent Form for Children (K-2<sup>nd</sup> Grade)**

**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON**  
**ASSENT FOR CHILDREN**  
(Kindergarten – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade – who cannot read)

***A Study of the Musical Qualities in Mexican American Children***

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**Researcher: Amanda C. Soto, Graduate Student, Department of Music Education,  
206-852-2822**

Oral assent

A research study is a way to learn more about people. I am from the University of Washington and will be doing a music project in your class from August through June. I would like to learn about the singing, chanting, and movements you do while you are at school. I would like to ask you questions about the music you sing and move to at school and at home. Sometimes, I may ask you questions about the musical activities that you and your friends are doing so that I can better understand what is going on. You don't have to answer my questions if you don't want to. Please do not mention whether you are an American or Mexican citizen.

These questions will take about 10-20 minutes and will take place during your activity, lunch, or recess time. I will audio record you during our talk if you give me permission to do so.

You will not benefit from taking part in this study. A benefit means that something good happens to you.

When I am finished with this study, I will write a report about what I learned. This report will not include your name.

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to be. If you decide to stop after we begin, that's okay too. No one will be mad at you. You will still be able to participate in all the music activities.

**Appendix P**  
**Assent Form for Children (3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade)**  
**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON**

**Assent Form**  
***A Study of the Musical Qualities in Mexican American Children***

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**Scientist:** Ms. Amanda C. Soto, Graduate student      Email Address: sotoa@u.washington.edu  
School of Music (Music Education)      Telephone number: (206) 852-2822

*You or your parents can call me if you have questions, now or later. If calling my phone number would cost your parents money, you may call “collect” with your parents’ help. If you email me, remember that email is not always private.*

**Who is Ms. Soto?**

I am from the department of Music at the University of Washington. I am doing a music research project. I will be doing this project in your class from August till June and I would like to learn about the singing, chanting, and movements that you do in English and Spanish language music while you are at school.

**Why is Ms. Soto Here?**

I want to know more about how students learn music. I want to watch you in class, during recess and lunch, and in your music classes. I want to interview you about what music you like to listen to.

**What does Ms. Soto want me to do?**

I want to watch you in the classroom about 2 times a week for the rest of the school year. I want to do one interview with you. I want to ask you questions about music in your life, both in and outside of the school. For example, I will ask you “How did you feel about your music lessons in school?” and “What kind of music do you listen to?” and “What type of language music do you like to play or perform?” You do not have to answer every question. Each interview will take about 20 minutes. You can choose whether or not to be interviewed. I want to audio record the interviews. I will use the recording to write down what you said. You should not tell me whether you or anybody in your family is an American or Mexican citizen. If you do so by accident, all recordings will be erased and I will not tell anyone what you said.

Some video I might want to show other people, such as in a classroom or at a presentation. If you are willing to let me show the tapes publicly, I will ask you to sign another consent form specifically for that. You will have a chance to look at the video and tell me if it’s OK to show other people.

**Will it Hurt Me?** Some people are a little uncomfortable when they are audio taped. You can stop the interview at any time.

**Do I Have a Choice About the Music Project?**

You can choose to be part of this study, or not. If you don't want to be in the music project, no one will be mad at you. You will not be left out of any music activities.

**What if I have questions?**

You can ask questions, now, or later. You can decide about being in the study after your questions are answered.

**Will other people know if I am in this music project?**

I will keep information private. I will not use your name when I write my report. However, if you say it's OK for me to show video of you, someone that knows you might recognize you in the video.

---

Name of Researcher

Signature of researcher

Date

**Participant's Statement**

The study has been explained to me. I agree to take part in this music project. I know I can ask questions now or later. I will receive a copy of this assent form.

---

Signature

Printed name

Date

CC: A copy will be given to you and to the researcher, Ms. Amanda C. Soto.

**Appendix Q**  
**Video, Audio, & Photographic Recording Publication Consent Form**  
**(Parent) in English**

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
VIDEO, AUDIO, AND PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDING PUBLICATION CONSENT FORM  
**(Parent Consent Form)**

*A Study of the Musical Qualities in Mexican American Children*

---

Investigator Name: Amanda C. Soto      Title: Graduate Student Department Music Education  
Phone Number: (206) 852-2822      Email Address: sotoa@u.washington.edu

*Please note that we cannot ensure the confidentiality of information sent via e-mail. You may call the numbers above collect in the event that they would pose a long distance charge to you*

Researchers' statement

USES OF THE RECORDINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

I would like to better understand how your child learns music and interacts in their classroom. I have recorded your child learning how to sing and how your child felt about music and/or have recorded an interview with your child about his/her expectations, experiences, and additional comments about the music lesson. I would like to keep the tapes for research until February 28, 2011. I may want to use the videotapes or audiotapes for educational presentations or in academic presentations.

It is possible for someone who knows you to recognize your child's voice or image from the videotape, audiotape, or photograph.

I ask your permission to use the following recording(s) and photograph(s) of your child in academic public presentations, educational settings and publications such as journals, magazines, newspapers, and online multimedia publications, and web sites:

\_\_\_\_\_

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I give my permission for the research team to use the above videotape or photograph in the following way:

- Academic public presentations
- Educational settings
- Scientific or educational journals, magazines, newspapers
- Online multimedia publications
- Web sites
- Keep the tapes for research purposes for \_\_\_\_\_ years.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Subject's statement

I have had an opportunity to review the recording(s) and photograph(s) referenced above. I give my permission to the researchers to use the items as I have indicated above in this consent form. I understand that my child's name will not be published in connection with any such presentation or publication. I will not receive any compensation for the use of the recordings or photographs. I will receive a copy of this consent form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

CC: A copy will be given to you and to the researcher, Ms. Amanda C. Soto.

**Appendix R**  
**Video, Audio, & Photographic Recording Publication Consent Form**  
**(Parent) in Spanish**

UNIVERSIDAD DE WASHINGTON  
VIDEO, AUDIO Y FOTOGRAFÍA CARTA DE CONSENTIMIENTO PARA GRABACIÓN Y  
PUBLICACIÓN

**(Carta para consentimiento del padre)**

*Estudio de las cualidades musicales en los niños México Americanos*

Nombre del Investigador: Amanda C. Soto

Título: Estudiante Graduada,

Numero de Teléfono: 206-852-2822

Departamento de Educación de Música

Correo Electrónico: sotoa@u.washington.edu

*No podremos asegurar su privacidad de cualquier información que mande vía correo electrónico.*

*Usted puede llamar al número mencionado anteriormente por cobrar.*

Comunicado del investigador

**USO DE VIDEOS GRABADOS Y FOTOGRAFÍAS**

Me gustaría entender mejor como su hijo(a) aprende música y como interactúa en el salón de clases. He grabado a su hijo aprendiendo a cantar y como su hijo(a) se sentía acerca de la música. También he grabado una entrevista con su hijo(a) acerca de sus expectativas, experiencias y comentarios adicionales acerca de la clase de música. Me gustaría quedarme con los videos grabados hasta febrero 28 del 2011. Tal vez use los videos o audio videos para presentaciones académicas o educacionales.

Es posible que alguna persona que vea el video reconozca a su hijo(a) por medio de la voz o de alguna imagen.

Le pido su permiso para usar los siguientes videos y fotografías de su hijo en presentaciones publicas, presentaciones educacionales y publicaciones tales como, revistas, periódicos, publicaciones por Internet y paginas Web:

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Doy mi permiso para que el equipo de investigación tome video o fotografías y las use para lo siguiente

- Presentaciones académicas públicas
- Escenarios educacionales
- Periódicos, revistas, diarios científicos
- Publicaciones en Internet
- Paginas Web
- Quédese con los videos para propósitos de estudio por \_\_\_ anos

---

Nombre del Investigador

Firma del investigador

Fecha

Comunicado del padre o tutor

He tenido la oportunidad de revisar las grabaciones y las fotografías. Doy mi permiso al investigador que use los materiales indicados posteriormente en esta carta de consentimiento. Entiendo que el nombre de mi hijo no será publicado en conexión con ninguna presentación o publicación. No recibiré ninguna compensación por el uso de los videos o fotografías. Recibiré una copia de esta carta de consentimiento.

---

Nombre del padre

Firma del sujeto

Fecha

PD: se le dará una copia de este documento a usted y a Ms. Soto

**Appendix S**  
**Video, Audio, & Photographic Recording Publication Consent Form**  
**(Teacher) in English**

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
VIDEO, AUDIO, AND PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDING PUBLICATION CONSENT FORM  
**(Teacher Consent Form)**

*A Study of the Musical Qualities in Mexican American Children*

---

Investigator Name: Amanda C. Soto  
Phone Number: (206) 852-2822

Title: Graduate Student Department Music Education  
Email Address: sotoa@u.washington.edu

*Please note that we cannot ensure the confidentiality of information sent via e-mail. You may call the numbers above collect in the event that they would pose a long distance charge to you*

Researchers' statement

USES OF THE RECORDINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

I would like to better understand how children in your class learn music, your personal relationship with music, and the various ways in which you use music in the classroom. I have audio/video recorded you during music/academic lessons or during an interview about your expectations, experiences, and additional comments about the study. I would like to keep the tapes for research until February 28, 2011. I may want to use the videotapes or audiotapes for use in educational or academic presentations.

It is possible that someone who knows you may recognize your voice or image from the videotape, audiotape, or photograph.

I ask your permission to use the following recordings and photographs of you in academic public presentations, in an educational setting and within publications such as journals, magazines, newspapers, and online multimedia publications, and web sites:

---

I give my permission for the research team to use the above videotape or photograph in the following way:

- Academic public presentations
- Educational settings
- Scientific or educational journals, magazines, newspapers
- Online multimedia publications
- Web sites
- Keep the tapes for research purposes for \_\_\_\_\_ years.

---

Printed name of researcher

---

Signature of researcher

---

Date

Subject's statement

I have had an opportunity to review the recording(s) and photograph(s) referenced above. I give my permission to the researchers to use the items as I have indicated above in this consent form. I understand that my name will not be published in connection with any such presentation or publication. I will not receive any compensation for the use of the recordings or photographs. I will receive a copy of this consent form.

---

Printed name of Teacher

---

Signature of Teacher

---

Date

CC: A copy will be given to you, and to the researcher, Ms. Amanda C. Soto.

## VITA

Amanda Christina Soto was born in Mercedes, Texas. She attended the University of North Texas where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music Education and received a Masters of Arts in Ethnomusicology from the University of Washington. She has taught middle school instrumental music in South Texas and elementary general music in the Seattle area. Amanda has presented research and conducted workshops for music educators at local, regional, national, and international music conferences. She has completed summer music studies in Ghana and her research interests include world music pedagogy, multicultural education, studies of Mexican American and Mexican music in the United States and in Mexico, and children's musical culture. In 2012, Amanda earned a Doctor of Philosophy in Music Education from the University of Washington. She currently lives in Moscow where she serves as an Assistant Professor of Music Education at the University of Idaho.