

Re-Framing the Master Narratives of Dis/ability Through an Emotion Lens:
Voices of Latina/o Students with Learning Disabilities

by

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ABSTRACT

This study re-frames learning disabilities (LD) through the emotion-laden talk of four Latina/o students with LD. The research questions included: 1) What are the emotion-laden talk of Latina/o students about being labeled with LD? 2) What are Latina/o students' emotion-laden talk of the idea of LD? I identified master narratives, the "pre-existent sociocultural forms of interpretation. They are meant to delineate and confine the local interpretation strategies and agency constellations in individual subjects as well as in social institutions," (Bamberg, 2004, p. 287) within the following literatures to inform my research questions and conceptual framework: a) historiography and interdisciplinary literature on LD; b) policy (i.e., Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)), c) the academic and d) social and emotional dimensions of LD; and e) student voice research with students with LD. Interdisciplinary, critical ethnographic and qualitative research methods such as taking into account issues of power, etic and emic perspectives, in-depth interviewing, field notes were used. Total participants¹ included: four students, three parents and three teachers. More specifically, descriptive coding, identification of emotion-laden talk, a thematic analysis, memoing and intersectional and cultural-historical developmental constructs were used to analyze students' emotion-laden talk. Emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD included the hegemony of smartness, disability microaggressions, on the trinity of LD: help + teachers + literacy troubles, on being bullied, embarrassment to ask for assistance from others and help as hope. The emotion-laden talk about the idea of LD included LD as double-edge sword, LDness as X, the meaning of LD as resource, trouble with information processing,

¹ All names are pseudonym in this study.

speech, and silence, the salience of the intersection of disability, ethnicity and language and other markers of difference, struggles due to lack of understanding and LD myths. This study provides a discussion and implications for theory, research, policy, and practice.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation study to my family. Specifically, my mother, Maria Eugenia Saca, father, Rafael Antonio Hernández Sr., sister, Heidi Gilda Dolores Hernández, and brothers, Jose Antonio Saca, Carlos Roberto Hernández-Saca, Rafael Antonio Hernández-Saca Jr., and Julio Salvador Hernández-Saca. Also, I dedicate this dissertation to my partner, Leon Christopher Begay and each of the student, parent and teacher participants of this study.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES.....	xii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xiii
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
The Problem and Its Significance: <i>From Personal History to Collective Identities</i>	1
LD Master Narratives in a Time of Growing Differences.....	7
Master Narratives of the Social and Emotional Dimensions of LD.....	12
Students with LD’s Voices: <i>A Critical Perspective</i>	14
Purpose and Research Questions.....	15
2 LITERATURE REVIEW & CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	16
Cultural-Historical, Policy, and Academic Professional Master Narratives of LD.....	17
Cultural-Historical Master Narratives of LD.....	17
Policy Master Narratives.....	20
Professional Master Narratives of LD.....	24
Neurological Deficits.....	25
Cognitive Deficits.....	27
The Social and Emotional Dimensions of LD.....	31
Promising Responses to Master Narratives: <i>Research on LD Student Perspectives</i>	34

CHAPTER	Page
The Voices of Girls with LD.....	36
Conceptual Framework.....	42
Disrupting Master Narratives: <i>Accounting for Emotion, Culture,</i> <i>Power & Privilege</i>	44
Why (Not) Emotion?	46
What is Emotion?	47
Narrative.....	48
The Narrative Space.....	49
The Interactive, Dynamic and Identity Work of Narrative and Discourse of Emotionality.....	51
3 METHODS	56
Researcher Positionality.....	56
District and School Site Access & Description.....	59
Participants.....	65
Focal Student Participants.....	67
Parent Participants.....	68
Teacher Participant.....	69
Data Collection Procedures.....	69
Student Interviews.....	70
Teacher and Parent Interviews.....	72
Data Analysis Procedures.....	74
Student Interviews.....	74

CHAPTER	Page
1. Descriptive Coding.....	76
2. Identification of Emotion-Laden Talk.....	76
3. Coding Emotion Implicative WHATs and Intensifiers.....	77
4. Memoing.....	78
5. Thematic Analysis.....	79
6. Ethnographic Information and Materials.....	80
7. Crafting of Findings Chapters.....	80
Teacher and Parent Interviews.....	80
Credibility/Trustworthiness.....	81
Triangulation.....	82
Researcher Positionality.....	82
Peer Debriefing.....	82
Prolonged Field Engagement.....	82
Thick, Detailed Description.....	83
4 SOPHIA CRUZ.....	84
Sophia’s Background and Home Sociocultural Contexts.....	84
Meeting Sophia Cruz and (Troubling) Sociodemographic and Identity Factors.....	84
Sophia’s Contexts Outside of School and Family Members.....	91
Navigating Schooling: <i>Sophia and Luciana’s Agency</i>	93
Coming to Terms with Being Labeled LD.....	95
Sophia’s General LD Associations.....	98

CHAPTER	Page
Luciana’s Perspectives Regarding Sophia’s LD.....	100
The Salience of Sociocultural Contextualization.....	103
Sophia’s Emotion-Laden Talk about Being Labeled with LD and the Idea of LD.....	104
Sophia’s Emotion-Laden Talk about Being Labeled with LD.....	104
The Hegemony of Smartness.....	104
Disability Microaggressions.....	116
Sophia’s Emotion-Laden Talk of the Idea of LD.....	124
LD as a Double-Edged Sword.....	125
LDness as X.....	129
<i>LDness as Polymorphous</i>	135
5 DANIEL MARTINEZ.....	143
Daniel’s Background and Sociocultural Home and School Contexts.....	143
Daniel’s Family and Home Context.....	146
Mia’s Beliefs about Daniel’s and Her Own LD.....	152
Mia’s Perspectives Regarding Her Community.....	156
Daniel’s Multidimensional Identities and Literacies.....	157
Daniel’s School Context.....	158
Daniel’s Current LD Classification.....	159
Daniel’s Emotion-Laden Talk about Being Labeled with LD and the Idea of LD.....	163
On the Trinity of LD: <i>Help + Teachers + Literacy Troubles</i>	164

CHAPTER	Page
On Being Bullied.....	174
Daniel’s Emotion-Laden Talk of the Idea of LD.....	182
On the Meaning of LD: <i>As Resource, Trouble with Information</i> <i>Processing, Speech & Silence</i>	182
Intersections of Disability, Race, Ethnicity and Language and Other Markers of Difference.....	191
6 BIANCA EDITH PUEBLO.....	200
Bianca Edith Pueblo’s Background and Sociocultural Home and School Contexts.....	200
Bianca’s Family.....	202
Bianca’s Academic Preferences.....	204
On the Importance of Relationships.....	207
Bianca’s Emotion-Laden Talk about Being Labeled with LD.....	208
Embarrassment to Ask for Assistance from Others.....	208
Help as Hope.....	218
Bianca’s Emotion-Laden Talk of the Idea of LD.....	223
Struggles Due to Lack of Understanding.....	223
LD Myths.....	227
7 CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS & LIMITATIONS.....	232
Discursive Practices of LD: <i>Infusing LD Emotionality</i>	236
Interrogating the Cultural-Historical Master Narratives of LD through Gender.....	239

CHAPTER	Page
The Social and Emotional Dimensions of LD.....	241
The Pros, Cons, and Fluidity of LD on the Ground.....	242
Structure and Agency: <i>Operationalizing DisCrit</i>	245
Implications for Policy and Practices.....	249
Limitations.....	264
REFERENCES.....	265
 APPENDIX	
A PARENT PRE-INTERVIEW AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND PROTOCOL CHECK LIST AND VERBAL SCRIPT INSTRUCTIONS.....	281
B PARENT PRE-INTERVIEW AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND PROTOCOL CHECK LIST AND VERBAL SCRIPT INSTRUCTIONS.....	304
C TEACHER PRE-INTERVIEW AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND PROTOCOL CHECK LIST AND VERBAL SCRIPT INSTRUCTIONS.....	327

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Marin School District Information (2013-2014).....	62
2. Nodding School Information.....	63
3. Nodding School Student Standardized Test Results and Median Percentile Ranks, 2011-2014.....	64
4. Student and Parent Participants' Demographics.....	68
5. Teacher Participants.....	69
6. Student Participants' Interview Statistics.....	70
7. Subthemes Identified for Student Participants by Study Question.....	79-80
8. Manifestations of Emotion within Sophia's Emotion-Laden Talk on Background and Sociocultural Contexts.....	87-89
9. Manifestations of Emotion in Daniel's Emotion-Laden Talk for Background and Sociocultural Contexts.....	151-152
10. Manifestations of Emotion in Bianca's Emotion-Laden Talk for Background and Sociocultural Contexts.....	201

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Conceptual Framework.....	43

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Problem and Its Significance: *From Personal History to Collective Identities*

This study focuses on the re-framing of learning disability (LD). This is achieved by interrogating the academic, social and emotional master narratives of LD through the emotion-laden talk of Latina/o students with LD. I weaved in this chapter my personal story because my unique experiences with LD, including the social and emotional impact of being labeled with an LD and my own intersectional identities have influenced my research questions, conceptual framework, and methods for this study. Not all students with LD have social and emotional deficits (Hallahan, Lloyd, Kauffman, Weiss, & Martinez, 2005). Some LD learners have lower self-concepts (Manning, 2007). I experienced overwhelming feelings of discomfort and anxiety due to not understanding what it meant to be labeled LD. I do not recall when I first became aware of my negative self-perceptions about being labeled with an LD. I regard my labeling as an imposed identity that the education system gave me to deal with and respond to my unique constellation of differences. I still suffer from having received the LD label due to my difficulties in learning to read and write at an early age. However, someone who is labeled with LD is not *only* LD, and being LD does not exist in a

vacuum, nor is it detached from the other sociocultural identity dimensions of who one is and her or his unique life-history and practices.

As a young child, I experienced a high fever that cumulated in convulsions and seizures, eventually leading to recurrent and unprovoked seizures inside and outside of school contexts during my early childhood. From a medical model of disability my experiences might have been viewed as a disability; however, in my father's eyes, the term "disability" never entered our conversations. My father once told me I would not remember having the seizures and that I would just go back to who I was. He told me that I would freeze up; my eyes would roll up toward the top of my skull and that I would shake. I remember having a strong seizure while I was walking down the stairs of my elementary school. I held onto the railing as my body was enveloped with an uncontrollable convulsion of energy. I was still David throughout and after such experiences.

To alleviate these painful and life paralyzing experiences that took over my body and mind as a young child, my parents, family, teachers and other school administrators and professionals did their best to accommodate my condition. First, my mother and father tried Western medicine to help me. However, after trying medication, my mother decided to take me off it because it left me in her words: "endrogado y sin vida" ["Drugged and lifeless"]. Then, my parents tried Eastern medicine such as acupuncture. I remember having weekly acupuncture done on my head and having to drink daily Eastern herbal medicine in the form of teas. I can still remember the smell of not only the Chinese/Eastern medicine store but of the herbal medicine that I had to drink. Prayer and my relationship to the

spiritual world helped alleviate the suffering and pain I experienced as a young child. Eventually, and what my mother described as a miracle, my convulsions and seizures just went away. I have felt blessed for this my entire life. In retrospect, these and other early childhood experiences with dis/ability² have informed my dispositions, beliefs, perspectives and eventual professional choice to enter the fields of LD, special education, Disability Studies (DS) and Disability Studies in Education (DSE).

I have felt and continue to feel the pain that being considered “Special Ed” has on someone’s sense of self. I still experience the emotional impact of being labeled with an LD and being in special education. More specifically, when I was in elementary and middle school, I was in a self-contained special education classroom and also received speech therapy due to being an English Language Learner (ELL). I grew up with both Spanish and English at home. My parents are both monolingual Spanish speakers. During high school, I was eventually mainstreamed, achieved good grades, and enjoyed my high school experience. On the one hand, I am an anomaly to the master narrative of what the characteristics and consequences of being diagnosed with an LD mean for the life-chances of this student population. Overall, I enjoyed my schooling experience. On the other hand, the internal impact of being labeled with an LD and being in special education was both a curse and a gift.

² By dis/ability I mean that “disability” and “ability” are social construction constructions as opposed to innate medical psychological phenomena and what counts as ability and disability are historically, politically and socioculturally situated.

I am not only my past. I am not only someone who was labeled with an LD—which now I reconcile and realize is an artifact of the system of education’s way to attempt to meet my academic needs—or not only someone with an identity with dis/ability. I am Latino of mixed ethnicity—El Salvadorian and Palestinian—bilingual, a recent naturalized US citizen, a brother, a life-long learner, gay, a partner, son and so much more than labels can index about my evolving essence that I am discovering about myself as a human being on this planet. My family immigrated to the US after the civil war in El Salvador, due to economic issues we were facing. Combined with my disability history, these larger historical and sociocultural contexts have effected on my educational opportunities to learn and my family’s overall well-being. As a young child, I did not have the language to be aware of these larger forces in my family’s decision making, but in retrospect, I am grateful for how my family members made important decisions that have positively influenced my opportunities to learn and continue my education. I am aware that these larger decisions have influenced who I am today.

Writing a dissertation on the emotional and social dimensions of LD as someone who was diagnosed with an auditory processing LD is complex to say the least. I am passionate about the study of LD due to having been labeled in the past, and having the opportunity to learn and problematize the notion of LD and its social and emotional dimensions at the same time is a privilege, challenge and redemptive. When studying and researching the social and emotional dimensions of LD, the fear and stigma of being labeled with an LD and being in special

education crept back into my consciousness; this was indeed a negative outcome. However, these experiences allowed me to have a qualitatively different stance about the study of LD and its social and emotional dimensions. By “qualitatively different” I mean that few LD researchers are also labeled with LD or have that history to draw on for theory, research, policy and practice.

Connor (2013) states “coming to know the thoughts, needs, and rights of people with dis/abilities—from their own perspective—is essential if equality is to be achieved” (p. 506). Echoing the disability rights movement slogan, “*Nothing About Us, Without Us,*” (Charlton, 1998) Connor underscores that theory, research, policy and practices within the academy and educational institutions should take into account the voices of people with disabilities. The tenet or ideal, which is central to DS and DSE is oppositional to how the current knowledge base regarding students with LD is institutionalized within special education (See Connor, 2013, for a review of this knowledge base and its critiques from a DS, DSE and sociocultural perspectives). Teo (2010) wrote about epistemological violence in the empirical social sciences. Epistemological violence is not about structural violence, but about personal violence and it includes “a subject, an object and an action, even if the violence is the researcher” (Teo, 2010, p. 295). Teo (2010) went on to point out that epistemological violence is the result of social scientists producing knowledge (the subject) about a certain population, the students labeled LD (the object) and the action is the production and interpretation of data that researchers within the field of LD present as knowledge. This knowledge process can be thought of as constructing master narratives of LD.

From my own perspective, being labeled with an LD has been a form of epistemological violence; not a lot of other researchers on LD can assert this if they have not been labeled LD. There are intended and unintended consequences related to being labeled and being a student of Color within special education (i.e., Artiles, 2013; Huber, Artiles, & Hernandez-Saca, 2011). For example, it is well known that having a special education disability category and placement comes with the unintended consequence of stigma and low expectations (US Commission on Civil Rights, Minorities in Special Education, Briefing Report, 2009).

Given that the literature on the social and emotional dimensions of LD gives little attention to culture and equity (Arzubiaga, Artiles, King, & Harris-Murri, 2008), I seek to examine the intersectional lives of Latina/o students with LD, their emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD, and their understanding of the idea of LD. I now understand that the ableism that lived and still lives within me is due to the larger societal master narratives that circulate about what counts as normalcy and the social category of dis/ability within society, or the epistemological violence (Teo, 2010) that occurs when imposed identities about an individual and her or his human characteristics are constructed in a particular way that does not ring true to who that individual is and is becoming.

Students across the US have multidimensional and intersectional identities that they bring to school. These are important sociocultural contexts, which the field of special education and LD should seriously take into account. Failure to

consider a student's multidimensional and intersectional identities and to respond culturally and emotionally to the needs and cultures of historically marginalized youth can lead to deleterious effects such as misidentification with a dis/ability, being pushed out of school, not feeling welcomed at school, and thinking that they are at fault for their mis-education, among others (Artiles, 2011, 2013; Du Bois, 1935; Noguera, 2006; Woodson, 1977). Given the increasing diversity in the US, interrogating the master narratives of the educational label LD is needed to contribute to a praxis, the coupling of reflection and action, on the ground with Latina/o students and ALL students labeled LD within educational contexts.

LD Master Narratives in a Time of Growing Differences

People from all over the world are coming to the US for different reasons. This diversity is not only represented along national lines but also racial and cultural ones. Across their life-course people also vary according to sexual orientation, class, gender, dis/ability, language proficiencies, and other social categories of difference. Banks (2000) called this increase in diversity the 'demographic imperative;' "it is projected that students of [C]olor will make up about 48% of school-age youth by 2020" (p. 97). Further, since its creation we have seen the educational label, LD, become the largest special education category. The racial and ethnic disproportionality in special education, including in the LD category, has been a problem in the public educational system for over 50 years (Artiles, 1998; Dunn, 1968; Donovan & Cross, 2001).

Students' intersectional identities are reflected in the racial inequities inherent in special education, when students from families with low

socioeconomic status are disproportionately represented in high-incidence disabilities, and the fact that the vast majority of them are boys: “boys represent about 80% of E/BD population, 70% of LD students, and 60% of students with ID” (Artiles, 2011, p. 432). Students with LD and the construct of LD then must be understood as intersectional, with multiple forms of difference. Special education placement for racial minority students have critical consequences for their life-chances and opportunities to learn. These consequences include limited access to related services and placement in more segregated programs than their White peers with the same disability diagnosis, among others (Artiles, 2011). The consequences of special education placement for students belonging to a racial minority index how not only race and ability differences but other markers of difference in a diverse society are interlaced. This situation is problematic since minority students are already “at risk” due to the social forces and permanence of race and racism that stratify US society (Carbado & Gulati, 2013; Bell, 1992; Powell, 2012), education (Leonardo, 2004; 2009) and special education (Blanchett, 2006; Patton, 1998).

The notion of “master narratives” assist us in making sense of the LD field’s neglect of historical and sociocultural contexts and forces. Every field has master narratives. Bamberg (2004) defines master narratives as the “pre-existent sociocultural forms of interpretation. They are meant to delineate and confine the local interpretation strategies and agency constellations in individual subjects as well as in social institutions” (p. 287). Jean-Francois Lyotard (1979) coined the term “postmodern” and later critiqued it “as incredulity towards metanarratives”

(p. xxiv). Lyotard goes on to argue that replacing metanarratives or master narratives that characterize the modern era comes from local or small narratives or counter narratives. Lyotard (1979) posits:

Science has always been in conflict with narratives. Judged by the yardstick of science, the majority of them prove to be fables. But to the extent that science does not restrict itself to stating useful regularities and seeks the truth, it is obliged to legitimate the rules of its own game. It then produces a discourse of legitimation with respect to its own status, a discourse called philosophy. I will use the term modern to designate any science that legitimates itself with reference to a metadiscourse of this kind making an explicit appeal to some grand narrative . . . if a metanarrative implying a philosophy of history is used to legitimate knowledge, questions are raised concerning the validity of the institutions governing the social bond: these must be legitimated as well. Thus justice is consigned to the grand narrative in the same way as truth . . . postmodern knowledge is not simply a tool of the authorities; it refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate the incommensurable. Its principle is not the expert's homology, but the inventor's paralogy (p. xxiii-xxv).

Beginning with the presumption that science, along with its expert's homology, have historically dominated the production of knowledge through 'grand narratives' has come to an end with the postmodern world and moved towards "the inventor's paralogy." This is the resistance to the hegemonic ways of

reasoning from science and other dominant institutions and philosophies that inevitably deconstruct and replace the hegemony of totalizing metanarratives.

The philosophy and dominant ways of reasoning (grand narratives) of LD position this student population from a deficit perspective that proposes:

- the problem lies within their neurology,
- they lack basic skills,
- LD is seen as a symbolic complex (Danforth, 2009),
- these learners have lower self-concepts than their non-labeled peers,
- their emotionality is theorized as negative and problematic, and
- their life-chances are in jeopardy due to their condition.

These and other cognitive, social, and emotional deficits experienced by students with LD have been documented (Wong & Donahue, 2002). I challenge the partial perspectives represented in many of these traditional a-historical and a-sociocultural framings through a cultural-historical developmental (Hegedaard, 2008), interdisciplinary, intersectional and emotion lens.

I operationalize this challenge as a re-framing of the social and emotional dimensions of LD. By emphasizing the student voices—operationalized as emotion-laden talk (Edwards, 1999; Moir, 2005)—and background and sociocultural home and school contexts of the participants of this study, I re-frame how students with LD, who also have social and emotional dimensions of LD, have been researched. Furthermore, using a cultural-historical developmental approach that takes into account the social situation of the child (Hegedaard, 2008), this study re-frames the study of the social and emotional dimensions of

LD by including the perspectives and voices of some of the parents and teachers of the participants³. The social and emotional dimensions of LD are part and parcel of the “pre-existent sociocultural forms of interpretation . . . [that] delineate and confine the local interpretation strategies . . . agency constellations[, and hence student’s voice] in individual subjects” (Bamberg, 2004, p. 287) within the master historical-material and discursive practices of LD. However, students who have been labeled with LD are agents within the language games, that is, school literacy practices for example, and within what Artiles & Kozleski (2016) has recently termed the habitus of education within his critical review of the inclusive education literature, or what Lyotard would call the social practice of education that includes its own language game.

Bamberg (2004) situated master narratives with counter narratives, as does Lyotard when he juxtaposed the expert’s homology (i.e., grand narratives or metanarratives) with that of the inventor’s paralogy (multiple and small narratives or language games). I am interested in how students labeled as LD conceptualized their own LD, and particularly about their emotion-laden talk (Edwards, 1999; Moir, 2005) as they dialogued with me about being labeled LD and the idea of LD. In doing so, they entered into the language game, that is, the discursive practice of LD, as they engaged with it and posited their own understandings.

For Bamberg (2004), master narratives and counter narratives imply subjectivity and positionality since subjects are not static entities as they navigate

³ I report “some” of the participants because not all of the student participants’ parents, participated and some dropped out.

master narratives or make meaning about the topic or social practice at hand through their paralogy (Lyotard, 1979). In other words, through their performed identities, individuals positioned by master narratives, self-reflect, self-criticize, self-revise, self-mark, and hence enact *agency* (Ahearn, 2001; 2010) through their discursive practices or what Gee (2011) referred to as language use. Agency is a complex process and there are different types of agency (Ahearn, 2013). Ahearn's (2001; 2010; 2013) summative definition of agency as the socio-culturally mediated human capacity to act is one definition. Within this study, I define *agency* as the socio-culturally and emotionally mediated human capacity to act and position oneself vis-à-vis master narratives through counter-narration with their emotion-laden talk. Agency is mediated by ideational, relational, material identity resources (Nasir & Cooks, 2009; Nasir, 2012), and emotional and affective resources (Ahearn, 2013; Wetherell, 2012) or what Wetherell (2012) calls affective practices. Furthermore, as Bamberg (2004) points out, we can never escape master narratives. That is, there is always a dance between complicity and countering of master narratives through our (counter) narrating and emotion-laden talk.

Master narratives of the social and emotional dimensions of LD. I re-frame the social and emotional dimensions of LD as part of the master narratives of LD. Research on the social and emotional dimensions of LD outlines a litany of deficits that these students suffer from. These include but are not limited to the following negative emotional and social conditions: depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, and difficulty making friends leading to loneliness (Al-Yagon, 2007;

Bryan, Burstein, & Ergul, 2004; Daniel, et al., 2006). Deficits in social and cognitive perception (Petti, Voelker, Shore, & Hayman-Abello, 2002) and social competence (Hagger & Vaughn, 1997) have also been documented. Deficits in behavior such as hyperactivity, aggression, teasing and bullying—as both the target of and predator—have characterized the social and emotional deficits of students with LD (Forness & Kavale, 1997; Pearl & Bay, 1999).

One key underlying assumption regarding the social and emotional dimensions of LD research is that the problem lies within the child. Emotional and social problems belong to the individual as opposed to being emotionally, socially, culturally, and historically bound and mediated. From this latter perspective, emotional and social problems are part and parcel of social interaction and power relations. Taking into account the centrality of race, class, dis/ability, and the social construction of emotions, it is central to critically interrogate how the research community has constructed LD students' social and emotional lives.

The self-concept of students with LD has been studied and measured using quantitative methods (e.g. the Piers-Harris children's self-concept scale, Piers-Harris, 1969; the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory). Although quantitative methods have been productive in documenting correlations between different factors (e.g., socio-economic status) and students with LD's self-concepts (Han, Wu, Yu, Yang, & Hang, 2005), the methods of studying and conceptualizing the self-concept and the multiple identities of students with LD have been limited. These limitations include the lack of theoretical nuance about the social

construction of LD and its emotionality. From a cultural-historical, intersectional and interdisciplinary perspective, traditional ways of studying the self-concept of students fail to expand the unit of analysis to students with LD and their sociocultural contexts and fail to include the role of emotionality. This study will seek to fill this gap.

Students with LD's Voices: *A Critical Perspective*

Gonzalez, Hernandez-Saca, and Artiles (under review) conducted a systematic research review on student voice covering studies published between 1990 and 2010. They defined *student voice* research as a field of study that attempts to capture the ideas or perspectives of students within K-12 schooling. Following systematic procedures and criteria, they identified 97 studies for the review. Out of the 97 studies included in the review, there was a paucity of student voice studies that specifically focused on the voices of Latina/o students with LD:

1. 9 % ($n = 9$) of the studies took into account disability;
2. 4 % ($n = 4$) of the studies included students with LD, and
3. 30 % ($n = 30$) of the study samples included Latina/o students.⁴

Consequently, there is a need for exploring the voices of Latina/o students with LD within the larger landscape of educational theory, research, policy and practice. Although narratives of students who are Black and Latina/o with LD are

⁴ I further review these studies within the literature review within the next chapter.

hard to find; Connor's (2008) critical ethnographic study of eight 18- to 24-year olds is a case in point. Other studies about students with LD tend to be from a White, male, middle class perspective.

To conclude, the field of LD and the study of social and emotional dimensions of LD would benefit from taking into account identity in critically examining the notion of "LD" and LD students' lived experiences within educational contexts. This study contributes to the need for pluralistic theorizing regarding LD and culture by zooming into emotion and back again towards the intersections of LD student's sociocultural contexts such as their identities (Artiles, 2015; Ferri, Gallagher & Connor, 2011).

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to collect Latina/o students' with LD emotion-laden talk, specifically their emotion-laden talk (Moir, 2005; Edwards, 1999) to re-frame the construct of LD through answering the following research questions:

1. What are Latina/o students with LD's emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD?
2. What are Latina/o students with LD's emotion-laden talk of the idea of LD?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW & CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter I critically examine the assumptions within the cultural-historical, policy and professional master narratives (Bamberg, 2004; Lyotard, 1979) of LD. I do this to outline the “pre-existent sociocultural forms of interpretation of [LD, specifically, the social and emotional dimensions of LD, that] delineate and confine the local interpretation strategies and agency constellations [for individuals labeled LD]” (Bamberg, 2004, p. 287). I also do this to outline the master narratives of LD operating in social institutions when the construct of LD is made salient. Some of these social institutions are the public educational system, the field of special education and LD and student’s families. However, absent from the master narratives of LD are the perspectives of those living with LD. Largely missing from the literature are middle school aged Latina/o students’ with LD emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD and the idea of LD.

With this study’s research questions—1) What are Latina/o students with LD’s emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD? 2) What are Latina/o students with LD’s emotion-laden talk of the idea of LD?—I seek to disrupt the hegemonic metanarratives (Lyotard, 1979) of LD by exploring the emotion-laden talk (Edwards, 1999; Moir, 2005) of Latina/o students with LD. For this purpose, I review the cultural-historical, policy, and professional master narratives. The professional ones include the academic and traditional knowledge base of LD and the social and emotional dimensions of LD literature. I review the cultural-

historical, policy, and academic professional master narratives in this order. I then present the conceptual framework which foregrounds issues of equity, narrative, power, emotionality, affective practices, agency, intersectionality, culture and discursive practices of LD to disrupt the master narratives of LD. Such a framework is needed to reframe beyond etic knowledge within the master narratives of LD. Such a reframing can move us towards a view of student socio-emotional perspectives that honor their lived realities with LD at the intersections of emotionality and sociocultural contexts.

Cultural-Historical, Policy and Academic Professional Master Narratives of LD

Cultural-historical master narrative of LD. The history of the official term Learning Disability (LD) began in 1963 when Samuel A. Kirk coined the term in a conference presentation (Danforth, 2009). Today Kirk is seen as one of the progenitors of the field not only LD but also special education. Kirk's 1963 presentation foreshadowed the 1969 passage of the Learning Disabilities Education Act (P.L. 91-230) and the Education of Handicapped Children of 1975 (P.L. 94-142). These three events institutionalized the term LD into professional educational discourse and US educational federal policy. However, both the intellectual history and history of the phenomena LD go back to the early twentieth century.

The cultural-historical master narratives about LD include: a) LD as a boy who struggles with reading, which is due to intrinsic factors; b) LD as a symbolic complex, and c) the feebleminded "as a dangerous class prone to chronic

unemployment, dependency on charitable institutions, and criminal behavior” (Danforth, 2009, p. 9). These three master narratives represent three ways in which the notion of LD has been constructed since its inception. These cultural-historical master narratives, like the other master narratives outlined below, represent common sense assumptions about the term LD that have become hegemonic about the idea of LD and about the academic and dis/ability lives regarding this population.

The history and intellectual science of LD shows that from the beginning the concept of LD has been one that situates ‘disability’ within the neurology and psychology of the child who could not read and write the written word. Danforth (2009) writes:

The American researchers in the field of learning disabilities believed that when children did not learn under the typical schooling arrangements and practices, the problem existed within the psychological or biophysical constitution of that individual. The child was placed under the proverbial microscope. Questions involving the practices, beliefs, and dynamics of larger social groups in which the child lived—the school, neighborhood, community, and society itself—were beyond the formal scope of scientific investigation. Bluntly stated, social theory or political exploration was not allowed (Danforth, 2009, p.20).

Since that time, however, the field of LD has been critiqued regarding the etiology and the very notion of LD based on philosophical and class, gender, race, and dis/ability lines (e.g., Artiles, 2011; Carrier, 1983, 1986; Connor, 2008;

Dudley-Marling, 2004; Gallagher, 2010; McDermott, Varenne, Goldman, Naddeo, & Rizzo-Talk, 1998; Skrtic, 2011; Sleeter 1986).

By symbolic complex, Danforth (2009) means the “constellation of scientifically generated concepts, terms, and practices that yield an improved understanding of the child and his needs” (p.14). The symbolic complex is a cultural-historical master narrative of LD because the symbolic complex can be understood as the paradigm in which professionals who work with students labeled as LD are operating under, consciously and unconsciously. In other words, it is the accumulated body of technical knowledge that positions or builds the construct of LD in a particular way.

The early twentieth century Eugenics nomenclature and cultural meanings applied to people with disabilities such as the “feeble-minded” and everything associated with this term is a cultural-historical narrative about LD. According to Danforth (2009), the feeble-minded during the early twentieth century were seen “as a dangerous class prone to chronic unemployment, dependency on charitable institutions, and criminal behavior” (Danforth, 2009, p. 9). Today we still see reductionist correlations being made between non-reading and criminal activity within the literature of LD (e.g., McMaster, Fuchs, Fuchs, & Compton, 2005). In addition, the intersection of students labeled with an LD and criminal activity is well known within the literature on the social and emotional dimensions of LD. Although research has shown that there are large numbers of people with LD within US prisons (Courtney & Lascelles, 2010; Hayes, 2007; O’Brien, 2008) not all people with LD are criminals. Here also, like within other master narratives of

LD, the problem is situated within the individual as opposed to thinking about behavior or activity as social and historical in nature.

Overall the legacy of the cultural-historical master narratives is that it has created a long history grounded in a narrative with distinctive features (e.g. LD as a boy who struggles with reading which is due to intrinsic factors; LD as a symbolic complex and the feeble-minded “as a dangerous class prone to chronic unemployment, dependency on charitable institutions, and criminal behavior,” Danforth, 2009, p. 9) revolving around deficit thinking (Valencia, 2010). Further, these distinct features within the cultural-historical master narratives have also had particular trajectories in the policy and professional realms that will be critically reviewed and unpacked below.

Policy master narratives. I review in this section the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), with particular attention to the term “Specific Learning Disability.” This review will allow me to examine the master narratives about LD that are embedded in federal policy. Learning is not assumed to be a social phenomenon within the definition of a “Specific Learning Disability” in IDEA. It only exists as an individual process of the “basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which disorder may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations” (IDEA, P.L. 108-446). In other words, the policy assumes that learning is only a function of the cognitive processes of an individual that are measured through psychometric means.

The definition of a “Specific Learning Disability” assumes that disability is a medical and psychological problem. That is, disability is epistemologically, ontologically, and etiologically constructed through a medical-psychological model. We should remember, however, there are other ways of understanding dis/ability. For example, the social models of dis/ability center the social construction of dis/ability and for the ways in which others respond to and organize systems (i.e. the environment, classrooms, social relationships, educational system) in ways that construct the meanings about dis/ability in another way or in a hegemonic way. The social model of dis/ability also foregrounds how people with disabilities have historically been marginalized and stereotyped and seeks to work towards a more positive “symbolic complex” or metanarrative about LD. The definition of a “Specific Learning Disability” includes the phrase “imperfect ability.” This is of paramount significance in the analysis of what constitutes “Specific Learning Disability.” The most obvious assumption is that there is a perfect way or ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations, which is contrary to human diversity and the different ways of being, feeling, doing, acting, perceiving, learning, thinking, understanding, and processing.

In addition, the medical-psychological model is upheld by the exclusionary clause within the definition of a “Specific Learning Disability.” This clause states:

(C) DISORDERS NOT INCLUDED—Such term does not include a learning problem that is primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor

disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage. (IDEA, PL-108-446).

Therefore, the etiology of a “Specific Learning Disability” is only due to the psychology and neurology of the child or adult. From a critical social theory perspective this is crucial. These official views about ability and disability suggest that people’s material realities, what Erevelles (2011) seeks to foreground in her historical-materialist analysis of disability for Disability Studies (DS), have nothing to do with ability and disability and how they make meaning. From a sociocultural learning theory perspective, which has also been influenced by critical theory and Marxists perspectives, the notion that someone can be “learning disabled” without considering the social context(s) and the dialectical relationship between learning and human development is misguided. The idea that human beings exist independent of their social contexts and the material world implies an objectivist worldview of human beings. Although this can be implied about the definition of LD within IDEA, Danforth (2009) demonstrated that the science of LD used both objectivist and subjectivist research methodologies. That is, throughout the history of the science of LD progenitors and researchers who followed them used both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to study the construct of LD.

Considering that all of these assumptions are interconnected at some level, I have found it hard to not make connections across the assumptions that are embedded within the definition of a “Specific Learning Disability.” Although, I have separated the assumptions in order to discuss them this is not meant to

suggest that they exist independently within the definition of a “Specific Learning Disability.” For example, notions of ability and disability are interconnected to notions of normality.

One assumption inherent in the definition of a “Specific Learning Disability” is the notion that ‘normality,’ ‘ability,’ and ‘disability’ reside within the individual and that there is such a thing called “norm ability” and can be defined against “abnormal disability.” This fails to take into account culture as a major mechanism in delineating what counts as ability, disability and hence, normality (see Artiles, 2015). Apple (2009) states that labels and categories perpetuate the cultural and economic capital of those in the dominant groups. Those who are privileged through constructions of normality, directly and indirectly, are those who are not constructed as such in expense to those who are constructed in ways that label them as deviating from that ‘norm.’ Through a DS perspective this is ableism. Ableism, like other systems of oppression, delineate the relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor as being hierarchical where the oppressed are subordinate to those who are the oppressor, or in other words, being privileged from the oppression of the oppressed. It can be argued that who benefits from the definition of a “Specific Learning Disability” are white-middle class, abled-bodied and more specifically what I will term, supposed, “*abled-cognitively/psychologically*” individuals.

Notions of normality within society become part of the common-sense ideological apparatus through discourses of difference, learning, emotionality, dis/ability and power within institutions like schools. According to Popkewitz and

Brennan (1998) the term “critical” in critical theory or the critical tradition refers to “a broad band of disciplined questioning of the ways in which power works through the discursive practices and performances of schooling” (p. 4). The definition of a “Specific Learning Disability” can be taken as a cultural and ideological artifact in which the educational system is inscribing into “law” what constitutes ab/normality, and in turn is normalizing a particular ideology of normality.

Propositions in SEC. 614 mention parents, administrators and other stakeholders; however, there is no mention of eliciting the perspectives or representations of the children or students who are in the process of being evaluated. Although there is no mention of involving the child who is being evaluated in the identification process, local practices do involve students in the process such as student lead Individual Education Programs (IEPs). Nevertheless, there is no official policy master narrative that positions students central to the process of identification and the evaluation process. There is a body of literature that speaks to the politics of representation with students with LD (McDermott et al., 1998; Mehan, 2001). This literature, for example, explains the issues that are associated with students with LD’s representation along epistemological, ontological, axiological, and etiologiical lines.

Professional master narratives of LD. Within the educational-professional literature of the field of LD there is a master narrative about the construct of LD that can be described as involving three models: neurological, cognitive and instructional models (Fletcher, 2012). Within this section I briefly

mention the neurological and cognitive models. I clustered these models around the notion of a medical-psychological model that stresses deficits. These three models can be seen as representing the historical shift in how LD has been and currently is defined in the field of LD. Recall that one of the characteristics of the cultural-historical master narratives is *LD as a boy who struggles with reading* which is due to intrinsic factors. This is similar to the neurological and cognitive models of LD outlined below. The instructional model represents the latest thinking within the field of LD in terms of assessment and identification of students labeled LD.

Neurological deficits. This educational master narrative about the construct of LD situates dis/ability within the body of the child. The neurological model of LD explains ab/normal or maladaptive behavioral patterns as neurologically based due to brain dysfunction. An entire nomenclature related to this model proliferated during the early 20th century within in the educational and research related professions of what since 1964 has been known as the field of LD. Fletcher (2012) listed the following terms in the order they appeared to explain what today is known as the heterogeneous term LD:

Continuing the focus on behavioral patterns associated with brain dysfunction, concepts emerged with terms like organic drivenness (Kahn & Cohen 1934), minimal brain injury (Strauss & Lehtinen, 1947), and minimal brain dysfunction (MBD) (Clements, 1962). As the concept of MBD emerged, it was recognized that many of the children had academic

problems and the concept was expanded to include reading, math, and writing difficulties (Fletcher, 2012, p. 9).

Therefore, the neurological model when seen as a master narrative painted the picture that brain dysfunction was the cause of student non-learning or non-development. Similar to other master narratives of LD here LD is considered to be within the child and does not take into account sociocultural factors as mediating human development and learning such as culture and language. This factor seems to be a key theme within the history and legacy of LD. Out of all the terms that were generated during the early 20th century about children having difficulties in academic learning, minimal brain dysfunction was the one that stuck for a while before the term LD took center stage. In 1964 the concept MBD was formally defined:

as children of near average, average, or above average general intelligence with certain learning or behavioral disabilities; associated with deviations of function of the central nervous system. These deviations may manifest themselves by various combinations of impairment in perception, conceptualization, language, memory, and control of attention, impulse, or motor function (Clements, 1966, as cited in Fletcher, 2012, p. 9).

As mentioned above, MBD was the predecessor of the term LD. For example, the definition even used the language of the current exclusionary criteria that is used today in the federal definition of LD since 1968 (Fletcher, 2012). Over the years, however, according to Fletcher (2012):

The neurological model eventually collapsed with the demise of the concept of MBD in the 1980s, reflecting the failure of training programs addressing special signs to generalize to important areas of adaptation (e.g., better reading performance). In addition, medication treatment using stimulants, which are clearly efficacious for problems with impulsivity and hyperactivity, were often recommended because a person showed multiple attributes of the group, but not those for which stimulants appeared particularly useful (Fletcher, 2012, p.10).

Although Fletcher made the point that the neurological model “collapsed,” the view of LD as a neurologically based construct remains even though progress has been made to balance the view between a “nature” verse “nurture” or “neurological” verse “environmental,” or at least instructional perspective. Master narratives about LD continue to evoke neurologically based understandings. In fact, according to Fletcher (2012) “neurobiological research into brain function and genetics has flourished in part because criteria for different kinds of LD are specific about the area of academic impairment and separate LD from ADHD” (p.10). With the decline of MBD came the rise of the formal concept of LD, which led to the separation of academic skill disorders involving reading, math, and writing from the term ADHD, “which was a set of problems in the behavioral domain involving inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity” (Fletcher, 2012, p.10).

Cognitive deficits. The cognitive model implies that LD is a cognitive and language disorder. That is, LD is due to cognitive and (speech) language

malfunctions in the child or the individual. Key behavioral scientists and speech and language specialists of this view included William Cruickshank, Helmer Myklebust, Doris Johnson, and Samuel Kirk who “viewed language and cognitive functions as central to the concept of LD” (Fletcher, 2012, p.11). The cognitive model of LD “emphasized unevenness in cognitive functions and a need for cognitive and educational interventions, along with an absence of other conditions associated with low achievement (i.e., the exclusionary criteria)” (Fletcher, 2012, p. 11). The cognitive model emerged during the time that legal master narratives became written into law through the passage of IDEA and the federal definitions of LD, as mentioned in the policy master narratives section of this chapter. Therefore, although chronicled separately in this manuscript, cultural-historical, policy and professional master narratives were and are intertwined and converge to make up what the overall “official master narrative of LD” is. Absent from these cultural-historical, policy, and professional master narratives are the voices and emotion-laden talk of students living with the condition LD about being labeled LD and the idea of LD.

With the cognitive model of LD came the IQ-discrepancy model when in 1977, the US Office of Education made official a regulatory definition of LD. The IQ-discrepancy model explained that there was a discrepancy between the IQ and achievement of students. Since the federal definition and the work of Samuel Kirk and others recognized that students with LD:

- a) learning characteristics that were different from children identified with intellectual or emotional difficulties;
- b) demonstrated unexpected

problems with achievement given strengths in other areas; and c) required specialized educational interventions that were not needed for typically achieving children (Fletcher, 2012, p. 12).

Therefore, like the cultural-historical and policy master narratives of LD as a symbolic complex, here we see that the meaning of LD also includes dimensions that include assumptions about dis/ability and normalcy. These three characteristics (a through c) however can be thought of transcending any one of the master narratives of LD and being central to the core assumptions regarding the meaning of LD.

Until fairly recently, the cognitive model of LD has reigned in the professional master narratives and it was inherent in the IQ-discrepancy model. For example, Fletcher (2012) noted: “from this regulatory definition, the idea of a cognitive discrepancy between higher IQ and lower achievement as a marker has become instantiated in policy and societal concepts of LD” (p.12) and again within the big d Discourse of LD (D. Connor, personal communication, August, 2013). However, according to Fletcher (2012) the IQ-discrepancy model has been discredited since the results of two major literature reviews (e.g. Hoskyn & Swanson, 2000, as cited in Fletcher, 2012; Stuebing et al., 2002 as cited in Fletcher, 2012), which indicated that there were no:

[m]ajor differences in the behavioral, cognitive, and achievement characteristics of children who met IQ-achievement discrepancy criteria in reading versus children with reading difficulties whose achievement was

consistent with IQ (low achievers, excluding those with intellectual deficiencies) (Fletcher, 2012, p. 13).

In addition, these two subgroups did not differ in the long-term development of reading skills, and therefore, they argued that “IQ and IQ-achievement discrepancies are at best weak predictors of treatment outcomes” (Fletcher, 2012, p. 13). Moreover, similar to the fact there have been arguments against the IQ-discrepancy model there have been arguments against what I call the brain or neurology model:

Tanaka et al. (2011) found no differences in the brain activation patterns of two different samples of children identified as IQ-achievement discrepant and low achieving when reading real words and pseudowords in a functional brain imaging study (functional magnetic resonance imaging) (Fletcher, 2012, p.13).

The existence of brain-imaging studies that try to locate malfunction within areas of the brain continue, directly and indirectly, the master narrative that LD is a neurologically based phenomenon stripped from the sociocultural context that mediates human behavior, activity and development. Fletcher (2012) argues that “at this point in time, brain imaging studies help us understand the neural mechanisms underlying LD, but don’t have specific implications for intervention” (p.14).

Overall, the cognitive model of LD, even though it still reigns today in the field of LD and within professional practice in special education, it is fraught with many issues. Some of these issues have to do with reliability and validity of the

measurements that the tools are purported to measure, but also lack attention to the sociocultural context which students are embedded within and come from. Making reductionist arguments about areas of the brain to one's potential or ability is problematic. These arguments are based on measurements of one's supposed ability in a fixed point in time. The latter of which implies a theory of mind and of learning that is static and deterministic as opposed to dynamic and hopeful.

The cognitive model of LD is grounded in an information processing metaphor of the mind where the material dimension of learning is neither theorized nor taken into account in defining what counts as ability and disability. Hence, we are left with an amaterial, acultural, asocial, aemotional and ahistorical view of learning that does not take into account the sociocultural nature of LD.

Fletcher (2012) argues:

None of these concerns should be taken to indicate that cognitive skills are not related to LD because the manifestations of LD in achievement and other functional limitations are clearly associated with specific cognitive difficulties. Using this information for identification and treatment has proven elusive (Fletcher, 2012, p.15).

Therefore, the cognitive master narrative of LD outlines an etiological framing as opposed to one that is used to identify and treat students with this educational condition.

The social and emotional dimensions of LD. Like all of the master narratives of LD reviewed above, the professional master narratives of LD

delineate how professionals come to understand the socio-emotional dimensions of this student population. The traditional research on the social and emotional dimensions of LD outlines a litany of social and emotional deficits, though not all students with LD have emotional and social deficits (Hallahan et al., 2005). Nevertheless, researchers who do find those students with LD who also have social and emotional deficits, generally identify the following characteristics: anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, low self-concepts, and difficulty making friends which can lead to loneliness (Bryan, Burstein, & Ergul, 2004; Daniel et al., 2006; Maag & Reid, 2006; Margalit, 2006; Forness & Kavale, 1997; Kavale & Forness, 1997). Deficits in social and cognitive perception (Petti, Voelker, Shore, & Hayman-Abello, 2002) and social competence (Haager & Vaughn, 1997) have also been documented. Deficits in behavior such as hyperactivity, aggression, teasing and bullying—both in being the target of and the predator—have characterized the social and emotional deficits of students with LD (Forness & Kavale, 1997; Kavale & Forness, 1997; Pearl & Bay, 1999; Wong & Donahue, 2002). These are deficits that are found and assumed to be part of student's neurology due to the medical-psychological model of disability in which the theory, research, policy and practice of, not only special education, but the literature on the social and emotional dimensions of LD is based.

Let us remember that the definition of LD—specifically item (C) DISORDERS NOT INCLUDED or exclusionary clause—does not take into account issues of what Connor (2009) called the “historical, social, and cultural contexts experienced by individuals who have been labeled [LD]” (p. 449).

Further, Connor (2009) stated that it is problematic to study the notion of LD in isolation from such contexts. The work on the discursive practices of LD, among others, attempt to illuminate the sociocultural aspects of the LD phenomena.

Artiles (2004) labeled the study of the discursive practices of LD (Reid & Valle, 2004) as a historiography of special education since that body of work attempts to take into account sociocultural aspects that students embody and are enveloped in as they participate in their language use within the big d Discourse (Gee, 2011) of schooling. Artiles' body of work around the disproportionate representation of culturally and linguistically diverse students in education is a case in point. Artiles called for a historiography of the field of LD and special education around issues of educational equity and access for, not only opportunities to learn, but also for what Danforth (1995) called the politics of both knowledge and representation for students historically marginalized and under and over-represented in special education. Artiles (2004, 2011, 2013) argued for explicit attention to educational equity in the research on LD using an interdisciplinary prism that takes into account the intersectional nature of markers of difference. Furthermore, the field of special education and the medical-psychological model of disability do not account for what Artiles (2004), Connor (2009), and other critical scholars (e.g., Artiles, 1998, 2003; Connor, 2008; Connor & Ferri, 2010; Dudley-Marling, 2004; Dudley-Marling & Paugh, 2010; Gallagher, 2010; McDermott & Varenne, 1998; McDermott, Goldman, & Varenne, 2006; Skrtic, 2011; Sleeter 1986, 1987, 1988, 1998, 2010; among others) have termed the sociocultural factors in which students are enveloped within.

Not taking into account the sociocultural factors of students labeled LD within the field of LD has been the common sense practice. Furthermore, taking seriously into account student's sociocultural milieus has the potential to disrupt this common sense practice to create new knowledge and ways of thinking and doing with regard to this student group. Artiles, Trent, and Kuan (1997) found a paucity of studies on ethnic minority students—such as Latina/os in the empirical research of LD. The social and emotional master narratives of LD, like the academic professional master narratives of LD, does not take into account the sociodemographic factors as mediating the lived experiences of students labeled LD. Further, these sociodemographic factors are not garnered as potential resources in their human development and learning. Beyond only documenting the sociodemographics as group traits (Artiles, King-Thorius, Bal, Waitoller, Neal, & Hernandez-Saca, 2011) in their sample sizes and participants' descriptions the literature on the emotional and social dimensions of LD fails to incorporate a more robust vision about these factors as mediating the lives of students.

Promising Responses to Master Narratives: *Research on LD Student*

Perspectives

There is growing attention to student perspectives in education research (Gonzalez et al., under review) that have the potential to create counter master narratives about marginalized and oppressed students, including LD learners. Gonzalez et al. (under review) found that the purposes of the studies included: a) school improvement or reform (n = 43 studies), b) personal or group

empowerment (n = 48), c) the sociology or process of teaching (n = 16) or d) learning the school curriculum (n = 17). A salient pattern in the evidence was a paucity of student voice studies that specifically focused on Latina/o students with LD.

Within the nine studies that took into account disability four studies addressed students with LD, three addressed students with emotional and/or behavioral disorders (E/BD), two addressed specific language impairments (SLI) (Wright, 2008), and 10 studies included participants categorized as “other.” This last category meant that the study (a) addressed another form of disability label (Cook-Sather, 2006; Frost, 2007; Frost & Holden, 2008; Kroeger et al., 2004; Moller, 2006), (b) used a disability label or description that is different from the US (e.g., complex and multiple needs) (e.g., Wright, 2008), or (c) addressed disability vaguely or indirectly (e.g., Griffith & Gill, 2006). Within the “other” category studies vaguely mentioned that either the school population included students with disabilities or described the participants with vague assertions using terms like “many” and “most” to describe the student populations disability identification. Vague generalizations about the school population or the study participants made it difficult for readers to discern whose voice was being studied. Seven of the studies sought to study the voice of students with disabilities either as the entire participant group or part of the participant group. Methodologically, these studies specifically indicated what sort of disabilities the participants were labeled with, how many participants, and included data representing the students’ voice or opinions. Given this review of the student voice research, there is a need

for exploring and eliciting the voices of Latina/o students with LD within the larger landscape of educational theory, research, policy and practice interested in issues of equity.

The voices of girls with LD. Similarly, Beth Ferri has produced a body of work on the lives of women with LD from a feminist perspective. Ferri along with her colleagues pointed to the fact that the voices of women with LD are missing within the literature (Ferri & Gregg, 1998). Historically the construct of LD has been a male dominated population. For example, currently and historically the number of boys diagnosed with LD have outnumbered the number of girls. Not to imply that we want more girls to be labeled as LD. Nevertheless, for Ferri and her colleagues, there are problems with the social and emotional dimension of LD and the field of LD when we consider gender:

- 1) lack of attention to sociocultural factors like gender,
- 2) its intersection with dis/ability,
- 3) lack of voices and attention to issues from a feminist perspective since Ferri posits that dis/ability is a feminist issue (Ferri & Gregg, 1998).

By this last statement what Ferri and Gregg (1998) foreground is the need to understand dis/ability not in isolation from issues of gender that not only takes into account girls or just boys with LD but both boys' *and* girls' experiences with LD or disability need to be taken into account. As opposed to thinking of dis/ability as isolated and not intersected with other forms of difference such as gender.

The dominant ways of knowing and thinking about LD, due to the master narratives of LD, is gendered in the sense that images of boys predominant our collective consciousness and stereotypes about LD. In turn, this is perpetuated given the lack of more critical reviews and attention to issues of gender about the construct of LD within the mainstream. Granted this can be explained due to the field's overall lack of theoretical and social theorizing (Danforth, 1995). There is a need to apply social theory and theoretical nuanced understandings and examinations about being labeled with LD and the idea of LD within the field of LD. In addition, given that the majority of students with LD are heterogeneous the use of intersectionality is useful in that it can prove generative for future research to explore.

In her study of adult women with LD, Ferri (2000) illuminated how these women dealt with the hidden costs of living with a LD. These include individual consequences, such as anxiety and lower self-concepts, but also social consequences that have to do with earlier parenting patterns as compared to their non-labeled counterparts (e.g., being positioned as less valued than their brothers or male siblings, and at risk for social rejection). Furthermore, societal consequences may occur as well where services are disproportionately provided for males as opposed to girls. Current trends show an overrepresentation of boys being classified with LD—specifically, “two-thirds of students identified with LD are male (66 percent) while overall public school enrollment is almost evenly split between males (51 percent) and females (49 percent). This overrepresentation of boys occurs across different racial and ethnic groups” (Cortiella & Horowitz,

2014, p. 15). Cortiella and Horowitz (2014) caution that since there is no specific reasons for this gender imbalance, we must remember that “these students as a group disproportionately reflect the experiences of boys” (p.15). Nevertheless, Cortiella and Horowitz (2014) point to the fact that research studies show that the common factor between boys and girls is their difficulty with reading. The latter of which is the most common characteristic of LD. Lastly, Cortiella and Horowitz (2014) call for more research on this gender disparity and ask: “In what ways and to what extent changes to LD identification criteria impact gender distribution[?]” (p. 15).

Using narrative analysis methods, Ferri (2000) came up with the following themes about the nine women in her study: (a) the impact of LD as a love/hate relationship, and (b) LD and passing—cycles of perfectionism, panic and exhaustion. As someone who was labeled LD, and still lives with the emotional impact of LD, I can relate with these findings, and at the same time problematize them. By problematizing them I do not mean to counter them or minimize the real impacts of living with an LD as they relate to living with other social categories that have been historically devalued in our society, such as women. I problematize the hegemonic forces that place the problem in the neurology of people as opposed to countering hegemonic notions of normalcy and ableism—with their metaphors, rhetoric and structuring nature.

[Ferri (2000) speaks about the term passing and found that] [t]he impact of [LD] then, is not only about mistakes, but also the anxiety, fear, and shame that individuals can come to attach to those mistakes. Moreover,

the energy required to be on guard is energy that cannot be spend on other tasks or other relationships. This discussion demonstrated that passing was one of the most insidious hidden costs of having a difference which is not seen or understood by others because of the energy required to keep that difference unknown. Abby explained that it was the fact that [LD] are hidden most of the time and the mistakes [made] are so unbelievably simple which make it difficult to explain and difficult for others to understand. A particularly destructive interpersonal effect of passing is that individuals may come to see themselves as imposters . . . heightening their feelings of isolation and shame. Passing also erases and diminishes the value of difference and re-inscribes ways of knowing and perceiving and that these non-disabled ways of knowing and perceiving are somehow inherently superior (Ferri, 2000, p. 135).

I agree with Ferri that the effects of coping with a LD can have an emotional and social impact on the quality of life on individuals. The notion of passing or imposters is problematic and deficit oriented in the ways in which it positions individuals with LD. When I think of my own experiences with LD and the fact that LD to be a social construction, I find the notions of passing and imposters a kind of ableism. In my life course, so far, I have not been trying to actively “pass;” I have just been myself—the notion of passing devalues the complexity of not only the human being who has been labeled with LD, but the complexity and awe-struck gift we call life and the relationships that comprise it. Implicit in the notion of “passing” is the hegemony of normalcy (Connor & Gabel, 2013), which

is structured in society through ableism, and within the ways of knowing and doing of the fields of special education and LD. The notion of passing is offensive and dehumanizing in describing people with LD. Ferri (2000) also found that the women had a love/hate relationship to LD.

Life is about relationships. Relationships between parts and systems exist to create things and institutions; and relationships matter in biology and nature. I have characterized my own relationship to LD as a love/hate relationship. I have used the metaphor of a gift/curse relationship. Not understanding the medical language of “my learning disability” has been a curse because it has caused me great confusion and pain about myself and about my relationship to learning. Nevertheless, it has been a gift since I have excelled in my academics because I wanted to distance myself from LD; therefore, the anger, sadness and pain I have felt was agentic and productive for being resilient and persevering towards my academic goals. In other words, LD, and specifically, coming to know that I was labeled with an LD, propelled me to take action and initiative to not be “LD.”

Both Ferri and Connor use narratives in their bodies of work to capture the complexity of the lives of young people and adults living with LD. Both Ferri and Connor value narrative ways of knowing and an intersectionality approach at making sense of the multiple identities of people living with LD. While Connor (2006) uses the work of Crenshaw (1993) and Collins (2000) to look at the intersections of race, class, and dis/ability, Ferri foregrounds her analysis through a gender analysis that also takes into account intersectionality. Most recently Ferri and Connor outlined along with their colleague Annamma (Annamma, Connor, &

Ferri, 2012) a framework to examine the intersection of dis/ability and race with other socially constructed phenomena given the interlocking dominance of White supremacy and ableism within society and schooling.

Connor's body of work has interrogated our common sense assumptions about the notion of LD existing in isolation from other socially constructed phenomena such as race and class. Grounded in intersectionality, Connor (2006, 2008) revealed the social contexts that students of color who were labeled LD and came from low-income backgrounds had to navigate in the world. Connor's research resists social forces, such as what Goodley and Runswick-Cole (2011) called "disableism⁵," opposed to neurologically based problems, through student counter-narratives.

The social and emotional master narratives of LD literature presented in the preceding section lead me to draw the following assertions: 1) there is a need for the social context of LD to be taken into account, 2) LD does not exist in a vacuum, 3) children, youth, and young adults live complex lives that most research in special education and the field of LD does not take into account in its knowledge construction about the lives of these human beings, 4) there is a need for the perspectives and voice, emotion-laden talk, about the lives of youth who live at the affective intersections of multidimensional identities while working for social justice against the stigma of difference due to the hegemony of normalcy, White supremacy and ableism (Connor & Gabel, 2013; Connor, Ferri, &

⁵ "a form of social oppression involving the social imposition of restrictions of activity on people with impairments and the socially engendered undermining of their psycho-emotional well-being" (p. 604).

Annamma, 2016; Davis, 1995, 2013). There is also a need to move beyond traditional methodologies, theories, policies and practices when it comes to the construct of dis/ability and LD (Connor, 2008; Ferri, Gallagher & Connor, 2011) and how it has been uncritically used, objectified, measured and controlled within the traditional field of special education and LD (Danforth & Taff, 2004; Patton, 1998). The voices of students with LD can be used as a springboard toward a *systemic interdisciplinary and collaborative transformation* (e.g., Artiles, 2013, 2015; Valle, Connor, Broderick, Bejoian, & Baglieri, 2011) in the ways in which our culture views and understands students with LD. Although, the efforts that have been made by critical special education and LD scholars have contributed to new knowledge about the notion of LD that have moved the field forward, there is still a gap in exploring and understanding the complexities of the social construction of emotionality in students with LD's lives as it relates to their emotion-laden talk about being labeled LD and the idea of LD.

Conceptual Framework

The relationships between the components of the conceptual framework (see Figure 1) for this study allow me to generate new knowledge regarding constructs embedded within the study's research questions: 1) What are Latina/o student' with LD's emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD? 2) What are Latina/o students with LD's emotion-laden talk of the idea of LD? Given that both research questions position Latina/o students with LD as the experts of their understanding of being labeled with LD and of the idea of LD, the research questions are placed within the middle of the figure and encompassed in the outer

square with the aforementioned big d Discourses and master narratives. This conceptual framework also takes into account the larger goal of this study: re-framing LD.

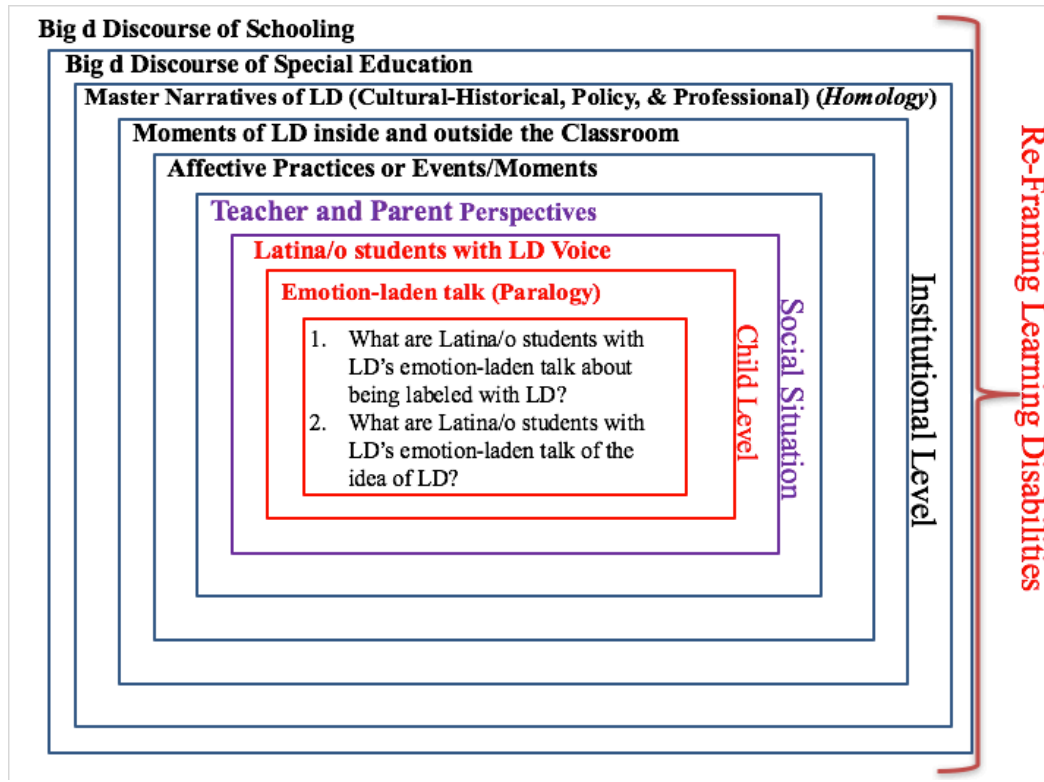


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

It does this by not only taking seriously the background and sociocultural contexts of students with LD, but their emotion-laden talk from an interdisciplinary, intersectional and cultural-historical approach. By placing the research questions at the center of the concentric squares, the figure of the conceptual framework underscores the centrality of the data that will answer the research questions. The research questions, at the center, represent the voice of the Latina/o students with LD in the form of emotion-laden talk; this is the paralogy of students about LD. Lastly, by labeling and bearing in mind the institutional (i.e., the master narratives

of LD), social situation (i.e., teachers and parents' perspectives) and the child's emotion-laden talk and understanding of educational cultural practices and traditions into account this conceptual framework takes a cultural-historical development approach (Hegedaard, 2003). The conceptual framework, that is, the argument (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012) that is represented within the figure and the relationships between the components enable me to analyze the data to answer the study research questions because it conceptualizes the Latina/o students with LD emotion-laden talk as embedded within the discursive practices of LD. Nevertheless, this conceptual framework centers the role of emotion within these latter discursive practices of LD. In other words, *the emotion discursive practices of LD*.

Disrupting Master Narratives: Accounting for Emotion, Culture, Power & Privilege in LD

The lives of students with LD are complex and nuanced. Students labeled as such are not only LD. The social and emotional dimensions of LD are not only a byproduct of having the educational condition LD, but are due to the emotional impact of being labeled as such and being in special education (Zabonick, 2013). Throughout the literature social, cognitive, and emotional problems, like the construct of LD, are theorized within the child or adult. In contrast, this study is grounded on the assumption that socio-emotional dimensions are sociocultural in nature. Emotion and affect is social and is a relationship between people, not something residing in the individual only (Wetherell, 2012). This premise

highlights the centrality of the social context(s) within which both the academic and socio-emotional dimensions of LD should be theorized and examined.

One way to disrupt the master narratives of LD is to gather the narratives, specifically, the emotion-laden talk, by students with LD about being labeled with LD and the idea of LD. Narrative, as I later expand on, provides us insights that the current paradigmatic ways of research within the field of LD and special education may not. For example, Catherine K. Riessman (2003) states:

Research interest in narrative emerged from several contemporary movements: the “narrative turn” in the human sciences away from POSITIVIST modes of inquiry and the master narratives of theory [e.g., Marxism]; the “memoir boom” in literature and popular culture; identity politics in US, European, and transnational movements – emancipation efforts of people of colour, [people with disabilities], women, gays and lesbian, and other [marginalized] groups; and the burgeoning therapeutic culture – exploration of personal life in therapies of various kinds (p.1).

By foregrounding emotion-laden talk, I move away from positivist paradigms with the field of LD and special education to understand the lives of students labeled with LD on the ground.

As outlined above, the cultural-historical, policy, and professional—including the social and emotional—master narratives of LD position students with LD as a set of walking deficits that do not do justice to who, this student group of human beings, really are. Across the US, the local contexts mediate the policies and practices embedded within schools that in turn influence local actors,

such as students with LD. The idiosyncratic ways in which students with LD navigate their lived experiences are not captured by the ways in which research, theory, policies and practices have positioned this student group. These master narratives present a homogeneous group of students that are largely stripped of any agency (Ahearn, 2001, 2013). Students' with LD perspectives are hardly taken seriously to disrupt our common-sense assumptions about who they are and to critically examine the notion of LD.

Why (not) emotion?

Why emotion? What is emotion? Talk involves emotion and emotion involves epistemological, ontological and axiological characteristics. Historically, the social and emotional dimensions of LD explain the lived experiences of student having problematic emotionality and sociality that is purely "their" problem. However, we do not hear the perspectives or emotion-laden talk from the students themselves. A way to fill this gap is in reframing the ways in which student's with LD social and emotional dimensions have been theorized emotionally. What counts as emotion? What counts as talk? Within this study emotion and talk are interconnected (Edwards, 1999; Moir, 2005). The coupling of emotion and talk is emotion-laden talk. Lemke (2013) argues for the term *feeling-meaning* in order to transcend the dichotomy between emotion and reason. He argues that the term meaning-making is limited since in the act of meaning-making we not only use reason but emotion and feeling. The former is not only cognitive but emotion and feeling-laden. Below, I speak to the relationships between emotion, feeling, meaning-making and talk as it relates to this study's

definition of emotion-laden talk. In doing so, I make explicit the reason why, theoretically and methodologically, I focus on emotion.

What is Emotion?

Emotion is not only biological, but sociocultural in nature and is part of human and learning activity systems (Chen & Fler, 2015; Roth & Walshaw, 2015). Broadly then, as I mentioned above, emotion is a biological, sociocultural, historical, and spatial phenomenon that is imbued with power (Benesch, 2012; Heshusius & Ballard, 1996; Kenway & Youdell, 2011). Feelings are a physical arousal as a result of emotions and affect. I understand affect as a verb versus a noun (Ahearn, 2013). Therefore, emotions move us given the feelings we experience due to the socially constructed affective atmosphere(s) within particular social practices and spaces (Ahearn, 2013; Gould, 2009; 2015, Moir, 2005; Wetherell, 2012). By ‘emotions move us,’ I mean that emotions have visceral and ideational effects on us which can lead to individual or social actions or social *movements* (Gould, 2009). The narratives and emotion-laden talk we tell ourselves, and those that others tell about us and the sociocultural and institutional available stories or master narratives about reality or groups of people (e.g., students with LD) are part and parcel of power relations (e.g., Ewick & Silbey, 1995). Nevertheless, all human beings, including students with LD are agentic (Ahearn, 2013; Ahmed, 2004; Moir, 2005; Wetherell, 2012). The social and emotional dimensions of LD research to date has ignored this more nuanced reality of students with LD. This is also the case within theory, practice and policies. One way to disrupt this lack of attention to the complexity of students’

lived experiences with LD and the emotionality that goes with being labeled with LD at the institutional level is going deeper into emotion. Emotion as it relates to the social construction of students' with LD emotional life living with the condition of LD. What does this look like? Feel like? What are the emotion-laden talk of students with LD, especially a minority group, such as Latina/o students, living with the institutional label LD?

Narrative

In the next couple of paragraphs, I outline how I will conceptualize narrative and emotion-laden talk in this study. I am interested in the emotion-laden talk of students labeled with LD about being labeled with LD and the idea of LD. One way to get access to students labeled with LD world is through narrative and their talk. According to Connelly and Clandinin (1990) "one theory in educational research holds that humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives. Thus, the study of narrative is the study of the ways humans experience the world" (p.2). Another way to get access to student's world is through their emotions and talk in interaction. Just like narrative is ubiquitous (Ochs & Capps, 2001), emotions and talk in interaction (Sandlund, 2004), in the co-construction of social reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) and in human development (Holstein & Gubrium, 2007; Rogoff, 2003) are ubiquitous. Further, according to Holstein and Gubrium (2007) "accounts and formulations used to characterize experience reflect the interpretive orientations, goals, and contingencies at hand, as they are used to meet the practical demands of the situation" (p.344). Hence, by narrative I use Prior's (2011a, 2011b)

constructionist approach to narrative and explain how narrative is also space, interactional (Holstein & Gubrium, 2007, 1995), flexible and dynamic in nature. I fuse insights from Prior's definition of narrative and what he terms the "doing" of identity through linguistic and interactional resources with that of James Gee's theory of discourse (i.e., language in use) and big "D" Discourses, discursive psychology's emotion discourse (Edwards, 1999; Moir, 2005) and Erevelles (2011) and Annamma et al., (2012) about intersectionality as it relates to dis/ability.

The Narrative Space

By narrative in this study I mean "the narrative or discursive space" to talk (Prior, 2011a, 2011b; M.T. Prior, personal communication, March 1, 2013). When students dialogue with me, we will be creating a space to narrate and talk about their stories and perspectives about being labeled LD and the idea of LD—their emotion-laden talk. The narrative or discursive space for meaning-feeling (Lemke, 2013), understanding, and reflecting will offer students a medium for talk and transformation about being labeled with LD and the idea of LD. Students will have the opportunity to assemble their experiences through narrating and talk and re-assembling experiences through talk, challenging past experiences and (re)shaping potential opportunities through talk; this is what the narrative or discursive space affords us (Prior, 2011a, 2011b; M.T. Prior, personal communication, March 1, 2013).

Further, this perspective will facilitate representing and challenging ideas about LD—it's master narratives—and student's experiences with being labeled

with LD and the idea of LD. The narrative or the discursive itself is that space that is created during the interview process. It is a third and hybrid space (Prior, 2011a, 2011b; M.T. Prior, personal communication, March 1, 2013). The narrative itself is also physical, metaphorical, temporal, historical, spiritual, emotional and meta-reflective space through talk or emotion-laden talk. I am aware that I will be contributing to the construction of their narratives and talk about LD (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). In other words, as the researcher I will be creating the opportunity for students to narrate, talk, and hence co-construct their narratives and emotion-laden talk with them.

This study will explore LD from the perspective of those living within the social world of LD as it intersects with other social categories of difference and pay particular attention to students' emotion-laden talk. I aim to create a space for them to produce, reflect, and meta-reflect; I hope student emotion-laden talk will make visible the world of LD from the perspective of someone living within the world of LD. This is different from the professional, policy, and cultural-historical master narratives about LD, which are framed from a medical model of dis/ability. What does this social world of LD look like from the perspective of Latina/o students with LD? Again, the use of narrative and talk is important as a means of sense making, a way in which to construct versions of reality about lived experiences (Prior, 2011a, 2011b). Through their emotions and talk in interaction (Sandlund, 2004) with me they will be constructing meaning and understanding about their LD. Narrative and emotion-laden talk, in other words,

provides me a method to represent and critically explore LD from Latina/o students with LD.

The Interactive, Dynamic and Identity Work of Narrative and Discourse of Emotionality

When constructing narratives, students may engage in narrative telling that may include canonical elements (e.g., a narrative that has a beginning, middle, and ending) akin to the Labovian model (abstract (how the story begins), orientation (who/what does it involve and when/where?), Complicating Action (What happened?), Resolution (what finally happened?), Evaluation (so what?), and Coda (what does it all mean?) (Labov & Waletzky, 1967; Labov, 1972) or they may not. Since students may or may not follow such a linear model of narrative, I also define *narrative as flexible and dynamic*, that includes emotion and talk in interaction or in other words a discourse of emotionality (Moir, 2005) or emotion-laden talk. By a discourse of emotionality (Moir, 2005) I further mean the actions that people do, to themselves and others within an activity system, which implies the coupling of cognition, discourse, agency, and emotion that highlight the ‘decisions’, ‘opinions,’ ‘reactions to others’ and the ways in which they help others and themselves help others ‘make sense’ of their actions to others. Hence, narrative or talk in interaction can be non-canonical and more situated, conversational and interactional in nature, which takes into account contextualized linguistic and paralinguistic resources. In other words, *narratives as interaction* have dialogical qualities with their occurring in ongoing social interaction (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012); again, this is similar to emotion

and talk in interaction (Sandlund, 2004; Moir, 2005). Therefore, *my definition of narrative also has a historical and temporal dimension*: past interactions influence present and future interactions—not in a deterministic way but for the purpose of meaning making and temporal ordering (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012). Borrowing from Prior (2011a), then, I define narrative in this study as:

[emotion and talk in interaction (Sandlund, 2004)], autobiographical talk, whether life-stories, self-reflections, or elicited interview responses, through which speakers account of their action and experience across time. Thus, I examine narratives as modes of representation and contexts for social interaction and making meaning. This constructionist approach to narrative accounts and interviews talk as discourse and performance provides a means to examine how speakers make use of their linguistic and interactional resources to “do” identity, public remembering, storytelling and sense-making” (p.29).

Consequently, what narrators and co-narrators and locutors and interlocutors do and co-produce dialectically and interactively through their narrative and talk construction is identity formation (Prior, 2011a, 2011b). I view student’s emotion-laden talk and narrative activity as part and parcel of their processes of identity formation. However, given that students may not produce full-blown stories with a beginning, middle and end, I conceptualize students’ discourse of emotionality as emotion-laden talk about being labeled LD and the idea of LD. In other words, students’ perspectives that they will express to me include talk that, through my

emotion conceptual lens, includes talk that is emotion-laden in addition to personal narrative.

In addition, the salience of social markers of difference in the US and in global contexts necessitate a serious infusion of (affective) intersectionality that “situates disability as the central analytic, or more importantly, the ideological linchpin utilized to (re)constitute social difference along the axes of race, gender, and sexuality in dialectical relationship to the economic/social relations produced within the historical context of transnational capitalism” (Erevelles, 2011, p.6). I take Erevelles’ (2011) cultural-materialist social critique/theory approach to intersectionality—along with Annamma’s et al. (2012) approach to the intersection of disability and race—by placing or highlighting dis/ability and global capitalism at the center of her vision for justice and the social good.

Similarly, through a Geeian discourse analysis perspective, social relationships or what he calls politics—social good—are built, destroyed or sustained through one’s language in use within situated primary and secondary big “D” Discourses (Gee, 2011). I posit that the centrality of social relationships within big d Discourses is imperative for all stakeholders them to take seriously into account. If applied to the social and emotional dimensions of students with LD, we can see that the students in interaction with their teachers do what Gee (2011) calls lots of social work and I posit discourse of emotionality (Moir, 2007). They do this through their language use or emotion discourse (Edwards, 1999) within situated contexts or what Sandlund (2004) calls emotion and talk in interaction within human activities. In addition, Walton, Coyle, & Lyon (2003)

defines discourse as “a systematic coherent set of images, metaphors and so on that construct an object in a particular way” (p. 46). Walton, Coyle & Lyon (2003) used this definition of discourse in their conceptualization of emotion discourse. For the purpose of this study, this definition adds to my conceptualization of student’s discourse or talk as emotion discourse that is further understood as a discourse of emotionality about being labeled LD and the idea of LD. Further, what is missing from Gee’s account is what Erevelles (2011) and Annamma et al. (2012) would have us pay attention to: intersectionality. But what is missing from Erevelles and Annamma et al. work is the salience in emotion in talk in interaction or what Wetherell (2012) calls affective practices and affective intersectionality. Therefore, the big d Discourses, on the one hand, are not immune from intersectional and affective phenomena that can constrain or afford opportunities to learn within the secondary Discourses (Gee, 2011) we call schooling, and being certain “kinds of people” within such contexts (Gee, 2011).

In addition, Erevelles and Gee’s theory of discourses are complementary since for Erevelles (2011) the centrality of materialism is salient to social analyses of social forces on the lived experiences of people, especially people with dis/abilities. While for Gee (2011) discourse and Discourses are not only linguistic or language in use, but also about the material artifacts that are animated vis-à-vis primary and secondary discourses within which certain “kinds of people” are more or less recognized or recognizable due to the material and ideological or conceptual/ideational/language in use.

Erevelles' (2011) emphasis on situating dis/ability at the center of intersectional analyses provides us with a micro and macro level analysis of the ways in which multiple makers of difference or identities converge within global capitalism or what Morales (1998) pushes us to not forget:

The theory we need to be developing is one that helps us understand the relationships among our different and multifaceted lives with all their specific struggles and resources. Rather than build unity through simplification, we must learn to embrace multiple rallying points and understand their inherent interdependence. Such a theory needs to move away from the idea of "intersections" of oppression and assume a much more organic interpenetration of institutional systems of power. Although the intent is to address complexity, the idea of distinct intersecting realities still treats the social categories of "woman," "working-class," "lesbian," "person of color," etc., as if it were possible to separate someone's "woman-ness" from her class position, her "racial"/ethnic position and so on. But these social categories do not exist in their "pure" state (p.122).

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This study examined the emotion-laden talk (Edwards, 1999; Moir, 2005) of three Latina/o students with LD about being labeled with LD and their understanding of the idea of LD. I analyzed the students' self-constructions (Prior, 2011a, 2011b), that is, their self-narrativization (Gee, 2001) through their emotion-laden talk to answer the following two research questions:

1. What are Latina/o students with LD's emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD?
2. What are Latina/o students with LD's emotion-laden talk of the idea of LD?

The following sections describe the school and district sites, participants, data collection and analysis procedures, and the limitations of the study. But before I do this, I outline my researcher positionality.

Researcher Positionality

By positionality, I take what Ravitch and Riggan (2012) define to be as one's researcher stance. Ravitch and Riggan (2012) state that a researcher's stance comes from your personal interests and includes one's "curiosities, biases, and ideological commitments, theories of action, and epistemological assumptions, all of which are profoundly influenced by your social location, institutional position, and life experience" (p. 10). The beginning of my researcher stance as I discussed in the introduction, is my life experiences living with LD. I am aware of the privileges and rights that having LD, in retrospect, also has endowed upon me.

For example, extra time on tests and accommodations because standardized policies and practices have historically marginalized people with disabilities from equitable participation in the school curriculum. Nevertheless, I cannot deny the internal oppression that also comes from my being labeled with an LD, which is also part of my researcher stance. My research interests throughout my schooling practices, and now as an interdisciplinary educational equity scholar, about the meaning of LD and the social and emotional consequences of being labeled myself have led me to problematize LD throughout my academic and professional experiences and goals.

Nothing exists in a vacuum. My ethnicity and immigration history has influenced my ideological commitments. My multiple identities—as gay, Latino, El Salvadorian and Palestinian, my schooling experiences and my family position, as the youngest of six, and a son to a single mother and my relationship with my father, and language use history have all influenced how I make meaning and feeling-meaning of the world and myself in it. Also, I was exposed to the writings of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire and his epistemology of dialectical materialism from taking a course while an undergraduate at UC Berkeley about literacy. This, in turn, has influenced my epistemological assumptions. Today my epistemological stance is sociocultural, social constructivist and dialectical materialist (Au, 2007). Also, coming from a family of six has influenced the person who I am today. From a very young age, my mom and siblings influenced and socialized me to help others by helping around the house and later monetarily since our working-class status did not give us the privilege of just studying or

going to school. For example, I have helped with rent and food cost since the age of 14. All these experiences and more have influenced my conceptual framework for this study. For example, my identity as Latino and coming from a working class background have influenced me both methodologically and theoretically to work with a population of students from a Latino and working class background.

Also, my immigration status has also influenced my ideological commitments. When I was a senior in high school, I was in the process of applying for permanent residency and as most seniors do at the time, began applying for scholarships to go to college. However, due to my immigration status, I was denied a full-tuition scholarship to my university of choice. This was a pivotal moment in my life regarding shaping my views about undocumented students in the United States. The system that was in place while I was trying to access higher education funding failed to take into account my unique life experiences. These policies stressed my legal-based citizenship as opposed to a more global and nuanced view of citizenship. At the time I applied for scholarships, I was a full participant not only in my family but my school community and local town community. However, from a legal-based model of citizenship perspective, I did not qualify for financial assistance since I was not either a legal citizen or a permanent resident yet. I posit that I was a citizen as immigrant. A citizen as immigrant involves viewing the local practices of immigrants in the new host country as participating as 'global citizens.' From this perspective, immigrants can be considered citizens as well. This perspective

highly contrasts with those that have historically and currently positioned immigrants not as citizens but as the ‘Other’ and as ‘alien.’”

My family and I immigrated when I was two years old due to the civil war in El Salvador and for economic reasons. My lived experiences have also influenced my ideological commitments and beliefs about issues of social justice in the US and global contexts which students with LD and their families, who carry other markers of societal and cultural differences, grapple with. These markers of difference may mediate their human development and can be taken into account when considering epistemological and ontological paradigms within the field of LD. These larger questions of difference are absent in the field of LD and within the master narratives of LD. I have been blessed to have the opportunity to receive an excellent quality of education while in high school and while getting my undergraduate and master degrees. I am very lucky to have not stayed in special education where the material resources were less than other neighborhoods from which I lived. I know that I was privileged to have gotten the education that I did and the type of education I am getting now. I have been given access to social, cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 2008) that others who have been labeled with LD, may have structurally been excluded.

District and School Site Access & Description

I was excited to volunteer and meet the students from their special education program who were labeled with a learning disability (LD) when I first arrived at the school site, Nodding Elementary School (pseudonym), in the fall of 2012. I first met Mr. Mark, the principal of the school and he interviewed me

regarding my motives for the study. After sharing with him a brief overview regarding the topic of the dissertation I shared that during K-16 I was labeled with an LD and experienced being in special education. It was at this point in our conversation when Mr. Mark became excited regarding the opportunity of having me volunteer. Mr. Mark encouraged me to not only volunteer in the 7th and 8th-grade classes but observe in their special education program.

To give back to Nodding I volunteered and observed within each of the special education teacher's classrooms for the first couple of weeks after meeting with Mr. Mark. Nevertheless, although I volunteered, I did not lose sight of my researcher role during the research process—that includes the fieldwork. I volunteered in the language arts general and resource classroom teachers', Ms. Wilson and Ms. Garcia (pseudonyms), classrooms Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 8:30 am to 2pm weekly during the fall 2012 semester. I positioned myself as the teacher's assistant and helped with whatever they needed. The majority of the time I helped students with their classroom work, such as their math sheets, and helping them understand what they were reading.

During the 2013 spring semester, I continued volunteering on Wednesdays and Thursdays in both the language arts general (9:30am-10:30am; 12:30pm-1:30pm) and resource (8:25am-9:30am; 1:30pm-2:30pm) classrooms. Also, I began to consider possible participants for this study. I identified the study participant selection criteria in the next section. Beginning in the fall of 2013, Ms. Garcia left the school site, and Ms. Michaels took her place as their resource teacher. Also, beginning in the fall of 2013 I no longer volunteered within Ms.

Wilson's classroom and began volunteering in Mr. Banks language arts general education classroom. The pool of students that I used to select participants from were in Ms. Michaels' and Mr. Banks' classrooms. Beginning in the spring of 2014 I started collecting data. I finished collecting data in the middle of spring 2015. During this time, Mr. Banks left the school and Ms. Reeves, and Ms. McDonald joined the study as the two language arts teachers.

The study site was an elementary school in Arizona. The area's dominant population was both low-income and culturally and linguistically diverse. The school site belongs to a racially diverse school district. The site is located in Marin Elementary School District (pseudonym). There are 9,724 students within Marin Elementary School District (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013-2014 school year; Fiscal data from 2011-2012). Since 2011, the Arizona Department of Education began using a new A-F letter grade system to hold schools in its state accountable for the education and achievement of its student population (Arizona Department of Education, 2011). The 2013-2014 letter grade for the Marin district is "C," which means that schools in the district demonstrate an average level of performance (Arizona Department of Education, School Report Card, Spring 2013-2014). Marin's annual measurable objectives (AMO) for 2012 and 2013 is "Not Met" and their AYP for 2011 is "Not Met" and for both 2012 and 2013 is reported as "Discontinued" (Arizona Department of Education, School Report Card, Spring 2013). Also, Table 1 includes the number and percentage of students at Marin School District who are on Individual Education Plans (IEPs), the number of students who are English Language

Learners (ELLs) and lastly, the number and percentage of ELLs with disabilities.

Table 1

Marin School District Information (2013-2014)

Grade Span	Total Schools	Total Students	Classroom Teachers (FTE)	Student/Teacher Ratio	ELL (formerly LEP) Students	Students with IEPs	
PK-8	20	9,724	484	20.09	1,702 (18%)	1,250 (13%)	
Total Population by Race (2010)							
Black or AA alone	White alone	Asian Alone	Hispanic or Latin@	AI and Alaska Native	Native Hawaiian and Other PI	2 or more races	2 or more races
16,787 (16%)	15,687 (15%)	2,082 (2%)	64,212 (60%)	1,265 (1%)	145 (.1%)	1,530 (1%)	5,548 (4.9%)
Teachers (FTE) (2013-2014)							
Prekindergarten	Kindergarten	Elementary	Secondary	Total			
0	35.50	447.50	1	484			
Other Staff							
Instructional Aides	Instructional Coordinators & Supervisors		Total Guidance Counselors				
127.31	27		0				

Note: AA = African American; AI = American Indian; PI = Pacific Islander;
 National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2013-2014; CCD Public school data 2013-2014 school year, Institute of Education Sciences (IES). Retrieved From:
http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/district_detail.asp?ID2=0407080

The name of the school is Nodding Elementary School (pseudonym). See Table 2 for the grade span, total number of students and classroom teachers, student/teacher ratio and for the school's Title 1 information for 2013-2014.

Table 2

Nodding School Information

Nodding School (2013-2014)					
Grade Span	Total Students	Classroom Teachers (FTE)	Student/Teacher Ratio	Title I School	Title I School-Wide Program
KG-8	581	31	18.74	Yes	Yes
Nodding School Enrollment Characteristics (2013-2014)					
Enrollment by Grade (n) (%)	Enrollment by Gender (n) (%)	Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity (n) (%)	Total Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Eligible Students (n) (%)		
K (54) (9%)	Male (293) (50.5%)	AI/Alaskan (11) (2%)	558 (96%)		
First (64) (11%)	Female (288) (49.5%)	Asian/PI (3) (.5%)			
Second (65) (11%)		Black (29) (5%)			
Third (73) (13%)		Hispanic (514) (88%)			
Fourth (63) (11%)		White (22) (4%)			
Fifth (63) (11%)		Two or More Races (2) (.5%)			
Sixth (60) (10%)					
Seventh (64) (11%)					
Eighth (75) (13%)					

Note: AI = American Indian; PI = Pacific Islander;
 CCD Public school data 2013-2014 school year, Institute of Education Sciences (IES). Retrieved From: http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/school_detail.asp?Search=1&DistrictID=0407080&SchoolPageNum=2&ID=040708001100 Total Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Eligible Students Info; Retrieved From: <http://public-schools.findthebest.com/1/3778/Valley-View-School>

Also, see Table 2 for the school enrollment characteristics for 2013-2014. These include enrollment by grade, gender, race/ethnicity and the total Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Eligible students by number and percentage. The number of ELLs at Nodding was 88 for the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 year there were 109. ELLs with LDs included 2 for the 2013-2014 and 2 for the 2014-2015 (ELL Program Director at Nodding Elementary School, personal communication via email, June 8, 2016).

Table 3 shows the scores on the official standardized test for 2011, 2012, and 2013 in math, reading and writing⁶ for Nodding school; the statistics represent the percent of students passing the test. Table 3 also includes the 2011 to 2013 median percentile ranks for Nodding school in mathematics, reading and language. These data suggest that Nodding school’s performance on literacy, language and math measures is low and went down during the years 2011, 2012, and 2013. Nodding school has a 21.1% English Language Learner Reclassification Rate on the Arizona English Language Learners Assessment (AZELLA) (Arizona Department of Education, School Report Card, Spring 2013).

Table 3

Nodding School Student Standardized Test Results and Median Percentile Ranks, 2011-2014

Year	Standardize Test Results			Median Percentile Ranks		
	Math	Reading	Writing	Math	Reading	Language
2011	43%	69%	35%	37	29	26
2012	48%	62%	33%	42	30	26
2013	48%	60%	27%	42	29	24

Note: Arizona Department of Education the scores on the Arizona’s Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS), 2011, 2012, and 2013.

<http://www10.ade.az.gov/ReportCard/SchoolReportCard.aspx?id=5367&Year=2013&ReportLevel=1>

The attendance rate for Nodding for 2014 was 94% (Arizona Department of Education, School Report Card, 2014). The 2014 dropout rates by subgroup for Nodding Elementary School includes: females had a 1.19 lower dropout rate than

⁶ The state’s test is a standardized tool for reading, writing, mathematics and science given to students in grades 3-8 and 10.

males; whereas females' dropout rate was 1.22, while males had a 2.41 rate for 2014. Hispanics had a 1.37 dropout rate, while for American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Limited English Proficient, Migrant all had less than 11 students, so no data was reported (Arizona Department of Education, Nodding school dropout rates, 2014 and 2015. Retrieved from: <http://www.azed.gov/research-evaluation/dropout-rate-study-report/>).

The annual measurable objectives (AMO) status for the school, for both 2013 and 2014, was "Not Met." The annually yearly progress (AYP) status was reported as "Discontinued" (Arizona Department of Education, School Report Card, Spring 2013, AMO and Federal Graduation Rate Determinations for All Schools Excel Document). Within Nodding Elementary School Hispanics did Not Met the overall math Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) determination and the graduation rate for both 7th and 8th graders in 2014. ELLs, for both 7th and 8th graders within 2014, passed the overall math AMO determination and both 7th and 8th ELL graders were not eligible (Arizona Department of Education the scores on the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs). Key: NE = Not Eligible. Retrieved from: <http://www.azed.gov/accountability/reportsfederal-accountability/>).

Participants

I used purposeful sampling (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Purposeful sampling means "choosing subjects, places, and other dimensions of a research site to include in your research to enlarge your analysis or to test particular emerging themes and working hypothesis" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 274). This study included two girls and one boy who were in either the seventh and eighth

grade. I purposefully chose to include two girls and two boys as participants because of the overwhelming disproportionate amount of males represented within the LD category and underrepresentation of girls with LD in the traditional and more critical literature on the experiences of students with LD. The selection criteria, therefore, included:

a) **Grade level:** Participants had to attend seventh or eighth grade. I chose these grades due to the paucity of studies that look at the narratives of children with disabilities regarding their schooling experiences at this grade levels. Also, these grades are an important identity developmental period for middle school aged children as they transition into high school years.

b) **Ethnicity:** the ethnicity of the participants were all Latina/os. Focusing on the lived experiences of Latina/o students with LD contributes to the gap in the literature of historically marginalized youth, such as ethnic minorities with LD. Ethnicity was verified by self-report and by Nodding Elementary School principal and Ms. Michaels, the special education resource teacher, when they provided potential participants for the study who eventually agreed to participate.

c) **LD status:** Participants must have a reading based LD. Consistent with the traditional definition of LD, the participants had accompanying social or emotional deficits. Both were verified by Nodding Elementary School principal and Ms. Michaels, the special education resource teacher when they provided potential participants for the study who eventually agreed to participate.

d) **Low income:** The family socioeconomic status was low. Beyond ethnicity and disability, investigating the intersection of ethnicity, LD, and social

class was an important component of the study's design since historically the master narratives of LD have ignored the role of these identities or sociocultural, demographic factors in the theory and research regarding understanding the label LD and the idea or concept of LD. The socioeconomic status (SES) of the participants were verified by Nodding Elementary School principal and Ms. Michaels, the special education resource teacher when they provided potential participants for the study who eventually agreed to participate, in addition to, asking the participants themselves to self-report their SES.

e) **Program placement:** Students attended a general and resource classroom as a way to examine their participation in literacy events across these two school contexts.

During the summer of 2013, I consulted with the school principal and Ms. Michaels, the special education resource teacher, about potential participants that would meet the criteria identified above. We decided to generate a list of six students, in case any students dropped out of the study. The principal gave me a list of six names, in consultation with Ms. Michaels, three boys, and three girls, that met all of my criteria as described above. I randomly selected four of those names to be included in the study. Nevertheless, I purposefully selected two boys and two girls, to have balanced gender representation in the study sample. Due to time constraints, I only report on three participants in this dissertation.

Focal student participants. The students' social demographics are listed in Table 4. I elaborate in the findings chapter on the participants' background and sociocultural contexts.

Parent participants. I elaborate and introduce participants' parents in the findings chapters. Their background traits are listed in Table 4.

Table 4

Student and Parent Participants' Demographics

Participants	Disability	Sex	Grade	Age	Ethnicity	Language(s)	Socioeconomic Status	Neighborhood
Sophia Cruz	Reading based Learning Disability and a Language and Speech Impairment	Female	7th grade (at the time of the study)	13	Mexican-American	Spanish and English	Working-Class	South Pinole
Daniel Martinez	Reading based Learning Disability and a Language and Speech Impairment	Male	8th grade (at the time of the study)	14	Mexican-American	Spanish and English	Working-Class	South Pinole
Bianca Pueblo	Reading based Learning Disability and a Language and Speech Impairment	Female	8th grade (at the time of the study)	14	Mexican-American	English	Working-Class	South Pinole
Luciana Cruz (Sophia Cruz)	None	Female	N/A	40	Hispanic (Mexican)	Spanish and English	Middle class	South Pinole
Mia Martinez (Daniel Martinez)	Self-Identified as having a reading and writing based LD	Female	N/A	42	Hispanic (Mexican)	Spanish	Middle class	South Pinole

At the beginning of the data collection portion of the study, Luciana Cruz, Sophia's mother, and Mia Martinez, David mother all participated in being interviewed. However, only Luciana continued throughout the study to participate, and I was only able to conduct one session with Mia. Afterward, Mia

dropped out of the study.

Teacher participants. The participating teachers included one special educator resource teacher, Ms. Michaels, for all of the student participants. Ms. McDonald and Ms. Reeves were the general education language arts teachers. Ms. McDonald was Daniel and Bianca’s general education language arts teachers, while Ms. Reeves was Sophia (see Table 5).

Table 5

Teacher Participants

Teachers (Type of Teacher)	Disability	Sex	Age	Race	Ethnicities	Spoken Language(s)	Socioeconomic Status (Self-Identified)	Neighborhood
Ms. Michaels (Special Education Resource Teacher)	None	Female	32	White	German (predominately), Native American--Shawnee, and Irish	English	Middle-Class	South Pinole
Ms. McDonald (General Education Language Arts Teacher)	None	Female	26	White	German and Scotch-Irish	English	Working-class	East Mall
Ms. Reeves (General Education Language Arts Teacher)	None	Female	34	White	English	English	Low-Class	East Pinole

Data Collection Procedures

I describe in this section the procedures that I used to gather the evidence to answer the study questions. I used the data from the student and parent interviews that I conducted to answer both research questions. Also, when needed, I used critical ethnographic methods, such as participant observations, the collection of artifacts, among others, within both the resource and general education classrooms to help supplement student’s emotion-laden talk as they were revealed

to me through interviewing them.

Student interviews. To collect the three Latina/o LD student emotion-laden talk I conducted 60-90-minute audio recording interview sessions with each of the students individually (See Table 6 for statistics regarding student participants' interviews). The student interviews were conducted in English, but sometimes we co-switched to Spanish with some of the students such as Sophia and Daniel. The questions I asked were not only purposefully designed to prompt students' emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD and the idea of LD but also designed to expose students to the master narratives of LD and had them engage with some of those (See Appendix B for Pre-interview and Interview Student Interview Protocol). Thus, the interview protocol was designed to elicit data to answer the research questions, but also to index the literature and the conceptual framework as it related to the master narratives of LD. The student interview protocol included three topics.

Table 6

Student Participants' Interview Statistics

Students	Amount of Audio/Video Recording	# of Sessions
Sophia Cruz	8 hours 35 minutes 22 seconds	10
Daniel Martinez	8 hours 2 minutes 12 seconds	8
Bianca Pueblo	6 hours 31 minutes 19 seconds	3
<i>Total</i>	<i>23 hours 13 minutes 53 seconds</i>	<i>30</i>

The topics were 1) background and social contexts, 2) perspectives on being labeled LD and 3) perspectives on the idea of LD (See Appendix B for the entire interview protocol). Within each topic, I covered three aspects, namely general,

personal, and school based questions. The general questions were designed to get the interviewee “warmed-up” to the concepts of the topics, while the personal and school questions focused on specific constructs within the research questions to generate data to answer the latter. Specifically, the background topic included interview questions such as the student’s demographics, home, and school language use, their intersectional identities such as ethnicity, gender, class, and dis/ability, the number of siblings and other family related questions. For topic of perspectives on being labeled LD interview questions focus on and was meant to generate responses about the labeling of children with LD in general, their emotions about being labeled LD, experiences being in special education (versus general education), their recollections of first being labeled and told they had an LD, among others. Lastly, for the topic, the perspectives on the idea of LD, interview questions were meant to elicit data about the meaning of LD itself, what is an LD, the intersection of LD and ethnicity, and language, among others.

The interviews were conducted at the school site at a time and location that was agreed upon between the students and myself and school personnel. I followed the general recommendations and approach to interviewing by Bogdan and Biklen (2007). The interviews in this study were “used to gather descriptive data in the subject’s words so that the researcher can develop insights on how the [three students] interpret” their understanding of being labeled with LD and the idea of LD (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 103). I followed Bogdan and Biklen’s (2007) suggestions about using attentive listening and building a good relationship with the students. Also, the overall goal of the interviews was to

obtain a thorough understanding (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) of student emotion-laden talk of being labeled with LD (research question one) and their understanding of the idea of LD (research question two).

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007) “interviewing requires flexibility” (p.105), therefore, the interviews varied in degree of structure. The first set of interviews were more free-flowing and exploratory (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) since my purpose at that point was to get a general understanding of who they are, build our initial interview relationship, and orient the students to the purpose and goals of my dissertation study. After the initial meeting, I structured the following interviews more to “focus on particular topics that emerged during” the free-flowing and exploratory interviews (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p.104). Nevertheless, in each session with individual students, I stayed close to the interview protocol after we exhausted discussion of emerging topics to get through the entire protocol.

Nevertheless, during the free-flowing and exploratory interviews, I used Quinn’s (2005) interview style. Quinn's (2005) recommends “deliberately [ceding] control of the ‘interviews’ to the ‘interviewees’ and allowing them to decide how their interviews should be organized overall, what topics should come next and what might have been overlooked or unfinished, and when we are to be done” (p.41).

Teacher and parent interviews. I conducted teacher and parent interview sessions for 60-90 minutes to get their perspectives given that my theoretical and conceptual commitments to a cultural-historical approach to human development

required getting their perspectives to take into account the social situation of the child (Hegedaard, 2008). That is, one must gain insights from not only the child's point of view but also from other social actors within the child's social environment, such as her or his teachers and parents, in this case. Further, I conducted as many additional interview sessions as it took to exhaust the discussion of the teachers and parents' perspectives about their students and children's perspectives about LD and the roles of emotions in those perspectives and hence talk. The questions of all interviews (including students') were stripped of academic language in order to facilitate easy understanding (Waitoller, 2011). The teacher and parent interview protocols were structured the same way as the student interviews with three topics (e.g., background, perspectives about their children or student being labeled with LD, and perspectives about their children or student's views about the idea of LD) and three parts (e.g., general, personal, and school based questions) (See Appendix C for General and Resource Teacher Interview Protocol). This was done not only to guarantee that I collected data that overlapped with the students' emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD and the idea of LD to answer the research questions, but also to allow for data triangulation.

I conducted a total of six sessions totaling 10 hours, 34 minutes and 5 seconds of audio recorded interviews across three parent participants (See Appendix A for Parent Interview Protocol). A session was defined as a single field trip to interview the participants either within their home and school. For Sophia's mom, Luciana Cruz, we completed a total of 6 hours, 41 minutes and 7

seconds, across four sessions at her home in South Pinole. I was only able to complete the full protocol of interview questions with Luciana Cruz since Mia Martinez dropped out of the study after the initial session due to her lack of availability and her multiple jobs and multiple shifts at work. Nevertheless, for Mia Martinez, we completed 1 hour, 22 minutes and 43 seconds, within a single session. I conducted all parent interviews in Spanish since all of the three participating parents spoke Spanish only.

I conducted a total of 24 sessions that generated 26 hours, 19 minutes and 28 seconds of audio recordings, across the three of the teacher participants. For two of the teachers—Ms. Michaels and Ms. Reeves—we completed the teacher interview protocol. For Ms. McDonald, we met three sessions and did not complete the entire teacher interview protocol, but we did interview for 4 hours, one minute and 37 seconds. Ms. Reeves and I conducted her interview for 11 hours, 53 minutes and 58 seconds across 11 sessions; while Ms. Michaels and I conducted her interview for ten hours, 23 minutes and 53 seconds across ten sessions. Ms. Reeves was finishing up her second year of teaching experience at the time of the study and had a provisional secondary education teaching certificate, while Ms. Michaels began her career in 2007 as a teacher aid and started to be an official teacher since 2011, for a total of eight years at the time of study. While it was Ms. Reeves' first year at Nodding, it was Ms. Michael's second year.

Data Analysis Procedures

Student interviews. I used descriptive coding, identification of emotion-

laden talk, thematic analysis of the student interview data to answer the research questions. The student data included personal narrative, self-reflection, meta-commentary, and dialogue with the researcher. However, I was specifically interested in student's emotion-laden talk as the unit of analysis. Again, emotion-laden talk was conceptualized as emotion discourse (Edwards, 1999). Emotion discourse is situated within social practices and is indexed within the reactions, responses, opinions, etc. of students' interview data (Moir, 2005). Moreover, within the emotion-laden talk, I focused on the “*whats*”—the content of their responses—and the “*hows*”—the ways in which the students indexed emotionality through *emotion implicative WHATs* (Prior, 2016) and *intensifiers* (Labov, 1984). *Emotion implicative WHATs* are topics, statements, questions, and responses that invoked emotionality due to sociocultural norms and standards (Prior, 2016). Prior (2016) states “speakers can also do emotion-implicative work through topic selection (e.g., discrimination, trauma, complaints) and implying cause and effect . . . without specifically labeling emotions” (p.109). *Intensifiers* are the indices of social and emotional expression within the linguistic responses and statements of speakers, in this case the students (Labov, 1984). Labov (1984) understood intensity as the “emotional expression of social orientation toward the linguistic proposition: the commitment of the self to the proposition” (p. 43-44). Intensifiers are on a gradient scale of intensity starting at zero; an “unmarked expression as the center” (Kullavanijaya, 1997), which is neutralized. An increase in intensity is positive (+) while a minimizing in intensity is a negative (-) marked expression regarding the proposition. Kullavanijaya (1997) summarized Labov's

conceptualization of intensity the following way:

For Labov, the positive marked expression is aggravated or intensified and the negative marked expression is mitigated or minimized. The terms “amplifiers” is used by some grammarians for intensifiers above the assumed norms and “downtoners” for intensifiers below the assumed norms. Despite the use of different terms, it seems that both intensification or amplification and minimization or downtoning result in intensity (Kullavanijava, 1997, p. 147).

These theoretical discussions regarding emotion implicative WHATs and intensifiers assisted in how I coded and identified these a prior manifestations of emotions within the student interview data. Based on these conceptualizations I developed the following rules and procedures.

1. Descriptive coding. The first step was descriptive coding. That is, I indexed the data as I was collecting it. Delamont (1992) recommends to, “index your data as you go; do not allow the data to pile up without knowing what you have collected” (p. 151). The purpose of indexing was to create a tabular account of data contents—the “*whats*” (Saldana, 2009). This table included several columns covering timespan, summary, link to research question 1 or 2, link to background and sociocultural contexts for the students, transcription (if necessary) and a comments, questions, and reflections column.

2. Identification of emotion-laden talk. In addition to filling in the descriptive coding table for each audio file I identified interview data within the time segment column if the response to the interview question related to:

- a) being labeled with an LD and their understanding of the idea of LD,
- b) their academic, social and emotional experiences within and outside of school about their learning and/or learning struggles, and/or
- c) any other topics that were relevant to answering the research questions.

The majority of the interview data yielded emotion-laden talk that also had to meet the same criteria as above for the *whats*, of the talk. I identified 17 strips of interview responses for Sophia that I classified as emotion-laden talk, 34 for Bianca, and 40 for Daniel.

3. Coding emotion implicative *WHATs* and intensifiers. Next, I identified what Holstein and Gubrium (1997) termed the “*hows*” of the emotion-laden talk of each of the student’s interview data. I identified the *hows* through the linguistic manifestations of emotions. These included lexical, sentence or statement level manifestations:

- a. *Intensifiers* (Labov, 1984)—through adverbs such as *really, so, very, kinds*, etc. that are attached to the linguistic mode of expression and/or explicit labeling of/orientation to emotions (e.g., *SO mad, REALLY upset, a LITTLE worried*, etc.).
- b. *Emotion implicative WHATs* (Prior, 2016)—that is, responses, statements and topics that imply emotionality situations or contexts due to the sociocultural understanding that they signify as emotion-laden. In other words, in order for a response, statement or topic to be identified as an emotion implicative WHAT it had to be a) related to one of the above a through c emotion-laden talk content listed in step

#2 and b) imply emotionality given the sociocultural norms and standards in society without explicitly labeling emotions (Prior, 2016).

4. **Memoing.** I wrote in-process, initial, and integrative theoretical memos (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995) about the different emotion-laden talk and content of the interview data. Further, I reflected upon the different elements in the research process (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012): research questions, conceptual framework, researcher positionality, literature, methodology (including design, data collection, data analysis), findings, discussion, and implications for theory, research and practice. This served as part of my interpretation process; the latter helped me make sense and integrate my findings.

In-process memos were written throughout the analysis processes of the student interviews to supplement my analysis of the emotion implicative WHATs and intensifiers since they were more sustained analytic writings that “address[ed] incidents across several sets of” data analysis procedures (Emerson, et. al., 1995, p.103). Specifically, in writing in-process memos, I made connections for potential outside audiences regarding what I found as a result of my data analysis procedures. I wrote initial memos “on series of discrete phenomena, topics, or categories” not only during the student interview data analysis but also early on in the research process (Emerson et al., 1995, p.143). Then, I wrote integrative memos that “seek[ed] to clarify and link analytic themes and categories” (Emerson et al., 1995, p.143), not only within the student interviews but across data analysis procedures and data collected about each student participant.

5. **Thematic analysis.** I did a thematic analysis (Riessman, 2008) across the emotion-laden talk to develop themes about the *whats* (content) that answered each of the research questions. Riessman (2008) stated “all narrative inquiry is, of course, concerned with content—“what” is said, written, or visually shown—but in thematic analysis, content is the exclusive focus” (p. 53). For each of the student participants this analysis yielded two subthemes per research question as follows:

Table 7

Subthemes Identified for Student Participants by Study Question

Research Questions	Subthemes by Student Participant
What are Latina/o students with LD’s emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD?	Sophia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The hegemony of smartness • Disability microaggressions Daniel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the trinity of LD: help + teachers + literacy troubles • On being bullied Bianca: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embarrassment to ask for assistance from others • Help as hope
What are Latina/o students with LD’s emotion-laden talk of the idea of LD?	Sophia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LD as double-edge sword • LDness as X Daniel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meaning of LD as resource, trouble with information processing, speech, and silence • The salience of the intersection of disability, ethnicity and language and other markers of difference Bianca: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggles due to lack of understanding

	• LD myths
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6. **Ethnographic information and materials.** In addition, I collected other ethnographic information and materials that might be relevant to my analysis of students' emotion-laden talk and overall experiences and perspectives about being labeled with LD and the idea of LD. These included district and school level educational statistics described above and through student interviews about their background and sociocultural context at home and at school.

7. **Crafting of findings chapters.** After coding, analyzing and memoing the data, I created findings chapters for each of the student participants that included a) a background and sociocultural context section, b) student emotion-laden talk about being labeled LD and c) about their understanding of the idea of LD. The background and sociocultural contexts section situates the reader in the sociocultural milieus of the student participants and also satisfied the cultural-historical developmental perspective (Hegedaard, 2008) of taking into account the social situation of a child as it related to the research questions by including parent's perspectives about the students. The second section of each of the finding chapters included the emotion-laden talk of the students about being labeled LD, which were organized by subthemes as explained above. The third section was about their understanding of the idea of LD organized around subthemes, as well. These finding chapters culled from multiple data sources, such as students and parent's interviews.

Teacher and parent interviews. I did descriptive coding or indexing of two of the teacher interview data, Ms. Michaels, and Ms. Reeves. However, I did

not use the data in crafting the student findings chapters because of time constraints. I will use teacher data for further analysis and future publications. All of the parent interviews were analyzed using emotion and descriptive coding (Saldana, 2009). Emotion codes label the emotions recalled and experienced by the participant, or inferred by the researcher about the participant. Saldana (2009) argues that “affective coding methods investigate qualities of human experience (e.g. emotions, values, conflicts, judgments or [positioning]) by directly acknowledging and naming those experiences” (p. 86).

All parent interviews were conducted in Spanish and verbatim transcribed in Spanish and translated into English by myself and back-translation by a colleague’s sister who does translation and transcribing for Arizona State University at the Social and Science Department. After emotion and descriptive coding of the parent interviews I selected key background and sociocultural context themes that both overlapped and enriched the student’s case descriptions as they not only related to the research questions but provided insight into their social situation as it related to LD and their other sociocultural contexts. I did a content analysis of the parent interviews. This included the selection of quotes that contributed to the overall story of each case and content analysis of the quotes within the actual chapter after presenting the quote.

Credibility/Trustworthiness

Within qualitative research, investigators have the task of ensuring that their studies are *credible* and *trustworthy* (Brantlinger et al., 2005). I used the following strategies to ensure that my empirical findings will be credible and

trustworthy. Some of these strategies (i.e. researcher reflexivity and thick, detailed description) will be included in my researcher journal:

- **Triangulation**—that is, the “search for convergence of, or consistence among, evidence from multiple and varied data sources” (Brantlinger et al., 2005, p. 201). I used student and parent interviews, critical ethnographic participant observations, school records in order to triangulate the data. Therefore, this study uses *data triangulation*—that is, the “use of varied data sources in a study” (Brantlinger et al., 2005, p.201).
- **Researcher reflexivity**—“researchers attempt to understand and self-disclose their assumptions, beliefs, values, and biases (i.e. being forthright about position/perspective)” (Brantlinger et al., 2005, p.201). I added a positionality or researcher stance above; however, throughout the research process I wrote reflective memos in order to remain reflective about my own and ongoing reflectivity.
- **Peer debriefing**—“having a colleague or someone familiar with phenomena being studied review and provide critical feedback on descriptions, analyses, and interpretations or a study’s results” (Brantlinger et al., 2005, p.201). These people included but are not limited to: my chair of my dissertation committee, Professor Alfredo J. Artiles and my other two members of my dissertation committee—Professors David J. Connor, and Matthew Prior.
- **Prolonged field engagement**—“repeated, substantive observations; multiple, in-depth interviews; inspection of a range of relevant documents;

thick description validates the study's soundness" (Brantlinger et al., 2005, p.201). I ensured prolonged field engagement by:

- spending two years prior to collecting data as a volunteer at the school site,
 - conducting multiple sessions of interviews with the participants, both at the school site and their homes.
- **Thick, detailed description**—"reporting sufficient quotes and field note descriptions to provide evidence for researchers' interpretations and conclusions" (Brantlinger et al., 2005, p.201) during my analysis, writing my results and discussion and conclusion chapters of this dissertation.

CHAPTER 4

SOPHIA CRUZ: SMARTNESS, MICROAGGRESSIONS, AND LDNESS AS X

Sophia Cruz: “Well, if she did understand that am a *little bit* slow learner then she would’ve understand and she would have take[n] her time” (Sophia Cruz, 9/14/15)

Within this first findings chapter, I present Sophia Cruz’s emotion-laden talk in three sections below: background and home and school sociocultural contexts, about being labeled with LD and finally, her understanding of the idea of LD.

Sophia’s Background and Home and School Sociocultural Contexts

Meeting Sophia Cruz and (troubling) sociodemographic and identity factors. Sophia was a Mexican American 14-year-old female student, bilingual in Spanish and English and in the seventh grade. I walked into Ms. Michael’s special education resource room one late afternoon with excitement to ask Sophia Cruz to join the study. Sophia was sitting at the central desk, a place where Ms. Michaels and her students would gather daily for class. Sophia was drawing in a notebook, waiting for the end of the school day to come, when I sat next to her. I learned that day Sophia was an avid drawer:

I **love** drawing, its one of my favorite things . . . Well one of my things that I like for drawing is that you can imagnate (sic) how you can draw the sky or a person, and it **feels** that . . . you’re drawing somebody, like a mirror, like for say, like if you’re drawing yourself, it’s a mirror of you (Sophia, 9/17/14).

In her explanation of how she draws, Sophia pointed to the sensual dimension of the act of drawing: —“it **feels** that . . . you’re drawing somebody, like a mirror”— highlighting how emotion is indexed in her language use as well as how she conceptualizes her practice of drawing. Sophia connected her practice of drawing to the affective as well as to her imagination. How emotion operates in children’s lives is not simply positive or negative, and how this emotion works remains under-theorized in educational psychology. Furthermore, a student’s demographic information is often limiting within educational research that purely focuses on group traits or identity markers without taking into consideration what people *do and produce* (Artiles, 2015; Artiles et al., 2011). Besides being an avid drawer, Sophia stated that she was good at math, reading, and science:

Am good at math, am a *little bit* good at reading . . . reading fluency and science . . . Well, for math sometimes I feel **happy** cause you well, if you pass the grade that you wanted, like for say you wanted, um, to learn how to divide and multiply and all that and then you get the answer, you pass and all that it makes you feel **happy** that you succeed at that level so you can go to the second level (Sophia, 9/17/14).

Sophia’s response highlighted what she felt that she was good at. However, this response was not devoid of ideological assumptions about schooling (e.g., grade level understanding of learning, stage development level of learning, use of reading fluency, and thus speed level, as a cultural measure of success in literacy) or from

the emotional context of learning⁷ (e.g., “it makes you feel **happy** that you succeed at that level so you can go to the second level”). Specifically, math in the above emotion-laden talk, is an emotion implicative WHATs (Prior, 2016) because for Sophia it represented a topic that gave her happiness. This was especially so, when she achieved at math.

Using the procedures described in chapter 3, I identified seven emotion-laden talk in Sophia’s discussions of her background and sociocultural contexts. Within this dataset, Sophia’s self-narrativizations of emotion implicative WHATs, intensifiers, emotions, feelings, and paralinguistic modes of expressions of emotion signified not only the role emotion played in her narratives and talk about being labeled LD and the idea of LD, but also how emotion afforded and constrained her agency and lived experiences with LD on the ground. Quantitatively Sophia used 71 emotion implicative WHATs, 65 intensifiers, 18 emotions, 37 feelings and a total of nine paralinguistic manifestations of emotion across the interview corpus of evidence to answer research questions one and two. Qualitatively, these manifestations of emotion undergird the emotional impact of LD labeling and the idea of LD and emerge through themes unique to Sophia’s emotion-laden talk.

Overall, Sophia used 18 emotions, 35 feelings, and nine paralinguistic manifestations of emotions within her emotion-laden talk across her discussions of background and sociocultural home and school contexts. Specifically, Sophia expressed 22 emotion implicative WHATs related to these contexts: *literacy* (e.g.,

⁷ I will further elaborate on these and other sociocultural, emotional, and ideological assumptions within Sophia’s emotion-laden talk within my discussion in chapter 7.

writing, spelling, math, spelling, and writing words), *special education practices* (e.g., bad news from a teacher, an IEP meeting), *the politics of LD identity* (e.g., understanding why your mom does not tell you about your LD; not being told you have LD; discomfort at not being told and being left out; not talking about something; students need to talk about it and make sense of their label; and not telling your little brother he is a special needs kid), *resistance* (e.g., questioning, complaining), *hobbies* (e.g., drawing, favorite thing), *social life in school* (e.g., friendships), and *emotional explicatives* (e.g., hurt, feels, positive and negative emotionality). Sophia linguistic and paralinguistic manifestations of emotions included: sad (three times), happy (two times), angry, love, and bad; *feelings*—tired (two times), indignation, and shut down; and *paralinguistic*—exclamation point (See Table 8).

Table 8

Manifestations of Emotion within Sophia’s Emotion-Laden Talk on Background and Sociocultural Contexts

Background and Sociocultural Contexts	Emotion Implicative WHATs (19)	Intensifiers (14)	Emotions (9)	Feelings (4)	Paralinguistic (1)
	Social and emotional context of and spelling and writing	Really (7)	Sad (3)	Tired (2)	Exclamation point
		Big	Happy (2)	Indignation	
	Bad news from a teacher	Little bit	Angry	Shut down	
		Kind of	Love		
	Not being told you have LD	Kinda	Bad (2)		

IEP Meeting and hearing
bad news about her
quality of participation
—in writing and reading

A lot

Big

Sorta

More

Understanding why your
mom does not tell you
about your LD

Doing math problems at
a slow rate

Reading (3)—
teacher's reading
speed is too fast,
compared to Sophia's;
Reading in class with a
partner;
literacy as social good

Favorite subject is
drawing and

Questioning of your
ability by others

Spelling and
writing
words

Positive and
negative
emotionality

Discomfort
at not being
told and
being left
out

Not talking
about
something

Students
need to talk
about it and
make sense
of their
label

Not telling
your little
brother he is
a special
needs kid

Schooling
as social
good

Retention
from a
grade

In total, Sophia used 65 emotion intensifiers, the majority of which related to her background and sociocultural contexts, about being labeled with LD (e.g., the theme the hegemony of smartness), and the idea of LD (e.g., the theme LD as a

double-edged sword). The most frequent intensifier across Sophia's emotion-laden talk regarding the three topics above was "really". The second frequent intensifier was "little bit" used nine times, specifically within Sophia's emotion-laden talk as they related to her understanding of the idea of LD, including LDness as X.

Sophia was a serious learner. For example, in regards to schooling, Sophia expressed enthusiasm for learning and shared that "there is like a *big* reason why we're here" (Sophia, 9/16/14). Sophia used the intensifier *big* to emphasize the *positive* importance she gave to school and education. Similarly, Sophia explained her favorite thing about school:

Well mostly part is . . . that sometimes you have to learn and you *really* need it and you can't . . . get a job if you don't have that. Ability to be reading, and have to learn to read and write and to learn *more* bigger words like you used to be like you used to and sometimes I just like talk to my friends and all that but there is like a *big* reason why we're here (Sophia, 9/16/14).

Sophia expressed that we were all in school for a *big* reason (for the purpose of education) in a way that she appeared to have concluded consciously for the first time, but yet already knew deep down. Sophia also sensed that I understood her concern; there was a higher purpose for going to school even though it might be painful or a struggle to learn in school. Further, Sophia used the intensifier *really* when she states that school, and hence, education, is something we all need ("Well mostly part is that that sometimes you have to learn and you *really* need it and you can't you can't get a job if you don't have that" (Sophia, 9/16/15)). Rather than simply stating, "you need it," Sophia expressed the importance of schooling

through the intensification *really*. Here Sophia also used the intensifier *more* when she stated, “*more* bigger words,” to quantify the amount of bigger words that someone would normally learn across time within schooling. Nevertheless, from a New Literacy Studies (NLS) perspective this fixated attention on learning “*more* bigger words” indexes an autonomous model of literacy (Street, 1983) that has to do with a narrow view of literacy as opposed to an expansive view regarding literacy as a social practice.

Sophia’s contexts outside of school and family members. Sophia was born in Pinole, a southwestern major urban city, to Luciana Cruz. Going to Sophia’s home, I was able to meet Luciana, her grandmother, grandfather, and two other siblings, who all lived together. Her siblings, Miguel and Andreas Cruz, had been diagnosed with autism. Both Sophia and Luciana had beautiful long braided hair that passed their waists. Luciana was also bilingual in Spanish and English. Her dominant language was Spanish, so we conducted all her interviews in Spanish. Luciana was born in a major city in Mexico, but soon after birth, her family moved to a Mexican city that shared a border with the US. Luciana’s family lived in that city for 19 years before moving to South Pinole in the US Southwest. Luciana has lived close to Nodding Elementary School for a little over 20 years. Luciana was 40 years old and answered Hispanic when I asked her both her race and ethnicity. Luciana did not have a disability and described her social class status as follows: “mmm, pues yo pienso que clase media, pienso, no sé (risas)” (“mmm, well, I think middle class, I think, I don’t know” (laughs)” (Luciana, 2/11/15).

Sophia attended a local church with her family in their town, where she also attended Nodding Elementary School. During one of my visits to see Sophia, her grandfather, Jorge, was reading a Christian Bible on the family living room sofa. Sophia's home was rich with elders and adults who were role models for her regarding different cultural practices such as literacy.

I parked at the curb in front of Sophia's home. The house was a large, white, three-bedroom corner home with a metal screen door on the front door of the house. Sophia's house was a less than five-minute drive from Nodding Elementary School, or about a 10 to 15-minute walk. As a participant observer, I felt my otherness as I knocked at the door to Sophia's home for the first time. However, after the second trip when I brought pan dulce (sweet bread) and coffee from Starbucks for her family, I felt more at home after each visit. Sophia's grandparents, Mary and Jorge, were always welcoming and cordial. As I stepped into Sophia's house I noticed how clean and organized it was. There was a large divider between the living room and the dining room area and table where I interviewed Luciana and Sophia. Sometimes I interviewed Sophia in the living room on their black leather couch that was immediately to the right of the front door (Fieldnote, 11/5/14).

Sophia always volunteered to help me set up my video camera equipment and brought me a glass of water that either she or her mom would offer me. We usually sat across or next to each other at their wide wooden large dining room table. Sophia's home was rich with multi-generational family members including

grandparents and an aunt from her mother's side. Sophia shared that her aunt recently moved into the house next door, further illustrating the rich sociocultural contexts of Sophia's family and her potential access to their funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005).

Sophia's mother was also an important part of Sophia's sociocultural context. Concerning Sophia's schooling and education, Luciana was extremely involved in her academic activities and advocated for Sophia's learning needs at school. Outside of school, Sophia saw a child psychologist and speech therapist and attended other extracurricular activities on a weekly basis. Luciana coordinated all of these activities for Sophia and her siblings. Enveloped with grandparents and extended family, Sophia's background involved positive sociocultural contexts.

Navigating schooling: *Sophia and Luciana's agency.* Sophia attended Nodding Elementary School since second grade. Coming to Nodding Elementary School was a major turning point for her education. Sophia reflected on how important it was for her to move to Nodding Elementary School, and she recounted what she struggled with academically in second grade as well as how she resisted being blamed for her "miseducation" from her non-responsive teachers:

Like in **second grade**, they had an IEP meeting with my mom, with the teachers and so I was in class and I was just doing whatever like drawing, cause it was like free time and I was not *really* good at spelling words or like writing them and so when I went back home then my mom was like,

“um your teacher told me that you were really, you weren’t trying your best how to spell,” and I was like, “It’s because they don’t teach me how to spell things,” am like, “How am I supposed to know if their not teaching me?” and that’s why she moved me here [to Nodding Elementary School elementary school] and so I learned a lot of things. If I was still there, I would like failed . . . I improved a lot cause um its over there in Southeast, so I was like scoring really low, I was like failing and so when I moved here [meaning Nodding Elementary School] I started learning new words and I started getting better at it (Sophia, 10/24/14).

Sophia used the intensifier really to underscore the fact that she was not good at spelling or writing words. (“I was not really good at spelling words or like writing them” Sophia, 10/24/14). Spelling and writing, I argue, are emotion-implicative topics for Sophia. Sophia also repeated her mother’s intensifier really as she recounted what her teacher told her mother about Sophia’s effort in spelling (“um, your teacher told me that you were really, you weren’t trying your best how to spell” Sophia, 10/24/14). A mother bringing home bad news from school that a teacher shared with her became an emotion implicative WHATs: three instances of the intensifier really appearing within Sophia’s emotion-laden talk above signified the intensity within these three contexts, which included a temporal dimension—while in second grade. Luciana was outspoken and took actions that guaranteed Sophia’s quality of education, but Sophia was also aware and concerned about her learning and education. Both individuals, then, were agentive, that is, they had the capacity to act within their sociocultural

environments (Ahearn, 2001, 2010, 2013), particularly it came to Sophia's education and opportunities to learn in the face of educational inequities (e.g., lack of quality of education, schooling and teachers). Nevertheless, the quality of Sophia's literacy learning, from a NLS perspective, was still limiting since it purely focused on learning new words and reading fluently and ignored the role of emotional and sociocultural contexts of literacy practices and learning (Gee, 1999). This situation has been the norm in special education reading research and practice (Artiles, 2002). Sophia's story involved heartache but is also an example of the capacity of young Latina/o students with LD and their community to be agentive within the system of education.

In addition, this example further illustrates Sophia and Luciana's positive relationship. Luciana listened to her daughter's perspective about her experiences at school, and to facilitate her education, decided to find a better school for Sophia. Sophia and her mother's ability to act in the face of Sophia's teacher's inability to teach Sophia, (from Sophia's perspective), and Sophia's ability to improve is also a testament of the sense of community that they both found at Nodding Elementary School. Nevertheless, we see the structural inequalities that Sophia and her mom experienced given the policies and practices in special education (e.g., Harry & Klingner, 2006), when compared to general education policies and practices related to literacy instruction.

Coming to terms with being labeled LD. Sophia did not remember when she was first told she had an LD. Sophia candidly reflected: "Nobody told me . . . No, I just like figured it out on my own" (Sophia, 10/16/14). I immediately

replied, “That was sort of my experience too” to empathize with her and share my similar experience regarding the LD label. Sophia continued:

Cause am like, why am I going to this class? And they’re like reviewing everything, like they restart it everything like, so I can understand it more cause if I forget it or something, they restart it, and am like, I already know this, and . . . they’re like it’s just because were doing this again and then am like . . . then am like, why am I in this class if I already know how to do that? . . . And they’re like, they don’t say nothing but am like, oh it’s because I have this (meaning a learning disability) . . . because when I was in Ms. Summer’s class, there’s this kid, there was a boy, he didn’t, he didn’t knew math like, he didn’t understand math, and I was like [to myself], “He doesn’t understand math,” and am like, “He doesn’t understand math,” and I was like is it *kinda* of like those classes where they help you? And that’s when like I *kinda* figured it out . . . Well, like my mom never told me about it. Then, back then, I would have been *really sad* because she never told me it and then I figured it out already, like I already figured it out that am a **slow learner**, and my mom never told me, that’s what it made me feel . . . like **sad**, not like being, like you know when you get **angry** when your mom doesn’t tell you that you have this Learning Disability or something and she never tells you until like 30 years and like you start finding out, right, that you’re *really slow at learning*, and then you’re like, “Mom you never told me that I was a, like, I didn’t learn things *really* fast. And she’s like and then she just looks at

me, and she doesn't say anything and am like, "She never tells me nothing," like, or is it because she doesn't like making the person feel **bad**? (Sophia, 10/16/14).

Sophia here underscored the emotional contexts that undergird the labeling of someone with LD as well as the ethical decision involved in informing individuals that they have the educational condition LD. Not being told that you have a learning disability is an emotion implicative WHATs because it leads to a culture of silence and it is unethical and unjust. Sophia just figured it out on her own, and she shared that, it was tough for her mom Luciana to acknowledge that Sophia was labeled with an LD. However, Sophia was a thoughtful and sensitive young person, and she expressed her feelings and emotions about not being directly told that she had LD:

Or like for say, like Andreas is like *sorta* a special needs kid, but I don't tell him . . . nothing, like what happens if it was me, like Andreas and like saying that I am a special needs kid . . . but I don't know. And then you're like . . . doing normal things, and then until the time comes, then you figure it out that you, that you're a special needs kid, and you didn't even notice . . . I don't like saying that to Andreas. It makes me feel **bad**. I don't say nothing to my older brother or my younger brother or else they get *really sad* and they get, they shut down . . . I don't say nothing cause I don't want to **hurt** their feelings. And so yeah, I just keep it to myself and one day they'll figure it out (Sophia, 10/16/14).

Sophia recounted this perspective about her brothers to express the idea that she understood her mother's decision not to tell her explicitly that she had an LD. The underlying ideologies at work within Sophia's emotion-laden talk about LD as being something to hide and be ashamed of led to stigma and silencing. In addition, Sophia's empathy toward her mom's hesitation to tell her that she had an LD, as well as her decision not to tell her brother about his special needs, were emotion implicative WHATs. If emotion implicative WHATs are ways in which to identify emotion within the discourse of speakers through topics, assessments, or questions (Prior, 2016), Sophia's understanding that "not telling her little brother that he was a special needs kid" was an emotion implicative WHAT since Sophia did it to spare her brother's emotions.

Sophia's general LD associations. How Sophia generally associated LD related to her performance within educational tasks and contexts. For Sophia, her LD was something of the mind. Sophia explained that if she were to draw her LD: "I would draw myself thinking, of my learning disabilities, like try to go back and think what I was failing before and how I got better at it" (Sophia, 10/16/14). Sophia couched her LD as something within herself. Nevertheless, I aim to show the social construction of LD and the emotions of LD. Sophia's responses are a testament to how LD is not purely an individual phenomenon, yet some of her responses represent an individualist portrayal of LD, that is, one purely existing within the neurology and psychology of the child as opposed to a combination of internal and external processes related to the nature and social construction of LD and its emotionality. This theorization is similar to Tom Shakespeare's medico-

psycho-social critical realist perspective about disability. Shakespeare (2006)

noted:

I reject the strong social model approach to disability and attempt to construct an alternative which neither reduces disability to an individual medical problem, nor neglects the predicament of bodily limitations and difference . . . I demonstrate that there are different options for de-medicalizing disability and promoting social change to enable and include people with impairments . . . Disability results from the interplay of individual and contextual factors. In other words, people are disabled by society and by their bodies. . . [Hence], the experience of a disabled person results from the relationship between factors intrinsic to the individual, and extrinsic factors arising from the wider context in which she finds herself (Shakespeare, 2006, p. 52-55).

Sophia's perspective reminds me of Shakespeare's critical realist perspective about disability. Sophia was candid about her past and current academic struggles in reading, writing, and learning. Nevertheless, like Shakespeare, Sophia also grappled with the complexity of disability and its meaning as it related to LD and its social construction and emotionality. Further, even though Sophia was tired and did not want to draw her explanations about LD, she shared her ingenuity as it related to her identity as a drawer:

Am **tired** . . . I do but cause you have to like draw the face, and make it perfect, and then you have to draw the eyes, then you have to draw the hair, then you have to draw the mind, the floaties of the mind, awe that

takes long. Do you know how long it takes to draw the picture? An hour or two! That's how long it takes to make a picture (Sophia, 10/29/14).

Sophia provided insight into her general associations of her LD as something of the mind and its thoughts as well as into her habits of mind as they related to her identity as an artist with great attention to detail.

Luciana's perspectives regarding Sophia's LD. Although Sophia's perspectives regarding her LD matter from a cultural-historical approach (Hedegaard, 2008), understanding what others, such as adults, believe about a student's beliefs and participation in cultural traditions such as school literacy is critical to understanding the social situation that a student like Sophia is navigating. I should note that Luciana's perspectives regarding her daughter's LD label were a significant aspect of Sophia's story.

Original statement	Translation
<p>Eso es algo que le dificulta bastante. Estuve hablando con la maestra de ciencias, me la encontré en la clase, en la oficina, la maestra de ciencias. Dice que es muy difícil para ella. Están haciendo un proyecto, de un carro. Y que el carro va caminando solito algo así. Entonces dice que tiene muchas ideas pero ya, muy muy buenas ideas pero a al momento de que las tiene</p>	<p>That's something that is very difficult for her [Sophia]. I was talking with her science teacher, I ran into her in her classroom, in the office, her science teacher. She says it's very difficult for her. They are doing a project about a car. And the car drives by itself or something like that. Then she said that she (Sophia) has many ideas but yea, they are very good</p>

<p>que, piensa y se las expresa, y esta, y dice la maestra “O está muy bien,” Pero ya el momento que ella tiene que pensar las paraescribirlas. No puede hacerlo (change in tone, as in a release in tension and hopelessness). Entonces tiene que estarlo hablando y otra persona ayudarle para escribirlo... Tiene problemas de, ¿Cómo se dice? Expresando. Tiene problemas expresando y digo luego para escribir lo que, lo que lo que expresa. Entonces me dijo se me puedes hacer el favor todos los días en la noche preguntarle, “Sophia, ¿Cómo te va en la clase de ciencias? ¿Qué es lo que estas tratando de hacer? Me dijo para que pueda mejorar, eso me dijo me comentó la maestra, el jueves de la semana pasada.</p>	<p>ideas but when its time that she has to, she thinks of them and she expresses them, and this, and the teacher says: "Oh, this is very good," but when the moment comes that she has think of them and write them. She can't do it (change in tone, as in a release in stress and hopelessness). So you have to be speaking [to her] and another person needs to help her write it . . . She has trouble with, how do I say it; expressing herself. She has trouble expressing and then to write what she expresses. Then the teacher asked me if I could do her a favor every day, if every night I can ask, "Sophia, how are you doing in science class? What is it that you are trying to do? She told me this so she can improve, this is what the teacher told me, Thursday of last week. (Luciana, 02/11/14).</p>
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Luciana was clearly involved in Sophia’s schooling. Luciana made sense of her daughter’s literacy struggles as well as her daughter’s disability diagnosis, revealing a counter-narrative about Sophia’s disability diagnosis of LD:

Original statement	Translation
<p>Es que a ella no la tienen con un diagnóstico de autismo. Pero yo porque tengo hijos autista, yo comparo a uno con el otro. Y son idénticos. Pero a ella no la tienen con un diagnóstico de autismo, a ella la tienen solamente con un diagnóstico de lento aprendizaje. Pero como yo ya tengo dos autistas y tengo una en medio, que no es, que dicen que no tiene autismo, nada más tiene lento aprendizaje, pero yo lo comparo con los otros dos y es igual a los otros dos. Y la ciencia, y los doctores [que] dicen no, no lo es. Pero sí, como uno es que está con ellos veinticuatro horas y uno los ve como hacen una cosa, cómo reaccionan con otra, entonces yo los miro estos dos acá y la miro ella aquí. Y dicen,</p>	<p>It’s that she has not been diagnosed with autism. But because I have autistic children, I compare one with the other. And they are identical. But she does not have a diagnosis of autism, she has only a diagnosis of slow learner. But because I already have two autistics and I have one in the middle, which they say she doesn’t have autism, that she only is a slow learner, but I compare her with the other two and she is the same to the other two. And the science, and the doctors say, “No, it is not [autism]”. But yes, because it’s like us or one who is with them 24 hours [a day] and us or one who sees [or knows them] and how they do things, how they react with others, then I look</p>

<p>“Ella no lo tiene,” pero ella esta igual a los otros dos.</p>	<p>at these two over here and then I see her over here. And they say, "She does not have it," but she is the same as the other two (Luciana, 02/11/14).</p>
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Luciana expressed her perspective about what she believed her daughter’s actual disability diagnosis should be: autism. Interestingly, we see that Luciana troubled Sophia’s “diagnóstico de lento aprendizaje,” while for Sophia, this was precisely how she understood her LD as it related to her learning. These competing understandings of what students “have” along ability and disability lines within special and general educational contexts can further our understanding of the notion of LD on the ground.

The salience of sociocultural contextualization. Sophia’s background at home and school contextualizes readers’ understandings of her emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD and the idea of LD. Historically, students’ with LD schooling experiences have been divorced from the notion of culture (Artiles, 2015; Artiles et al., 2011). Culture here is not a static concept that people or identity groups have, but an action verb that indicates what people do and produce in the moment to moment interactions that they navigate throughout their everyday lives in multiple contexts. One way to get at people’s sociocultural practices is through their talk, and in this chapter, through Sophia’s emotion-laden talk about her LD. Cultural-historical perspectives offer insight into children’s motives and intentions and practices inside and outside of schooling context

(Hegedaard, 2008). Luciana's perspectives regarding her daughter's LD and disability vis-à-vis Sophia's academic identity were not disconnected to the sociocultural contexts of which she and her daughter were a part.

Sophia's Emotion-Laden Talk about Being Labeled with LD and the Idea of LD

In this section I report the findings for Sophia related to research question one—*what are Sophia's emotion-laden talk being labeled with LD?*—and research question two—*what are Sophia's emotion-laden talk of the idea of LD?* Two patterns were identified about Sophia's experience being labeled LD, namely the hegemony of smartness and disability microaggressions, and two patterns emerged about Sophia's of the idea of LD—LD as a double-edged sword and LDness as X—where LD had polymorphous meanings for Sophia.

Sophia's Emotion-Laden Talk about Being Labeled LD

The hegemony of smartness. Sophia's experiences with the label LD involved the insidious process of the hegemony of smartness (Leonardo & Broderick, 2011). The hegemony of smartness includes a false but oppressive sense of inferiority (Leonardo & Broderick, 2011) of those more "abled"-bodied than you. Leonardo and Broderick (2011) argued that smartness is false and oppressive like whiteness. LD, for Sophia, then was enveloped within the ideological apparatus of schooling as it related to the oppression of disablism (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2011) and its emotionality in relation to school's creating "smart" and "not-so-smart" students (Leonardo & Broderick, 2011). Sophia's narratives underscored the label LD as a negative thing; by the hegemony of smartness, the LD label

affected Sophia internally and externally, within her sociocultural contexts and within the big d Discourse of general and special education.

The evidence summarized thus far shows that Sophia was part of a community who cared deeply about her development and learning. Sophia also cared deeply about her learning. Nevertheless, the social construction of ability and disability related to the educational label LD was something that Sophia, unfortunately, needed to navigate. The hegemony of smartness constrained her opportunities to learn and her well-being. Traditionally, LD is considered to be something that exists within the neurology of people—their underperformance or lack of achievement is individualized and psychologized within children and adults with LD. It is their “LD.” However, the accumulated effects of negative responses or a schooling culture that is preoccupied with creating “smart” and “not-so-smart” students like Sophia are rarely interrogated to move the educational discourse toward an understanding of not only the academic and cognitive dimensions of LD but also the sociocultural and emotional mediating forces that may influence students and their participation in schools. Hatt (2007) noted:

Children typically learn about their own relative smartness in school. Overwhelmingly, it is poor and/or students of color who are unjustly left *feeling* not smart in schools through such practices as tracking and teacher expectations. Anyon (1980) discovered in her work concerning knowledge construction in schools that, “[Working-class] children already ‘know that what it takes to get ahead is being smart, and that they themselves, are not smart’” (p. 14). Additionally, African-American and Latino students are

overly represented in special education programs and gifted programs often result in re-segregating schools, where the white students attend the gifted program while students of color are tracked into “regular” educational programming . . . Smartness is described as being initially located outside students and then culturally produced so that it moves through students as spoken discourse and embodied practice. Smartness operates as a figured world that shapes how ability is talked and thought about in schools and larger society (*my own emphasis*) (p. 147-148).

Hatt reminds us that smartness is intersectional; working-class African-American and Latina/o youth develop internalized oppression along smartness, class, ethnicity, race, and disability compared to their White and abled/“regular” class peers to and through discourse and social practice. Hatt, however, also noted that smartness is a topic that involves feelings of not-smart.

The hegemony of smartness permeated Sophia’s narratives, and she shared the following feelings about being labeled LD:

It feels that some person is better than you because [you] don’t understand something or you don’t know how to solve it *that* fast like other people do and learn it fast . . . and they think that they’re better than you just because they’re **smarter** than you, they learn everything fast (Sophia, 9/17/14).

Sophia situated the hegemony of smartness in the emotion implicative WHAT *the feelings of someone being smarter than you* since not everyone learns and understands at the same pace. Again, part of the hegemony of smartness includes a false but oppressive sense of inferiority (Leonardo & Broderick, 2011) to those

more “abled”-bodied than you. Here we see Sophia expressed the salience of smartness ideologically—that is, expressed the logic behind the phenomena of smartness—but also emotionally—since she emphasized the feeling one gets—*that they are better than you*—due to the logic of smartness. Similarly, Leonardo and Broderick (2011) argued that smartness is false and oppressive; however, they compared it to Whiteness. Like Whiteness, false beliefs and ideologies circulate about who People of Color are in relation to White people. Similarly, smartness is insidious and ideologically affects the lived experiences of people with disabilities.

Furthermore, smartness is a type of psycho-emotional disablism (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2011; Reeve, 2012; Thomas, 1999; Watermeyer & Swartz, 2008). Goodley and Runswick-Cole (2011) defined disablism as “a form of social oppression involving the social imposition of restrictions of activity on people with impairments and the socially engendered undermining of their psycho-emotional well-being” (p. 604). Disability studies scholar Carol Thomas (1999) has written about this coupling and the psycho-emotional side being historically under-theorized within the social model of disability as it relates to disabled people’s sense of self.

Self-identity is a key element in what I have termed the psycho-emotional consequences of disablism. By these I mean the “personally or inter-subjectively felt’ effects of social forces and processes which operate (not in direct, mechanical or uni-dimensional way) in shaping the subjectivities of people with impairments. They contribute powerfully to the sense that

each of us has about ‘who I am’ (or am prevented from being).

Poststructuralists would refer to these social forces and processes as the discourses, or discursive practices, through which our subjectivities are produced (Thomas, 1999, p. 48).

Thomas’ (1999) theory of the psycho-emotional dimensions of disability is grounded in the oppressive impact of discursive practices about what counts as disability in society. Therefore, the structural identity of LD has a psycho-emotional impact on students labeled as such, like Sophia.

Sophia’s emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD made visible a tension between who Sophia was and the meaning of ability and disability within the big d Discourse of schooling. For example, a cultural assumption within US schooling is the need for one-to-one correspondence between someone’s age and their grade level may be at odds with sociocultural assumptions about participation and learning (Rogoff, 2003). Being held back from school was an important moment for Sophia’s experience with the label LD. At the time of the study, Sophia was in the seventh grade and not in the eighth grade, where the US educational system typically places students of Sophia’s age. Sophia explained how she thought about her LD in the context of school failure, such as retention. Therefore, Sophia’s emotion-laden talk about being labeled LD were enveloped within the common sense assumptions of the big d Discourse of US schooling:

That's only if it comes to mind . . . Like if am **upset** that why am in seventh grade and am supposed to be in eighth grade and then am like thinking about it. And am like, “Oh, its because of my learning disability, or something.” .

. . . Actually, it only happens when am like at school or like if they say that they're **smarter** or something And it keeps me thinking that, their **smarter** than me and am not I get it twisted around. And if am over there at home with my cousins, it happens there too They don't act that their **smart**, but they like if they show me a problem, and am like ah, I haven't gotten to that point And then they ask me a question "what grade are you in?" and if am like oh, "am in seventh grade," and they're like "You're not supposed to be in seventh grade, you're supposed to be in high school? Did you like flunk or something?" And they like say that. (Sophia, 01/20/15).

Sophia indicated that she got **upset** if she remembered the fact that she was retained from eighth grade to seventh grade; however, these negative feelings did not exist in isolation from her peers and siblings. Further, Sophia reflected on her experience with the hegemony of smartness as being what Thomas (1999) stated: "personal or inter-subjectively felt' effects of social forces and processes which operate (not in direct, mechanical or uni-dimensional way) in shaping the subjectivities of people with impairments" (Thomas, 1999, p. 48). When Sophia said—"They don't act that they're smart"—she indicated the affective dimension of the ideological implications of her cousins' interactions when they inquired about Sophia's school-based status (e.g., being in seventh grade or not). Although not made explicit above, these school-based contexts were undergirded by Sophia's structural identity of LD and special education history. Therefore, her cousin's interactions were not benign since they were value- and emotion-laden for Sophia:

Inside of me it makes me feel **bad** cause am cause am a *little bit* slow at learning things and . . . I think to myself . . . that (**lowers voice**) am **not smart** . . . So it's like a twist. Like its making you feel **bad**, but in the same way its making you feel **bad** instead of . . . thinking what you have already learned in the past . . . Because ah like I said its like you're thinking negative and you're like **mad** in the inside and **sad** because you're in this grade and . . . you're not in high school, like you're supposed to be and you're in seventh grade. So it like it makes you feel **bad** and **sad** (Sophia, 1/20/15).

Sophia stated, three times, that being retained made her feel **bad**, which led to feelings of **madness** and **sadness**. Sophia's interactions with her peers as they related to their assumptions about her academic abilities and disabilities were power-laden as well, given the fact that they were emotion-laden (Benesch, 2012; Kenway & Youdell, 2011). Furthermore, the hegemony of smartness sustained a supposed position of superiority for Sophia's cousins. Sophia grounded her reflection about the impact of being labeled with LD *as a twist*—between feeling **sad**, **mad**, and “**not-so-smart**” (Leonardo & Broderick, 2011) and knowing deep down that thinking this way is false, oppressive, and not true (e.g., “And it keeps me thinking that, they're smarter than me and am not . . . I get it twisted around” (Sophia, 01/20/15)). As Sophia continued to reflect about the times that her LD became salient, she shared her ongoing perspective that the purpose of being in school was learning:

Well, sometimes I think to myself that if am *really* in . . . seventh grade if am not supposed to be in high school than they hold me back because they

want me to . . . learn more instead of . . . getting to the point to high school, I don't even know nothing, and am like sitting there and am like **confused** and um that's why they held me back so you can learn more so when you get to high school you don't have to be **worrying** about that (Sophia, 01/20/15).

Sophia's emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD included heartache, but also hope for the purpose, function, and promise of schooling and education: learning. However, there was a subtext in her emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD and the sociocultural and institutional contexts that being labeled as such engenders: emotionality. A coupling of emotional and social dimensions of learning with that of the hopes and dreams of learning, both negative and positive, was evident within Sophia's emotion-laden talk and involved mixed meaning-feeling (Lemke, 2013). For example, Sophia explained that LD could be a positive thing: "I think it could be a good thing because if you come to not know . . . like this problem or something and you can ask the teacher and they help you . . . *kind of*" (Sophia, 10/14/14). Sophia expressed a rational-utilitarian reason for the benefits of an LD label: getting help from a teacher, furthering Sophia's perspective that the bottom line of school and education was learning. This was even more evident when Sophia shared about the possible negative or bad things about being labeled with LD:

Like if it was me, then I would've think negative things like. That like being in, um a learning disability makes you feel like, you're not **smart** (change in tone and said under her breath and lips) . . . I think a lot of people think

like that . . . right now we have classes that are **separated** but one class its like mixed up with seventh and eighth graders inside so they think, they say that that's a **smarter** class and then the rest of the class, I don't know, **dumb** or something? But like a lot of people would've wanted to be in that class, like they . . . if they were more **smarter** (sic), cause if they . . . see that there's a **smarter** class, they want to be in it but their not **smart** (lowers voice and release tension in her voice and body as if letting her body indicate the helplessness in the hypothetical students' who desire to be in the smarter class). Like . . . they think that their really **smart** . . . they think that **they know everything**, and all . . . the people want to be in that class because they . . . have like **smart** kids in there, you know what I mean? (Shrugged her shoulders) . . . And then some people say, "Oh, why don't I," a friend that I have she said, um, "Why am I not in the **smarter** class, if I am **smart**? And am like, "Well, probably, because it's full (emphasis) of other kids in there that are really **smart** so . . . that's why they won't let you in" . . . cause there's like a bunch of kids in there that are really **smart** . . . Like Daniel is in the **smart** class . . . So that's why there's a bunch of people in there in the **smart** class (lowers voice at the end of this utterance) so that's why they haven't gotten, um, how do I say it, like new kids, they have this new kid, but I don't know his name. But he's in the **smart** class . . . And a lot of people are saying like, "Oh, why am I not in the smart class, if am really **smart**?" (shrugs shoulders) (Sophia, 9/17/14).

Compared to the positive aspects of being labeled with LD, Sophia had more to say about the negative aspects. Sophia used the word or a version of the word “smart” 15 times in the preceding quote, and cumulatively, the word smart was used 19 times within Sophia’s emotion-laden talk. This is significant since it illuminates how the hegemony of smartness was encoded in the emotion-laden talk of Sophia about being labeled LD and also about her experiences within special education. Sophia used “smart” and other words such as “dumb” and phrasings such as “they think that they know everything” in the above excerpt to express her keen awareness of her otherness as it related to what culturally counted as “smartness” within her sociocultural contexts.

Sophia’s interview excerpt above also represents an emotion implicative WHAT (Prior, 2016) response because the topic of being or not being smart or of being in a class that was considered “not-so-smart” involved emotionality. Again, an emotion implicative WHAT response or statement includes implicit (rather than explicit) linguistic and/or paralinguistic manifestations of emotions. For example, Sophia shared how she felt about this:

(Her demeanor becomes serious and she looks straight past me and says) At the same time, I really did want to be in that class, but (shrugs shoulders and turns her body to the right and looks at me and says in a quiet voice) like [I] am not smart, kind of (Sophia, 10/14/14).

Sophia internalized the attitude or paradigm that she was “not smart” due to not being part of the “smart” class. Although Sophia did not admit that it was emotional per se for her not to be in the “smart” class the ideology of smartness was something

that appeared to bother her. Above, Sophia also attributed her absence from the “smart class” as a personal deficit. Nevertheless, from a critical perspective, Sophia’s assignment to a class other than the “smart” class was a structural decision that involved the weight of the hegemony of smartness within the ideological apparatus of schooling (e.g., ability classification and segregating of children), concerning special education and the concept of LD. Overall, Sophia’s emotion implicative WHATs clustered around the following topics within the emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD: *dis/ability hierarchy* (e.g., smartness (19 times), someone knowing something better than you, dumbness, better than you); *schooling practices* (e.g., retention (two times), segregation); *the social context of literacy* (e.g., reading with a partner); *LD impact metaphors* (e.g., inside of me, so its like a twist); and *predicaments* (e.g., struggling (three times), negative thinking (five times)).

Sophia’s use of intensifiers provides further evidence that Sophia cared and perhaps felt the weight of her responses. I italicized and underlined the intensifiers (e.g. *really smart*; *kind of*) that were included in Sophia’s response as it related to how she felt about not being in the “smart class.” Overall, concerning the theme of the hegemony of smartness within Sophia’s emotion-laden talk she used the intensifiers *kind of* three times and *really* seven times. Given that intensifiers linguistically index social and emotional expression Sophia’s use of *really* and *kind of* specifically qualified her emotion-laden talk.

For Sophia, then, we can see that the hegemony of smartness was something she navigated, both internally and externally⁸, as she made sense of her label, LD. Sophia shared that the label LD made a difference in how she saw herself as a learner (“I see myself different because like I said am not, like I struggle learning things *really* fast, so I prefer slow, and then other people learn it *really* fast, *kind of*” (Sophia, 9/17/14)). However, Sophia then stated that it didn’t and rationalized and gained some comfort that she was not the only one who struggled (“And there’s this other thing, it doesn’t make me feel different because a lot of people struggle, too” (Sophia, 9/17/14)). However, as Sophia expanded on her response, she illuminated the hegemony of smartness as part and parcel of the root of her psycho-emotional disablism related to struggling in school:

A lot of people are struggling, too, but you’re not alone like certain people around the world, you don’t even know that their struggling right now, and their struggling and you don’t know that and you think you’re the only person that that’s, well some people think their not **smart** or **[they’re] not intelligent**, but their not the only ones their like a lot of people around the world that struggle in this particular part, but it doesn’t mean that everybody struggles in that part. *Kind of* like your own, its *kind of* like your thing (Sophia, 9/17/14).

Sophia also acknowledged that she and others indeed struggled with learning and conceptualized these as individual and unique struggles—Shakespeare

⁸ Although I don’t believe in binary thinking, am reporting the fact that for Sophia, she experienced the hegemony of smartness as both an internal and external binary.

would call them their unique predicaments. Ironically, Sophia juxtaposed this individualization and uniqueness with the problem of internalized disablism and alienation when she stated that people who sometimes think that they are the only ones—“not smart or [they're] not intelligent.” This juxtaposition is precisely the social construction of LD and the emotionality that accompanies the experience of having LD. However, to be clear, this is not something that purely exists within the neurology of students such as Sophia but are due to the circulating negative messages about ability and disability differences in society and within the big d Discourse of schooling. These messages, in turn, affect the lived experiences of students like Sophia as evidenced in her emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD and experiencing it on the ground. Although Sophia experienced the hegemony of smartness and we can see them within her emotion-laden talk, she did not experience it deterministically. Sophia was agentic and grappled with ablest messages stured within the big d Discourse of schooling and the larger society.

Disability microaggressions. Sophia also experienced disability microaggressions that were emotionally laden due to her structural disability label of LD. Sophia suffered comments and responses to her ability differences by her teachers, siblings, and peers that were hostile to her sense of self and academic identity. These disability microaggressions were interactional and interpersonal in nature, hence, socially constructed, and left negative feelings and emotions for Sophia.

Coined by Chester Pierce and his colleagues (Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzalez & Willis, 1978) and connected to the important and prolific work of

Derald Wing Sue (2010) and his colleagues (e.g., Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal & Torino, 2007; Sue & Capodilupo, 2008) the term racial microaggressions referred to “put-downs and insults directed toward Black Americans. These were everyday and often automatic or unconscious put-downs” (Pierce et al., as cited in Sue, 2010, p. 5). According to Sue and his colleagues, the consequences of microaggressions are clear: individual negative psychological, interpersonal, institutional (and I would argue, cultural-historical) developmental effects. For example, alienation, disparities in education, employment, and health care, insults, invalidation, putdowns, interference with learning processes, and the stereotyping of individuals and groups who belong to historically marginalized communities, “sap spiritual energies, lead to low self-esteem, deplete or divert energy for adaptive functioning and problem-solving” (Sue, 2010, p. 15). I adopt Davila’s (2011) definition of a disability microaggression defined as “subtle verbal insults directed at students with disabilities, often automatically or unconsciously; layered insults, based on one’s disability, race, gender, class, language, immigration status, phenotype, accent or surname; and cumulative insults, which cause unnecessary stress to students with disabilities” (p. 108-109). The disability microaggressions that Sophia experienced also affected her opportunities to learn, her view of herself as a learner and her academic identity in general, and how she made meaning-feeling (Lemke, 2013).

The concept of microaggressions is imperative and useful in a supposed “post-racial” society where one reality regarding the body politic is part of the hegemonic order. This hegemonic order entails the denial of People of Color’s realities and is similar to the “facelessness of [the] discursive power” (Mahzer,

2011) of LD. Student voices such as Sophia's illuminate how their structural identity as students with an LD create moments in which their sense of self and academic self-concept conflates with their experience with ableism. Understanding Sophia's experiences as shaped by disability microaggressions not only validates her experiences of ableism but, like racial microaggressions, in contemporary society and schooling, forces us to grapple with historical legacies of disability oppression operating today that form part of the master narratives of LD (see chapter 2).

Sophia experienced disability microaggressions both within the school context and while she engaged in learning activities outside of the school walls. It was during these moments of disability microaggressions, among other ways, that the social construction of LD became salient for Sophia:

That's only when you're at home doing homework or like your cousins are here and they ask you for a problem or they show you this problem and they say, "Do you have a learning disability or something?" and you're like, "No." (Sophia, 10/14/14).

Others, such as her siblings, and peers seemed to be preoccupied with Sophia's ability level and her being labeled with LD. Sophia disassociated herself from the negative connotations of LD when she immediately and simply stated, "No," to her cousin's accusation of having an LD. The above exchange constituted a disability microaggression since Sophia's cousin associated Sophia with the negative perceptions about LD, which in turn was an insult of her sense of self and academic identity. For example, Sophia explained that talking about LD makes things worse:

It makes it **feel worst** if you tell somebody about it. Because probably or may be saying to somebody else, and then you **feel** that that person **betrayed** you and tell, tell somebody else that you have this learning disability, that you can't learn that very fast and they make you **feel really sad** (Sophia, 10/14/14).

Negative emotionality was also associated with LD microaggressions and the fear of having one's disability label out of one's control. Having others comment or spread rumors about her disability was something that worried Sophia. Sophia connected this worry to a betrayal of trust through harmful talking or the potential spread of rumors by others about her LD. Trust, then, regarding one's identity as having LD, mattered deeply for her. This quote also made evident the idea that LD meant "one does not learn fast" or LD as slow learner. Throughout Sophia's emotion-laden talk the idea that she was a slow learner was not necessarily problematic. Sophia expressed that betrayals of trust by others can lead her to **feel bad** due to the ability differences. In other words, LD is an ideological artifact and LD is a sticky object (Ahmed, 2004), since the idea of LD is sociocultural and political in nature and does not originate within students like Sophia per se.

Sophia was keenly aware of how others might perceive her ability and disability differences within literacy and other related school-based contexts. For example, Sophia stated the following about other places where she experienced her LD:

Like in science when we're writing something, it happens there, because people are looking at your paper, "What did you spell right there?" And

they think that you spelled it wrong. But that person doesn't know what you're saying in the story, and you know what it says, but you tell the person that sees it and they tell you it's spells wrong or something (Sophia, 10/14/14).

In this example, Sophia's LD experience was not only within her neurology or psychology, but involved others in the form of their comments regarding her ability and disability performance on literacy activities such as spelling. How she navigated them is telling of how she constructed her emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD. Interestingly, Sophia shared heartfelt instances when her LD became salient: (a) Sophia candidly asked for help with an academic task and (b) unsolicited offenses by her peers or interlocutors. These examples demonstrate the social construction of LD—where students such as Sophia indeed have learning needs but face a hostile social response due to their needs. These hostile social responses and comments constitute disability microaggressions that Sophia experienced. Sophia continued:

And it's the same thing in reading too, as well . . . Like if it comes to like I don't know how to spell this word then I ask my classmates and then their like, "You don't know how to spell that word," and am like, "No." And then they spell it out for me. . . . And then that's why I don't like asking people that question, like how to spell, cause it makes me feel that am *more dumb* . . . than them and I ask that the same thing to my brother, my younger brother, I ask him how to spell the word. He's like, "You don't know how to spell?!" and he is like and am like, "Yeah, I don't know how to spell it." And he

spells it for me and then he's like, "You need to learn how to spell." And I am like, "Sorry if I am too slow at reading, at like spelling things" (Sophia, 10/14/14).

In this example, Sophia re-enacted a disability microaggression she encountered with her peers and siblings. We can further see that the hegemony of smartness was also present and perhaps re-enforced through disability microaggressions for Sophia since she admitted here that it made her feel "more dumb." In addition, more represents an intensifier that increased the intensity of "dumb" for Sophia. Sophia's use of other intensifiers indexed the intensity of her experiences with disability microaggressions: really, too, and much. Specifically, Sophia's emotion-laden talk about disability microaggressions fell under three categories: *literacy* (e.g., social and emotional context of spelling; reading); *ablesm* (e.g., dumb; accused of having LD; and being mean (twice)); and *LD as problematic* (e.g., LD as sticky object, betrayal, and misrepresented).

From a master's narrative perspective regarding the social and emotional dimensions of LD Sophia's seeking of help could be interpreted as learned helplessness (e.g., Ayres, Cooley, & Dunn, 1990; Valås, 2001). However, from an interdisciplinary perspective, the term learned helplessness speaks to what Curt Darling-Marling (2004) has called the social construction of LD and how the idea of LD sustains the ideologies of individualism and meritocracy in schooling settings when students with LD such as Sophia ask for help. Interactions with non-disabled peers, therefore, reveal disability microaggressions that students like Sophia have to endure within an ablest culture of smartness. Furthermore, Sophia

was forced to defend her dignity and her abilities (“Yeah, I don’t know how to spell it.” (Shakes her head indicating she does not know how to spell it) . . . “Sorry if am *too* slow at reading, at like spelling things”) to the comments or disability microaggressions that her peers and siblings unconsciously created. Sophia used the intensifier *too* as a form of increased intensification regarding her reading speed, as opposed to only stating she was “slow at reading,” which would convey a more neutral or what Labov (1984) would term a “cognitive zero” intensification regarding her slowness.⁹

Sophia reflected on how their comments make her feel:

It feels **irritating** when they tell you that . . . Like if you, like if they ask you a question how to spell it, can they just . . . Just like spell it and that’s it, don’t leave like any comments . . . Like if it were my brother then I would ask him like how do you spell this and I wouldn’t, it would’ve feel *much* better if he wouldn’t ask a question, like leave comments . . . “Like why? (Frowns face—imitating brother’s confusion at her question of how to spell something). Like, “You don’t know how to spell that?” . . . Like being **mean** (Sophia, 10/14/14).

The beginnings of meta-talk seem to be emerging in this quote and suggest that Sophia was agentive against the disability microaggressions that she experienced at school and home. Sophia questioned why her brother and others needed to

⁹ Although difficult to define, Labov (1984) understood intensifiers through a gradient scale—where intensifiers not only increase in volume the feeling-meaning (Lemke, 2013) communicated by the speaker through the linguistic resources (e.g., grammar structures such as adverbs, and nouns) she or he uses, but can also qualify those in a decreasing way.

leave “comments” after she asked for help. This questioning was a form of resistance against the unjust “comments” that Sophia’s siblings left in the atmosphere—or what Brennan (2004) would call the affective atmosphere. The conflation of others’ negative perceptions and evaluations of Sophia became the social construction of LD and its emotionality, that is, the “subtle verbal insults directed at students with disabilities, often automatically or unconsciously; layered insults, based on one’s disability...and cumulative insults, which cause unnecessary stress to students with disabilities” (Dávila, 2011, p. 108-109).

Sophia continued to explain how she felt when others left unwanted comments:

Sometimes I don’t like reading with somebody because their like, “Ah!” (makes frustration gesture and lets out a burst of air to show how others respond to her while they read with her in their sign of frustration and rolls eyes) like this. You’re like reading, if am reading and I have a partner hearing, and am like I don’t know this word, and their like, “Ah!” (imitating her partner’s frustration and Sophia lets out a burst of air and rolls her eyes), like this so that’s why I’d rather read by myself . . . Well, it feels like I feel when I have a partner with me I feel, **nervous, nervous** and . . . I try to think to myself to try my best (Sophia, 10/14/14).

This example illustrates that Sophia also experienced disability microaggressions that were paralinguistic or non-verbal. These, like her verbal examples, occurred within interactional exchanges. Given that literacy is not something that occurs in isolation from others, interactional exchanges are key to joint meaning-making and one’s meaning-making with any text—be it a book, a cousin, or a teacher.

Unfortunately, Sophia seemed to have developed the negative attitude that she did not like to read with others due to the cumulative effects of the disability microaggressions she has had to navigate.

The disability microaggressions presented here were at the interactional and inter-personal level. Like racial microaggressions, the forms of disability microaggressions were both extreme (e.g., structural ableism such as segregation) and subtle (e.g., bullying due to ability differences); however, both left an affective effect on Sophia. Sophia indicated that she just wished her brother and peers would not “leave comments”—disability microaggressions—to express their opinions and perceptions about who they believed Sophia should be and how she should act. The residual effect of these so-called benign “comments” were insidious and reminiscent of McDermott et al.’s (2006) theorization of “rumors” related to students with LD operating in the culture of schooling. These “rumors” (e.g., siblings’ and peers’ comments), as evidenced in Sophia’s emotion-laden talk, hurt and are oppressive to the lived experiences of students with LD. Nevertheless, just as in dealing with disability microaggressions, Sophia was agentive in her meaning-making regarding being labeled with an LD.

Sophia’s Emotion-Laden Talk of the Idea of LD

Sophia’s emotion-laden talk of the idea of LD included LD as a double-edged sword and LDness as X. Sophia saw her LD as double-edged sword, that is, as both a positive thing in her academic life as well as a problematic and negative force. Also, Sophia understood “LDness as X,” that is, in various ways including LD as slow learner and as polymorphous. The former referred to her speed of

learning as “slow,” as she characterized herself as just being a bit slow. LDness as polymorphous meant that this condition had multiple faces: *LDness as a matter of fact, LDness as a special needs kid, LDness as a self-fulfilling prophecy, LDness as struggling in literacy, and LDness as alienation.*

LD as a double-edged sword. Sophia emotion-laden talk the idea of LD as a double-edged sword due to the positive and negative consequences of being labeled as such. How these positive and negative consequences manifested themselves in Sophia’s life involved the interaction between intrinsic (e.g., individual) and extrinsic (e.g., structural) factors (Shakespeare, 2006).

Disability is always an interaction between individual and structural factors. Rather than getting fixated on defining disability either as a deficit or structural disadvantage, a holistic understanding is required. The experience of a disabled person results from the relationship between factors intrinsic to the individual, and extrinsic factors arising from the wider context in which she finds herself. Among the intrinsic factors are issues such as: the nature and severity of her impairment, her own attitudes to it, personal qualities and abilities, and her personality. Among the contextual factors are: the attitudes and reactions of others, the extent to which the environment is enabling or disabling, and wider cultural, social and economic issues relevant to disability in that disability (Shakespeare, 2006, p. 55-56).

For Sophia, internal factors included self-talk or meta-talk (meta-cognitive and meta-affective talk) about being labeled LD. External factors included interactions

with siblings and classmates in and outside of school that were negative in nature. Lemke's (2013) term "meaning-feeling" characterizes Sophia's sense-making processes since it conceptualizes emotion as a form of meaning-making or vice versa. The internal and external ways in which Sophia made meaning-feeling (Lemke, 2013) of her LD and the emotions about LD as it related to being labeled were bidirectional and not in isolation from each other. Sophia's meaning-feeling processes about what it meant to be labeled with LD involved a tension between the promise of LD and the confusion and negative emotionality of LD emotions.

Understanding one's LD identity can be a double-edged sword since the language of LD is both straightforward but yet confusing. My interviews with Sophia were a chance for her and me to think about and dialogue together about the meaning of LD or learning disability. I included these in my interview questions, since meaning-making about the term or a narrative about it was part of the purpose of our time together. However, Sophia's confusion could be seen when reflecting on what it meant to be a student with LD. She candidly stated, "I don't know actually" (Sophia, 01/20/15). I was aware that often it's not common practice for an interviewer to directly ask participants about the phenomenon under study per se; however, engaging with the term I thought would be useful to think about the types of constructions she might already have about the idea of LD. Sophia's answer—"I don't know actually"—speaks to the neutral or spectrum of ideas that LD can and perhaps does mean for Sophia and students like herself. Unpacking binaries such as positive and negative aspects or the binary inherent in the metaphor of LD as a double-edged sword can lead to more nuanced understandings of the

ways in which structural identities such as LD are taken up or not in student's identity development and school lives and experiences.

Sophia and I continued to learn about how she understood her LD when she reflected on if she talked with anyone about her LD:

No, just like to my teachers. Like a lot of people feel **embarrassed** to say something that that they're not really good at it and they need more help in it and am that person that doesn't like saying to people that am really good at this or am not good at this, and they make you **feel bad** at it. And like you don't understand something or for say you're not really good at math or reading or something and it makes that person **feel bad**. Like if you say somebody that you trust and then they keep spreading the words and all that and they say something **bad** about you that isn't true but sometimes it makes you really **feel bad** (Sophia, 10/14/14).

Talking about LD, for Sophia, was related to school-based personnel and not peers or peer culture. Talking to teachers about it for Sophia was safe, but at the same time, something that she or someone labeled with LD needed to keep under her or his control or silenced. For Sophia, her LD identity was something that could perhaps be a topic of gossip or a threat due to other's perceptions and attitudes toward her because of her disability. Sophia spoke of not trusting others with the knowledge of her or one's ability differences due to the negative emotional impact of their response toward her. We see the vulnerability that speaking about one's LD identity had on Sophia.

Sophia used the intensifier *really* three times in the above emotion-laden talk and expressed the feeling **bad** three times and **embarrassed** once. *Really*, both times, and *more*, the once, was used in the context of ability differences (e.g., not *really* good at it and they need *more* help in it; *really* good at this or am not good as this) that, in turn, are emotion-laden. For example, before and after stating the intensifiers (i.e., *really* and *more*) Sophia prefaced her statement regarding one's ability differences by acknowledging the vulnerability that many people feel—embarrassed—of saying what one is *really* good at this and what they need *more* help in—due to the fact that they “make you **feel bad** at it.” Within Sophia's emotion-laden talk about the idea of LD the topics that emerged across the emotion implicative WHATs were *literacy* (e.g., math, struggling in learning) and *relationships* (e.g., betrayal, trust, rumors, help, and hurt) as they related to LD as a double-edged sword. The emotion-laden talk about LD as slow learner involved: *behavior* (e.g., getting into trouble); *self-ability describing* (e.g., being a slow learner); *(mis)communication* (e.g., being yelled at; communicating more sensitively; misunderstood). Lastly, the emotion-laden talk regarding LDness as X and LD as polymorphous included: *relationships* (e.g., rumors (twice); intolerance (twice); betrayal, and identity not under your control); *behavior* (e.g., getting into trouble by teacher); *ablesm* (e.g., stupid; dumb (four times)); and *thoughts* (e.g., thinking negative (four times); all or nothing thinking; and not thinking straight).

Nevertheless, amidst this vulnerability the meaning of being in special education and having the LD label for Sophia, she continued her line of thinking about LD or being in special education as a positive force to get extra help even

though issues of inequity relating to the quality of education within general education classrooms persisted:

Well for me, I think that special ed is something that you struggle . . . but when you go to special ed, the class thing, then you get *more* help, then what you usually do in the other classes, you don't get help sometimes (Sophia, 10/14/14).

Sophia pointed to the fact that the general education classroom was not responsive to her needs for help and that special education classes were. Sophia again did not deny the fact that students with LD and who go to special education classes have learning struggles but pointed to the structural issue of not getting help in the general education classes. Again, the bottom line for Sophia was getting help with her learning needs and learning. This is further evidence that for her, the idea of LD was connected to receiving services and allowing her teachers to realize that she might be struggling and in need of help with her academic and literacy work.

LDness as X. LD had more than one meaning, which included (a) LDness as slow learner and (b) LDness as polymorphous. LDness as slow learner represents how she was “just a bit slow” at doing thing such as learning tasks. Nevertheless, other conceptualizations emerged from her emotion-laden talk as well: LDness as a matter of fact, LDness as a special needs kid, LDness as a self-fulfilling prophecy, LDness as struggling in literacy, and LDness as alienation. Given the varied ways that Sophia framed LD I grouped the latter permutations as LDness as polymorphous. The suffix “-ness” to LDness here represents the quality and state of LD represented for Sophia.

LDness as slow learner qualifies the state of LD as a learner who learns slowly. Sophia expressed the following regarding what she thought the meaning of LD was for her:

Probably like **am slow** or something [inaudible] I don't know . . . That other kids can learn it really fast, like for say a math problem they can learn it really fast and if I have a learning disability, I can't learn it that fast, I have to learn it really slow (Sophia, 10/14/14).

Sophia here pointed to a classic theoretical perspective within the disability studies literature on the psycho-emotional dimensions of disability oppression or disablism: the self-concept of those with a disability is in direct relationship to those who are not. Sophia opened with associating herself or someone with the label LD as being slow at learning and then pointed to how other kids, not like her or those not labeled with LD, learn fast. Within Sophia's response, we can also see a thin membrane between LD and herself. That is, Sophia seemed to conflate herself and LD. This narrative merger speaks to how classification systems influence the self-constructions of those labeled as such. However, what counts as LD and how individuals such as Sophia make sense of LD and what it has to say about their sense of self is not a seamless process or a one-to-one correspondence. In other words, the homology of the field is not the paralogy of individuals per se. In addition, Sophia used the intensifier really three times, interestingly, in opposing ways to how other non-labeled peers learn verse how she learns—that is, other kids learn really fast and she learns really slow—and used the intensifier that when she stated that she “can't learn it that fast”—to her non-labeled peers, the latter of which

perpetuated the social hierarchy among those who are not disabled to those who are.

Sophia shared the following regarding when she struggled the most in learning, which revealed a situated story regarding her emotion-laden talk of the idea of LD:

I think the most is social studies . . . Cause you're doing history things and there's a lot of things you have to do. Like print cheat details and like if you have like, uh, like a paragraph that we need to read, when we have to put marks on it that we don't understand and what's like, um . . . like when it's like when it comes to something that is important to the story and you like then like you keep like you don't know which one to put cause . . . to put cause you don't understand the story cause there is a *little bit* like words that I don't understand . . . and there like long so I can't like pronounce it . . . ahhh, when it comes, when she tells, when she gives us a paragraph, a story of a paragraph, and then she reads it but she reads it *really* fast that I can't, like she can't stop, I can't like stop and think, like she goes *really* fast and then am like, what is this part, and then she (Shakes her head), I don't like saying anything to her cause she gets **mad** . . . and then, no, no (Shakes head) . . . I don't like getting in **trouble** by her (Sophia, 10/14/14).

Here Sophia recounted a time during social studies where she had a teacher who was not sensitive to her learning speed. Sophia understood her LDness as a slow learner since she realized her LDness when she experienced a non-accommodating environment by her teacher. Sophia did not necessarily deny having LD, but she,

again, juxtaposed an account of a social context that created a barrier to her academic success. Sophia's perception of her teacher reading "it *really* fast" and her not following along is an iconic characteristic of having LD—hence we can see that for Sophia, the idea of LD, involves master narratives of LD as well as her paralogy based on her lived experiences. Sophia used the intensifiers *really* twice to characterize her teacher's reading speed that she found unresponsive to her needs. Further, Sophia shared that she sensed the anger from her teacher in not wanting to make her "**mad**," which further marginalized and silenced Sophia from speaking up to such a negative emotional context between her teacher and herself.

This is indeed troubling, since Sophia expressed fear of getting in trouble with her teacher and not being able to speak up for her needs. Sophia explained how she felt about this:

Well, if she did understand that am a *little bit* **slow learner** then she would've understand and she would have take her time but I think she doesn't got the paper that am a *little bit* **slow learner** so if she knew that I am a **slow learner** and there [are] a bunch of kids in there that are **slow learners** [in] there, like a few of them that go to Ms. Michaels' class then she would've understand and she would have **read slow** . . . It makes me feel that that she doesn't . . . understand. Like she doesn't know, like my real actual thing that am a *really* **slow learner**, that I don't understand things and that I don't get it . . . First your like **upset** . . . And I think that's it (Sophia, 10/16/14).

Sophia stated that she and other students are **slow learners** six times within her response above. This is significant because it represents a solidification of the ways in which she understood her LDness as a slow learner, but also how she generalized other's LDness as "slow learners". Sophia invoked the homology of the field when she alluded to her Individualized Education Program (IEP) papers that are supposed to tell teachers about her official classification for them to make accommodations for special education students. How Sophia talked about her LD above is illustrative of real sociocultural educational contexts that she had to navigate amidst her abstract conceptualization of the idea of LD. For the first time, Sophia provided a nuance to LDness as a slow learner—to not understanding things as fast as others. Finally, Sophia expressed that she was **upset** at how her teacher was unaware of the fact that she and her classmates did not learn as fast as she was going. Sophia emphasized the fact that she was not only a slow learner, but that she was "a *really* slow learner" with her use of the intensifier *really*.

Within the context of recounting the first time that Sophia heard the label and in amidst another emotion-laden talk about a non-accommodating teacher regarding her LD needs, she remarked how her mother, Luciana, was an advocate for her. The following emotion-laden talk by Sophia illustrates how Luciana was an advocate for her siblings with special needs as well. In addition, Sophia shared her problems with oral comprehension and understanding that also undergird her LDness as a slow learner:

With my mom. Because she talks on the phone . . . where like if she has like important things to do with her, with us kids, and all that, so she's talking

on the phone. Like if she's talking about us in the phone like information that she needs, like . . . saying like what learning disabilities . . . then she talks about that, about me and how like if I, like if I, like if am *really* slow at reading . . . then she says it to the people she talking to with . . . [This] was a long time ago when I barely notice it, like I think I was like in third grade. [At home]. Sometimes she's talking to the teacher if they understand[s] in Spanish, then she says it to them, like . . . um if I have problems, something like that . . . So its *kinda* like so sometimes am *maybe* **scared** when a teacher tells me I don't understand, like she **yells** at me for no reason if I don't understand nothing then my mom goes talk to them so they can understand that I have that, like, learning disability, like I can't capture the words sometimes, like they have to repeat it like two or three times, so I can understand it, but that was like back then. And then . . . she goes to tell them, like talk about that and then, their like "oh, okay," The next time they're not going to do that, then next time they like try to be more, how do I say it, like more gently, more **sensitive** (Sophia, 10/16/14).

Sophia and her mother, Luciana, as I explained within the background and sociocultural context section above, had a good relationship concerning Sophia's education. Both were vocal regarding their needs as stakeholders of the educational system and Luciana was a positive example amidst the hegemony of smartness and disability microaggressions that Sophia needed to navigate to access quality education. Sophia pointed to the fact that since grade-school she and her mother asserted Sophia's educational needs related to what Sophia believed to be the main

problem for her regarding her LD: she was a slow learner and that she understood things, in contrast to her non-labeled peers, in a slower pace. Here we also see, however, that Sophia experienced negative emotionality with teachers. Sophia again recounted another time when a teacher scared her—this time a teacher **yelling** at her due to a perceived lack of understanding on Sophia’s part. Sophia admitted that she was scared, but interestingly used the intensifier, in a decreasing way, *kinda*, and stated “sometimes,” when she shared she was **scared** of her teacher. Nevertheless, Sophia expressed what I term *LDness as a matter of fact* in the above emotion-laden talk, in which LDness as a slow learner and one that does not necessarily understand quickly but needs others to explain to her multiple times in order for her to get it.

LDness as polymorphous. Within Sophia’s emotion-laden talk—we see traces, directly and indirectly, of each of the themes—LDness as X, LDness as a slow learner, LDness as polymorphous. LDness as polymorphous underscores this. The idea that Sophia’s understanding of LD is non-linear and not straightforward—it includes contradiction with LD as a double-edged sword and LDness as polymorphous representing the multifaceted nature of LD. How Sophia felt about her teacher **yelling** at her and her mother, Luciana, calling the teacher about it is a case in point:

It doesn’t make me feel anything, its cause she’s just reminding them that, or like . . . telling them that I have this, learning disability, so they can know . . . what am . . . capable of and what am not capable of, so its *kind of* like that, so they can get a hint at what am not *really* good at doing so *kind of*

like that...but what I don't like is when they tell people, so they keep it to themselves, like they don't like they don't tell like their classes, like their students or something . . . it's like more personal to you instead of like, cause I don't know if there's like some teachers that they do that like, they say, like if there not in the class and they're in the other class or something, and then they behind their backs they say things to the classes, like their students that they have, and then they talk about a certain girl that they know, that's **what I don't like** (Sophia, 10/16/14).

Sophia evoked, what I have termed *LDness as a matter of fact*. Interestingly, Sophia also did this when she recounted times that her LDness needed to be addressed by institutional agents, such as her teachers, but they failed to do so. Sophia continued to explain that the purpose of the label LD was to inform her teachers what she is good at and what she is not really good at doing in the hopes of them responding to her ability differences appropriately. Sophia continued to invoke her fears that her teachers would talk about her LDness behind her back when she was not in the general education classroom. Therefore, this is another example of the juxtaposition where *LDness as matter of fact* or LDness as non-problematic can become problematic if Sophia's teachers, peers and siblings gossiped about it. The excerpt above is illustrative of LDness as polymorphous due to the quick way LDness goes from non-problematic signifier to problematic signifier due to its social construction and the emotions that emerge from the latter.

Sophia shared her idea of LD, specifically, in the following response about if LD made a difference on how she saw herself: "*Kind of* . . . cause . . . I see myself

different because like I said am not, like I struggle learning things *really* fast, so I prefer slow, and then other people learn it *really* fast, *kind of*" (Sophia, 10/16/14). Sophia's initial response reified that she was different due to her understanding of LDness as a slow learner; however, as she continued to reflect, she rationalized that being different was the norm since there were probably other kids and people who struggled to learn and had a learning disability just like her. Sophia sandwiched her uncertainty regarding how she felt different through the minimizer intensifier *kind of* and used the positive intensifiers *really* within her emotion-laden talk as it related to being different due to the idea of LD. Further, Sophia spoke to the isolation or alienation she felt in regards to this group of other students or people with LD:

There's this other thing, it [LD] doesn't make me feel different because a lot of people struggle, too . . . like a lot of people are different how they dress and how they wore things, but like more like when they show all things, people are . . . different what they learn but their kind of the same cause you're like struggling this part and their struggling, too. You don't know that but they can see it in themselves, they can see it in themselves that they are struggling, but they don't tell you like cause they, how do I say it, like their know when their struggling and like a lot of people know that they're struggling but, it's *kinda* like the same thing cause, its *kind of* like, you're not alone, like a lot of people . . . are struggling, too, but you're not alone like certain people around the world, you don't even know that their struggling right now, and they're struggling and you don't know that and you think you're the only person (Sophia, 10/16/14).

Sophia alluded to the dilemma of difference (Artiles, 1998) as it relates to a common sociological dilemma between difference, sameness, and stigma (Ainlay, Becker, & Coleman, 1986): we see Sophia attempted to rationalize her sameness regarding her difference, but at the same time, she acknowledged the stigma attached to her difference, LD, and her struggles in learning. Her narrative also spoke to the isolation and alienation that one feels when one believes they are alone and the only one struggling. Sophia in situ realized that she was not the only one with an LD or who was struggling, but that struggling was okay and that being labeled with an LD because you learn slower was okay and not the end of the world. However, in making such an argument Sophia was aware of those negative stereotypes that circulate within schooling and society about ability and disability differences. Further, she indirectly pointed to the negative emotionality and association that LD and her learning struggles engendered:

Well some people think they're **not smart** or their **not intelligent**, but they're not the only ones their like a lot of people around the world that struggle in this particular part, but it doesn't mean that everybody struggles in that part. *Kind of* like your own, its *kind of* like your thing, you struggle in one thing, but the other person doesn't but some people are different . . . when they struggle things but you don't know if the person is struggling or not but you can like, they can figure it out that they are struggling. And then sometimes like, a lot of people think that their **dumb, stupid**, sometimes and they don't think positive, instead of thinking the good way, instead of saying that a lot of people think that their **dumb** and their not, their *really*

good at reading something and they're good at, their good at something, but their not good at this, *kind of* and they don't think . . . that, *kind of* around the world there's like a lot of people that struggle in this particular part. You don't know if somebody is labeled with a learning disability, you don't know that, cause you never been around the world and asked people are you if your with a Learning Disability but, but in yourself you know that you have, are a Learning Disability person that doesn't figure out things *really* fast, but you're not the only one who has that label thing, cause their Learning Disabilities, you don't know in Pinole like say if there is only two people with a Learning Disability but you *really* don't know, cause there is a bunch of people who are, but they don't, cause you hardly see them (Sophia, 10/16/14).

Besides connecting LD and her struggles and those like her with the negative emotionality of thinking of one's self as **stupid** and **dumb**, Sophia illuminates for us the sense of alienation that she and others like her often fall into through negative thinking about themselves. Research has shown that the mindsets that students develop within a competitive schooling context affects their motivation and performance (e.g., Paunesku et al., 2015). Above, Sophia highlighted this sense of alienation, or *LDness as alienation*, but also a unique perspective: that students like herself who are labeled LD understand their struggles and the idea of LD as something to hide and be ashamed of as a part of themselves. Above, Sophia used the intensifier *kind of* four times and *really* three times as she underscored her points

about her own and other's ability differences that are both unique to the individual but universal to human experience. Sophia continued on this topic:

It makes me feel that I understand myself that am not the only one who has that, like there's a bunch of kids in this school that have a learning disability, but you don't know them, the only thing is that you know that they have this learning disability, but you don't know them. Like if you we're to go to a bunch of schools that have, that thing, a learning disability, you would know, "Oh, you're not the only one who has a learning disability," like a bunch of people (Sophia, 10/16/14).

Even though this might have been the first time over an extended amount of time that she had the opportunity to sit and dialogue about it, Sophia was keenly aware of what is true and what is false regarding her academic identity as a student in special education and having been diagnosed with LD. Unfortunately, in school and society students like Sophia need to navigate negative stereotypes about students in special education. This negative emotionality and thoughts contribute to *LDness as alienation*. Nevertheless, we can see that Sophia was agentive through self-talk or what I term self-narrativization about the idea of LD and also being labeled as such. Sophia's emotion-laden talk cannot be neatly packaged into the emerging themes and we see residues of many of the themes presented above. This overlapping of themes within her emotion-laden talk about LD is precisely what also characterizes the theme *LDness as polymorphous*.

Sophia, below, illustrated that the notion of LD per se was not bad, but perhaps it was the way we think and perceive it when we think negatively about ourselves that can be insidiously problematic:

There's nothing **bad** about it, there's really not, there's nothing **bad** about it, its just like just a *little bit* slow at learning some things, it doesn't mean that you're **dumb** . . . If you think positive that you can do it, then you believe in yourself, like you're not thinking too much of yourself that you're **dumb** like, you're thinking negative, you're thinking negative instead of positive . . . to be more positive, instead of being negative all the time saying that you're the only person who doesn't know how to read or something but you're not the only one there's like a bunch of people who has that, you just don't know. **You don't think straight** . . . you think that you're the only one person, but theirs like a bunch of people who has that, but you're just not the only one there's like a bunch of people but you just don't notice but you think, you just think to yourself that you're **dumb**, instead of thinking that there's a bunch of people who has that, that's what that's what lets people down, that **they don't think straight**, or they don't think positive, that everybody, like mostly everybody or half, the people has that, and you don't know . . . It makes me feel that am not the only one (Sophia, 10/14/14).

Sophia again acknowledged that the idea of LD associated with negative emotionality, but akin to the theme, LD as a double-edged sword, we see that for her LD is not necessarily a “bad” thing. Given that LDness as X includes LDness as a slow learner and LDness as polymorphous, for Sophia, being a slow learner

was what she preferred. However, different from what? What seems to be undergirding this complacency by Sophia, unfortunately, is the hegemony of the “average child” and “normal child”. Students within the educational system, directly or officially through labeling and classification systems are compared to one another, and indirectly or unofficially, children and students do the comparing on the playground or the classroom. Ironically, the former is institutionally sanctioned, while the latter is institutionally unsanctioned.

CHAPTER 5

DANIEL MARTINEZ: THE TRINITY OF LD, ON BEING BULLIED AND LANGUAGE

Daniel Martinez: “Reading . . . I don’t like to be called learning disability . . . I like to be called like the struggles in reading . . . A learning disability sounds like if you’re a kid that was born with a genetic disease or disorder. . . Probably it is cause like Spanish is way different than English, the vowels, constants how they go, the sight words, like that . . . Cause am like new to English and . . . I don’t really see [students] whose first language was English have like a learning disability, but I think um you can be born . . . like I don’t know like, their brain doesn’t really work in a certain way. I don’t know, that’s what I think” (Daniel, 2/16/15).

Within this second findings chapter, I present Daniel Martinez’s emotion-laden talk in three sections below: background and home and school sociocultural contexts, about being labeled with LD and finally, about the idea of LD.

Daniel’s Background and Sociocultural Home and School Contexts

Daniel and I met one late afternoon at Nodding Elementary School in the fall of 2014 after being introduced by Ms. Michaels, Daniel’s resource teacher. Ms. Michaels was excited for Daniel to be in my study; she considered Daniel to be a “superstar”—both in academics and on the soccer field for the Nodding Elementary School’s seventh and eighth grade soccer team. When talking with Ms. Michaels about the possibility of Daniel being in my study, she immediately shared that Daniel had a brother in seventh grade, Oscar, who also played on the Nodding Elementary School soccer team. Ms. Michaels and Ms. Reeve, a language arts teacher, regularly attended Daniel’s soccer games. Ms. Michaels proudly shared about Daniel’s proficient soccer and math skills. On several occasions, I attended

Daniel's soccer games and witnessed his effortless skills, embodied on the field as he glided as the midfielder in both defense and offense.

Daniel was 14 years old and bilingual in Spanish and English. He spoke Spanish at home with his parents and felt "comfortable [speaking Spanish] cause my parents know [how to speak it]" (Daniel, 9/18/14). Daniel also shared that he felt comfortable speaking Spanish inside and outside the classroom with his friends. However, Daniel used Spanish for social purposes at school and not for academics (Daniel, 9/27/14). His use of Spanish was not restricted to peers, but also adults, since Nodding Elementary School served a predominately Spanish-speaking community and had school staff members, such as the vice principal, Mrs. Luz, and teachers, who spoke Spanish. Nevertheless, restrictive language policies such as English-only laws in Arizona and other states with predominately Spanish speaking communities such as California and Massachusetts (Artiles, Klingner, Sullivan, & Fierros, 2010) have historically limited the language learning opportunities for English Language Learners (ELLs) in educational contexts. From a critical perspective, Daniel's insight into his use of Spanish only during recess and not during academic tasks (Daniel, 9/27/14), is not a reflection on him as much as it is a reflection of the policies and practices at the state and school level. In other words, although there has historically been a bilingual program at Nodding Elementary School, Daniel's educational experiences have not generally included his home language as a resource (For a comprehensive review of restrictive language policies and ELLs see Gándara & Hopkins, 2010).

Daniel's ethnicity as Mexican-American and his first language, Spanish, was salient to how he conceptualized the relationship between learning disabilities and his language use of Spanish. Similarly, a small but growing body of work by critical scholars in special education and the field of LD has begun to theorize the relationship between ELLs and LD (See Klingner, & Artiles, 2006). This budding literature seeks to not conflate language difference with an LD by pointing to the ways in which second language acquisition is separate from an LD, while acknowledging that multiple manifestations of the former may appear like those of the latter. Daniel thought in both Spanish and English (Daniel, 2/11/15).

Daniel was born in Pinole, a southwestern major urban city, to Mia and Mateo Martinez. Daniel was the third of four children; his oldest brother was in the twelfth grade and another sibling graduated from high school in 2012. Daniel had beautiful, thick black hair, usually faded cut with his sideburns shaved in a thin V-shape. Daniel always carried a smile on his face that would light up a room, but he would use it wisely—when centered and attentive in conversation, his eyes would widen and his face would become serious. Daniel shared that he lived in “a good neighborhood,” Daniel, 9/18/14). He shared his neighborhood was not violent, “Everybody gets along. There's no violence or people like shooting or doing drive-bys” (Daniel, 9/18/14). As a representative of his community, Daniel pushed back against the dominant deficit and circulating narratives about People and Communities of Color in the larger society being “violent” and “criminals” (e.g., DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Yosso, 2005).

Daniel similarly resisted deficit-oriented ideologies about People of Color when I asked him about his ethnicity: Mexican-American. Initially, Daniel said he hardly thought about being Mexican-American, but then shared the following when he did think about it: “To not make Mexicans look bad, cause they want to deport them back to Mexico, yeah, I don’t know” (Daniel, 11/5/14). When Daniel shared this, I immediately empathized with him. As a young child, I also wanted to represent the Latina/o community in a positive light due to the negative stereotypes circulating in society. Further, Daniel was not only aware of his ethnic self and the ways in which society perceives his ethnic group, but he was motivated to fight and resist those stereotypes in society just like the deficit ideologies about his neighborhood.

Daniel’s family and home context. Daniel and his parents lived about five minutes from Nodding Elementary School. I was warmly greeted by Mia and then Mateo. Mia asked me what the study was about, and I told her, in Spanish:

Original statement	Translation
<p>Que tenía que ver con la recopilación de las voces de los Latina/os estudiantes con discapacidades de aprendizaje acerca de ser etiquetado con dificultades de aprendizaje y de su comprensión de la idea de LD.</p>	<p>That it had to do with gathering the voices of Latina/o students with learning disabilities about being labeled with LD and about their understanding of the idea of LD.</p>

Mateo later asked me how this would benefit Daniel. I explained that although this study would not help him regarding traditional metrics such as Daniel's grades, it was a time for him to talk about his feelings and emotions about having a diagnosis of LD and being placed in special education. I was cognizant of my language, considering how traditional special education language has been shown to alienate historically marginalized parents and families from equitable access to the specialized discourse of special education (See Harry, 1992). At the same time, I felt it was important to provide accurate and accessible language to the meaning of technical language such as defining a "learning disability."

I only interviewed Mia due to Mateo's busy work schedule and volunteer work at the local church where the family, including Daniel, attended.

Nevertheless, Daniel shared the following regarding his father's education, which I empathized with, since my father also attended only primary school ("Like in Mexico . . . My dad only had like a sixth-grade education . . . Cause he used to like live at the ranch and there was an English school there and he went there until he was like 15 years old" (Daniel, 11/5/14)). Furthermore, I interviewed Mia once for approximately 80 minutes; she dropped out of the study due to multiple jobs and work shifts. Mia Martinez was a 42-year-old Mexican-born who emigrated with Mateo from a southern Mexico at the age of 18 to the US without any children:

Original statement	Translation
“Vine porque me casé con mi esposo y me trajo aquí”	“I came because I got married with my husband and he brought me here” (Mia, 2/25/15).

Mia self-identified as Hispanic and middle class:

Original statement	Translation
Pues, media, se puede decir, media, ni soy pobre ni soy rica, soy gente medio . . . Pues si porque no no no somos personas de, mi familia no somos de mucho dinero pues apenas estamos pasandola para vivir, no no nos falta, pero también no tenemos en abundancia.	Well, middle, you can say, middle, am not poor nor rich, I am of a people who is middle . . . Well yes because no no no we’re persons of, my family is not of a lot of money, we are barely passing it to live, we don’t lack, but we also don’t have in abundance (Mia, 2/25/15).

Similarly, Daniel’s background and sociocultural contexts included mediating aspects of social identity markers such as middle class.

Mia shared the following about Daniel’s and his siblings’ language practices at home:

Original statement	Translation
Español . . . por mi y mi esposo, mis hijos hablan inglés y español, pero yo y mi esposo puro español . . . Yo entiendo poquito inglés pero mi idioma, usted me ve hablando, pues es español.	Spanish . . . for me and my husband, my children speak English and Spanish, but my husband only Spanish . . . I understand English a little bit but my language, you see me talking, well it's Spanish (Mia, 2/25/15).

Although Mia did not consider herself bilingual she explained Daniel's use of Spanish and English at home the following way:

Original statement	Translation
Cuando habla con nosotros [i.e., con ella y su marido] . . . no se porque no porque con nosotros hablamos puro español entonces el siempre habla español con nosotros . . . Con sus hermanos pues habla ya casi puro inglés.	When he speaks with us [i.e., with her and her husband] . . . am not sure why not because we only speak Spanish then he always speaks Spanish with us . . . With his brothers, well, he speaks mostly English (Mia, 2/25/15).

Daniel watched TV both in Spanish and English, while she only watches it in Spanish. According to Mia, Daniel and his siblings spoke English the majority of the time.

Original statement	Translation
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<p>Porque es mas fácil para ellos porque desde chiquitos lo van aprendiendo en la escuela . . . entonces como lo saben más bien escribir y a leer y todo yo digo entonces para ellos son más fácil el inglés.</p>	<p>Because it's easier for them since they were very little they have been learning it at school . . . since they know how to write it very well and read it and everything I say then for them it's easier the English (Mia, 2/25/15).</p>
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Language practices of students and their speech communities (Gumperz, 1968) other than English are not benign and neutral. Unfortunately, there has been a historical divide between culture and LD (Artiles et al., 2011), and historically, students with disabilities and especially English Language Learners with and without disabilities, literacy and language practices have been marked as different from the *white cognitively-psychologically-abled-bodied, heterosexual and middle class norms* embedded within common sense assumptions and ideologies circulating in schools (Apple, 2004; Brantlinger, 1997; Dudley-Marling & Dippo, 1995). In fact, I would use the term *abled-cognitively-psychologically-emotionally-bodied*.

When discussing his background and the sociocultural contexts in which he lived, Daniel used a total of 25 *emotion implicative* WHATs (e.g., LD diagnosis (4 times), language, ethnic identity, safe neighborhood, etc.), nine *intensifiers* (e.g., *sort of* (4), *great* (2), etc.), five emotions (e.g., happy (2), not happy, fear and pride), four *feelings* (e.g., good, sense of urgency, boredom, and comfortable) and one

paralinguistic (e.g., very soft voice) manifestation of emotion (see Table 9 for list of manifestations of emotion for Daniel’s emotion-laden talk for the background and sociocultural contexts). Turning briefly to Daniels’ mother, her perspective adds another layer of contextualization for Daniel’s case.

Table 9
Manifestations of Emotion in Daniel’s Emotion-Laden Talk for Background and Sociocultural Contexts

Background and Sociocultural Contexts	Emotion Implicative WHATs (25)	Intensifiers (9)	Emotions (5)	Feelings (4)	Paralinguis-tic (1)
	LD Diagnosis (4)	Sort of – (4)	Happy (2)	Good	Very soft voice
	Special education placement (4)	Great (2)	Not Happy	Sense of urgency	
	Language	A little bit	Fear	Boredom	
	Neighborhood	Good	Pride	Comfortable	
	Harmonious relationship	More +			
	Ethnic identity				
	Safe Neighborhood				
	Shooting				
	Drive-bys				
	Representing				

community and ethnic group
To not make his community look bad
Deportatio- n
Parent education Friends
Reading— least favorite subject
Sense of urgency
Grades
Help
Human

Mia's beliefs about Daniel's and her own LD. Mia believed she had a learning disability:

Original statement	Translation
Pues yo digo que tenía y tengo porque ahorita mismo que estoy en clase cuando, cuando nos dictan así la tarea que hablan pues yo capto pero no capto	Well, I say then and now because now right now that I am in class when, when they dictate the homework that they say well I capture it but not capture it all,

<p>todo, entonces se hace a mí muy difícil a poder aprender todo lo que dijo el maestro, lo que dicto una tarea, yo yo le dije, “¿Me puede repetir otra vez lo que dijo?” Porque entonces para mí se me hace difícil de una sola vez.”</p>	<p>then it’s difficult for me to learn all of what the teacher says, the homework that he dictated, I I say to him, “Can you repeat again what you said?” Because well for me it’s difficult on the first try (Mia, 2/25/15).</p>
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Mia attended adult school, and considering her busy full-time work schedule, her attendance was an indicator of the value she placed on education. Further, Mia described Daniel’s LD in similar ways as her own—problems in understanding instructions and capturing what the teacher says or teaches and the need to write everything down:

Original statement	Translation
<p>¿Aplicando a la mía o aplicando a la de Daniel? . . . Pues a mayor sí, soy lenta para aprender . . . pues cuando iba a la escuela a que que los dicte el maestro la trajera, mmhm, será por lo que soy lenta para escribir, no escribiría mucho, pues él habla y yo voy escribiendo no alcanzava a escribir todo, entonces, y luego nos preguntaba, “¿De qué hablamos?” y a veces y a veces, no no</p>	<p>Applying it to mine or applying it to Daniel’s? . . . Well perhaps yes, am slow at learning . . . well when I went to school and the teacher dictated to us the homework, mmmhm, maybe it’s because am slow at writing, I didn’t write a lot, well he talked and I would write I didn’t reach to write everything, then, and later he would ask us, “What did we talk about? and</p>

<p>podía explicarle porque era muy rápido que hablaba y y no podía, mi mente no alcanzaba grabar todo lo que decía porque iba muy rapido . . . Pues eso entender entender a capturer pues cuando me dictan una tarea cuando no puedo hacerla por ser si yo trato de hacerla sola muchas veces no puedo no la completo, no la termino, porque no no puedo, porque más que trato de pensar que que que pongo no puedo poner nada entonces, para mí es una discapacidad, discapacidad que que no pueda terminar mi trabajo . . . Bueno también yo digo que ahorita en este en este nivel de el que esta en la escuela pues yo también lo describir así como yo le dije de mi que a veces el maestro le dicta tanta tarea que él trata de de de de querer [captar todo] pero porlo mismo no alcanza, a mejor es la forma de que yo lo escribiera.</p>	<p>sometimes, and sometimes, I could not explain it to him because it was too fast how he talked and and I couldn't, my mind could not reach to record everything that he said because it was too fast . . . Well to understand understand to capture well when they dictate a homework when I don't know how to do it by myself and I try to do it by myself sometimes I can't I don't complete it I don't finish it because I I can't because the more I try to think what what what I can put I can't put anything then, for me this is a disability, disability that I can't finish my work . . . Well, also I would say that right now in this grade he is at in school well I would also describe it like I did for me that sometimes the teacher dictates some amount of homework to him and he tries to to to to capture it all but the same he can't</p>
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	reach [to capture it all], this is the way I would describe it (Mia, 2/25/15).
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It is important to take a cultural-historical development perspective regarding the nature of LD when comparing the ways in which parents view their child’s LD characteristics or their etiologies. While Daniel’s mom described in detail how she understood his LD such as (a) difficulty with capturing everything that is communicated to him while getting instructions in class from a teacher:

Original statement	Translation
Pues es que no puede aprender especialmente cuando son preguntas como que el no no puede entender que que significan	Well it’s that he can’t learn especially when when they are questions that that he can’t understand what what they mean (Mia, 2/25/15).

and (b) how to independently do and remember to do his work:

Original statement	Translation
Cuando, cuando esta cuando esta escribando pues, dece, “Son palabras muy grande,” como que a el se el asen palabras muy dificil para poderlas explicar.	When when he is writing, well, he says, “The words are too big,” like for him they are too difficult to explain them (Mia, 2/25/15)

Nevertheless, from a disability studies in education (DSE) perspective (Connor, 2013) Mia’s assumptions about her own and Daniel’s LD reify that LD is a) an individual and neurological phenomenon and that b) learning is based on a student’s merit and consists of information processing (Dudley-Marling, 2004). In contrast, Daniel understood it in abstract ways, such as providing single word descriptors that he has been told about his LD.

Mia’s perspectives regarding her community: *Disrupting stereotypes.*

Similar to Daniel, Mia described their neighborhood in a positive light. Mia stated the neighborhood was very quiet and that she had very good neighbors:

Original statement	Translation
<p><i>Muy</i> tranquilo . . . tengo <i>muy</i> buenos vecinos aquí . . . pues no más que es <i>muy</i> tranquilo.</p>	<p><i>Very</i> quiet . . . I have <i>very</i> good neighbors here . . . no just that it is <i>very</i> quiet” (<i>my emphasis</i>) (Mia, 2/25/15).</p>

Here we see the intensifier ***muy (very)*** used twice when describing her neighborhood climate and neighbors which shows the emphasis that Mia put on depicting her neighborhood in a positive light. I interpreted this, as once again, connecting to the deficit ideologies about communities of Color, especially in relation to state politics as it relates to immigrant communities. This was a way both Mia and Daniel resisted these deficit oriented narratives (Tefera, Gonzalez, & Artiles, 2015) imposed on their community.

Daniel's multidimensional identities and literacies. I came to know Daniel as a determined, observant, quiet but energetic young person whose eyes captured you. For example, what motivated Daniel to go to school was his social peer relationships (“The students that attend this school . . . cause they’re great kids and great friends . . . we get along” (Daniel, 9/18/14)). Daniel wanted to be an “an engineer or a soccer player, professional,” not surprisingly, considering strong math and soccer skills (Daniel, 2/15/15). From a New Literacy Studies (NLS) perspective that takes literacy beyond the psycholinguistic apparatus of people’s neurology but situates it in social practices that people *do* and contribute to in their production of culture, (Gee, 2000; Hull & Schultz, 2001; Street, 1997) I see that Daniel was involved in multiple activity systems (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). Daniel was also a video game player, enjoying “racing, shooting, strategies, and puzzles, like chess, on the computer” (Daniel, 2/16/15). How do we in the field of special education and LD reconcile the classification and labeling of students as LD or with reading and writing disabilities when students such as Daniel participate in multiple literacy practices such as soccer? (e.g., Artiles, 2015; Gonzalez, 2015).

Within traditional metrics of “school success” like assessment tests (e.g., standardized test scores in reading, writing and math), and from Daniel’s perspective, he enjoyed “Math . . . cause am just good at it” (Daniel, 9/18/14). Nevertheless, Daniel explained that reading was “*sort of*” his least favorite subject in school “cause (very soft voice) sometimes I don’t understand it, and I just get

bored of reading it, reading books or something” (Daniel, 9/18/14). Daniel explained his struggles:

Reading . . . *sort of* . . . cause meeting the expectations or something I don’t get it a *little bit* . . . some of the text . . . It makes me **feel a sense of urgency** to like get my, to like, yeah . . . understanding the text or to get my grade up . . . **happy** but not as **happy** (Daniel, 9/18/14).

Daniel explained that his struggles originated from his teacher’s expectations, text difficulty, and emotionality. His response points to the motivation and sense of urgency to get his grades up; nevertheless, he experienced mixed feelings since, on the one hand he was **unhappy** that he had these issues but **happy** at the same time since he had the sense of urgency to get his grades up in reading. Grades for Daniel were a motivator and gave him a sense of confidence in school. For example, Daniel stated: “Grades . . . cause I put in work to like get those grades up or have good grades” (Daniel, 9/18/14). Daniel was doing well in all his classes at the time of our interviews and was on track to graduate from middle school, which he did in the Spring of 2015.

Daniel’s school context. Culturally and historically, Daniel was enveloped within a community at Nodding Elementary School that was doing everything it could to support his transition from middle-school to high-school. Daniel received free math tutoring after school with his science teacher, Ms. Street, to prepare for the math portion of an entrance exam to a local private high school. Although Daniel was eventually not chosen for the school, Nodding’s efforts toward preparing him to succeed and win admission was a testament to the

sense of community and motivation to help Daniel succeed academically. What has supported Daniel has been his relationship with his teachers at Nodding Elementary School, and Daniel's recognition of his teacher's role in his transition to high school reaffirms Daniel's response that teachers gave him confidence in school ("Teachers," Daniel, 9/18/14). An outcome and a process influencing the integrated nature of the different components of the trinity of LD for Daniel was motivation.

Daniel's current LD classification. During the time of the study, Daniel was in a unique situation in regards to his LD classification. Daniel's special education multidisciplinary team for his Individual Education Program (IEP) led by the school psychologist, Ms. June, were determining if he would stay in special education and be considered as having LD. Daniel played a central role in this process, self-determining his future within special education as a participant on the IEP team: "I said that I want it but I do want it, sometimes but *sort of* . . . For I can get *extra* accommodations" (Daniel, 11/6/14). Daniel shared that several of his teachers—Ms. Michaels (his resource teacher) and Ms. December (the social studies teacher)—were also part of the multidisciplinary team and attended the IEP meeting. Daniel did not know what his mom thought about keeping him within special education or not or having the label LD ("I don't know . . . mmhm, naw I don't remember," Daniel, 11/6/14). Ms. December believed that Daniel should not be in special education anymore. Daniel stated Ms. December's perspective the following way: "That I shouldn't, that I should try not having the resources, special education" (Daniel, 11/6/14). Nevertheless, Ms. Michaels,

believed that Daniel “still need it” (Daniel, 11/6/14). Finally, Ms. Walnut thought that he should still have it also. When I asked Daniel what he felt about what they said, he commented: “**Good, happy, *sort of***. I, cause they still think that I still need *more* help” (Daniel, 11/6/14).

The competing perspectives about staying in special education and having the LD label for accommodation and modification purposes highlight the success of the big d Discourse of special education deliberative process for Daniel, but at the same time, bring up the subjective nature of high-incidence disability categories such as LD, especially for historically marginalized groups such as African-Americans and Latina/os. Absent from this “culture of referral” (Harry & Klingner, 2006) were considerations of the sociological aspects of being labeled with an LD and being in special education and the identity implications for students such as Daniel—that may include questions such as: to be LD or not LD? Harry and Klingner (2006) defined a “culture of referral” the following way:

By culture of referral we mean the attitude and beliefs of children who were not doing well in the general-education program, as well as beliefs about special education. Important beliefs included how quickly teachers and administrators assumed that low performance or behavioral difficulty were indicators of “something else” at work, whether these children were seen as “belonging” in general education, whether special education was seen as the solution either to the children’s difficulties or the classroom teacher’s frustrations, and whether special education placement was considered an appropriate response to external pressures resulting from

high-stakes testing. Although in all schools there were individual teachers whose referral patterns were either much higher or much lower than the average among their colleagues, each school faculty tended to show its own patterns of referral rates. Our observations and interviews revealed that administrators' beliefs and policies were greater determinants of these patterns than were the characteristics of the children themselves (p. 95).

What are the self-identity implications of institutional and administrative decisions of such liminal moments in the educational life-course of students, like Daniel, due to being labeled LD? Harry and Klingner (2006) and others Artiles' (2015) Blanchett (2006, 2010), Connor (2013), Ferri (2000), Patton (1998) seek a humanizing discourse about students with disabilities; especially those students of color with disabilities. During my interview conversations with Daniel about his multiple identities and markers of difference such as ethnicity, gender, and disability and the meanings of these constructs, we also talked about his other activities such as playing soccer, being a friend, a son and much more than group traits can index about his evolving self. One major insight that Daniel stated as I asked him to describe himself was that he was "human" since "everyone does these activities or similar to that" (Daniel, 2/16/15). Although I agree with Daniel that most human beings do those types of activities—regardless of race, class, gender, immigration status, language, and disability—we must not fall prey to simplistic "we are all human beings" (Morales, 1998, p. 79) arguments. Akin to the social construction of any category, there are real material consequences due to race, there are real material consequences of dis/ability labeling. Erevelles

(2011) rhetorically asked: “how does one theorize the disabled body as if it exists outside of the specific historical conditions that constitute its material reality?” (p. 12).

Daniels’ case reifies important human rights and dignity issues related to the big d Discourse of special education and general education. In his own words, Daniels’ background was above all “human” (Daniel, 2/16/15). Aurora Levins Morales’ (1998) refers to the nature of childhood in a related way:

Childhood is the one political condition, the one disenfranchised group through which all people pass. The one constituency of the oppressed in which all surviving members eventually stop being members and have the option of becoming administrators of the same conditions for new members . . . The oppression of children is the wheel that keeps all other oppression turning. Without it, misery would have to be imposed afresh on each new generation, instead of being passed down like a heritage of disease. Children enter the world full of expectation and hope. They are not jaded. They are not cynical or resigned. They are clearly what custom has made invisible to us, and are outraged by all injustices, no matter how small. It is through the agency of former children that the revolutionary potential of each generation of children is held in check (p. 51).

Morales alluded to the insights that anthropologist Ray McDermott, Goldman and Varenne (2006) argued about the cultural work of learning disabilities: 1) *culture against children and children against their culture*—that is, the values of the American educational system, and in our case the big d Discourse of general

education and special education, are highly structured to diagnosis, sort and label certain “kinds of minds” and actions in certain ways. Some of these ways include “LD” but others are “gifted,” “emotionally disturbed,” “at risk,” and even “ELL,” among others. This labeling and sorting of children within the American educational system that is taken as normal and common sense constitutes the American educational “culture against children.” By “children against their culture” children participate in reproducing an American educational culture that is based on competition and what McDermott et al. (2006) call “the survival-of-the-show-off-smartest logic” (p. 12). Similar to the hegemony of smartness, the hegemonic ideologies within the big d Discourse of schooling and special education are not benign social forces that students must navigate and make sense of. Daniel’s background and ethnographic contexts frame his emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD and about the idea of LD and illuminate the complexities and nuances of LD on the ground when a critical, situated and interdisciplinary perspective is taken into account.

Daniel’s Emotion-Laden Talk about Being Labeled with LD and the Idea of LD

Daniel’s emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD included the following two themes: *on the trinity of LD: help + teachers + literacy troubles* and *on being bullied*. Daniel’s emotion-laden talk related to the idea of LD were: 1) *the meaning of LD as resource, trouble with information processing, speech, and silence* and 2) *the salience of the intersection of disability, ethnicity and language and other markers of difference*. Across both emotion-laden talk

regarding being labeled with LD and his understanding of the idea of LD, there were 53 emotion implicative WHATs, 26 *intensifiers*, 15 *emotions*, 13 *feelings*, and 3 *paralinguistic* manifestations of emotion.

On the trinity of LD: *Help + Teachers + Literacy Troubles*. The first way Daniel conceptualized being labeled with LD was through the trinity of LD: help + teachers + experiencing literacy troubles. Each element did not exist in a vacuum, but rather, they were interrelated, especially if we consider them as aspects of the big d Discourse of schooling and special education. Each aspect of the trinity of LD manifested themselves within Daniel’s experiences and emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD. Within this metaphor, one aspect of the trinity could not exist without the other two—the trinity of LD was integrated.

By help, Daniel meant that being labeled LD afforded him accommodations such as extra time on tests and assignments. This is indeed an iconic artifact of the big d Discourse of special education. For example, Daniel reflected about how his label of LD impacts him in a positive way: “Am not *really* sure, it helps me to ask the teachers to get *extra* time on stuff, like, on assignments or projects” (Daniel, 2/16/15). Further, Daniel’s initial associations about the term LD also revealed that being labeled with LD was about “being in need of help”: “That needs help in a certain subject . . . People need help on certain subjects” (Daniel, 9/27/14). Interestingly, Daniel also situated it within an academic subject (reading). which undergirds the label of being LD as part of the educational context.

Daniel shared the following reflection about his classroom struggles, an emotion-laden talk about asking for help and the emotion implicative WHAT nature

of help in his daily school life: “Well, sad and happy at the same time . . . cause am asking [for help] if I don’t understand it and I feel sad cause I don’t understand it” (Daniel, 11/4/14). Here, Daniel reflected not only on the existence of one emotion or feeling related to his learning struggles and help but about several, often opposing or contradictory ones: “**Sad** and **happy** at the same time” (Daniel, 11/4/14). Daniel was happy because he was asking for help, but at the same time he was sad since he did not understand how to do the problem or academic skill by himself. This contradiction, I argue, also indicates a sign of frustration due to non-understanding.

Daniel experienced help in the context of reading and writing and his primary strategy for learning or getting unstuck consisted of asking for help from his teacher. In discussing his language arts class, for example, Daniel shared feelings of frustration when reading the novel of Frankenstein (“I feel **frustrated**” (Daniel, 11/4/14)). Daniel explained:

The teacher, um, telling me what does a word I don’t understand. It makes the whole sentence confusing. Tells me what it means . . . Try to re-read it and go over it again . . . It helps, like, it helps because I can understand a little bit more if I read it (Daniel, 11/4/14).

Getting help from teachers with his reading and writing for Daniel seemed to be set in motion from the first time he heard the label LD and was told he was going to be in special education. His teacher told him that he was going to be with his special education resource teacher, Ms. Michaels, in order to receive more help (“That I was going to be with her for more help” (Daniel, 11/4/14). Similarly, Daniel shared

that the meaning of being in special education was that someone needs more help (D: “It means that I need more help in a certain subject” (Daniel, 11/4/14)).

This conceptualization of being labeled with LD as help was also evident in Daniel’s resistance of dominant stereotypes about students with LD and being in special education. For example, Daniel reflected about the meanings of LD from everything that he had been told about LD from his school personnel: “It’s not just for people that are **dumb**, it’s just for people that need *extra* help” (Daniel, 2/16/15). This insight to the meaning of being labeled with LD and being in special education not only related to the rational-utilitarian aspect of receiving the label LD for service purposes, but also spoke to the psycho-social-emotional dimensions of disability oppression and stigmatization that Daniel and others needed to navigate both internally and externally. **Dumb**, like smartness, I argue, is a emotion implicative WHAT (Prior, 2016). To be considered **dumb** is emotion laden and negatively affects one’s self-narrativization and one’s understanding about being classified as LD and part of a stigmatized institution such as special education. Dumb not only signifies an invalidation of one’s ability or intelligence but a dehumanization of the self as less-than. It could be argued that Daniel’s remark—“It’s not just for people that are **dumb**”—almost reproduced the stereotype about students and people with disabilities and students in special education as being “dumb” or the cultural-historical master narrative of the “feble-minded.”

In discussing the meaning of disability in general, and more specifically, Daniel also shared the theme of help as it related to his literacy troubles. When I asked him what comes to mind if I say the word disability, he said: “Mmmhm,

someone needs more time, or like extra help on stuff on anything” (Daniel, 2/16/15). Daniel continued: “Extra help on something . . . school stuff like reading. Writing” (Daniel, 2/16/15) and “When I need help on something” (Daniel, 2/16/15). Further, this idea of getting more help was evident in Daniel’s beliefs about students in general being labeled with LD because, in his words, “they are going to receive more help” (Daniel, 11/4/14). Daniel understood his LD as well as the labeling of children with LD and being in special education through the lens of help, that is, helping students like him with reading, writing, and other academic subjects and skills. Furthermore, like Sophia, Daniel was articulate regarding how the label LD was something that benefits not only him, but others labeled as such, evidence of an “LD consciousness” and related to the welfare of others like themselves and their group identity as students with LD.

Due to Daniel’s upcoming transition to high school, the IEP multidisciplinary team also conveyed the message that Daniel should stay labeled as having LD and being in special education in case he needed the extra help. Daniel stated it the following way—“Cause they still think that I still need more help”—when I asked him why they believed that he still needed to be in special education. I argue that the ways in which Daniel experienced being labeled LD and being in special education also influenced his perceptions and views about what he would tell teachers to do to help students like himself: “To focus on the kids who have LD, like every time to make sure to ask them questions. Every time they go over a lesson and to ask the kids with LD questions, so they can see if they answer them right or wrong, if they need help” (Daniel, 11/5/14). When I positioned Daniel as

an expert to teach teachers about how to help students with disabilities, he spoke to the rational-utilitarian function of being labeled with LD—in this case within the context of the classroom. Nevertheless, from a critical perspective, Daniel might be reinforcing a binary regarding teaching and learning where knowledge is not socially constructed (Ladson-Billings, 2009) where discreet absolutes of “right or wrong” answers position students in need of help. Nevertheless, Daniel continued on what he would say to teachers: “To help them one-on-one” (Daniel, 11/5/14). As Daniel shared this insight. I agreed with him that this indeed was the hallmark of special education.

This call by Daniel for teachers to help students with LD was also self-evident within his talk and emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD. For example, within the context of reading and writing or literacy struggles what helped Daniel was the assistance or help that teachers provided to him. Daniel shared that Ms. Michaels, his special education resource teacher, helped him “by going over the sounds of the letters” (Daniel, 11/5/14). I informed him that that was called phonics and further probed if it helped him, and he confirmed that it did (“Sounds out the word . . . (Nods yes)”) (Daniel, 11/5/14). Daniel also shared about his literacy practices and dispositions, what Sterponi (2007) would call his reading habitus. Although Daniel situated the activity of reading within himself, Sterponi (2007) reminded us that:

Reading is no longer viewed as merely a psycholinguistic phenomenon. While decoding and comprehension, and their underlying neurological mechanisms, remain central topics of reading research, the socio-cultural

nature of reading has also become a central focus of inquiry. Reading is a situated activity. As such, it can best be approached as a range of historically contingent, ideologically grounded, and culturally organized practices (Sterponi, 2007, p. 1).

Daniel, unfortunately, was exposed to a narrow view of literacy as phonemic-awareness and psycholinguistic-neurologically based, the latter of which is highly decontextualized and lacks culturally relevant epistemological, ontological and axiological paradigms that may be responsive to students with LD and, in particular, students' of color with LD multidimensional identities and funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Sterponi (2007) defined reading and a reading habitus the following way:

Thus, learning to read is not only a matter of acquiring a set of cognitive skills afforded by neurophysiological maturation; it is also a wider process of literacy socialization through which children acquire a reading habitus (Bourdieu, 1977, 1996; Bourdieu & Chartier, 1985). Reading curricula and pedagogy propose normative definitions of involvement with text (Heap, 1991). Certain kinds of reading are authorized and promoted, while others tend to be neglected or even intentionally excluded (Sterponi, 2007, p. 2).

Daniel's literacy struggles were not only emotionally negative, they included his reading habitus as it related to being motivated or not to read and, in his words, liking "to be in a quiet place" and reading word by word in order to read ("I have to do like be like in a quiet place" (Daniel, 11/5/14)). For example, Daniel shared: "Like when I read, if it's not something interesting, I just get tired of reading it"

(Daniel, 11/5/14). Daniel continued: “I just stop reading it . . . because I don’t understand it” (Daniel, 11/5/14). The following illuminates Daniel’s reading habitus:

Alone [and] anywhere [but] in a quiet place . . . I can’t focus my, my ah, get into the book, I just hear the other people talking . . . Not so good, cause am just reading, like not understanding what am reading . . . I get **bored** already . . . You’re just reading, but you’re like not understanding . . . stop, and like start tomorrow (Daniel, 11/5/14).

Daniel’s reading habitus involved emotionality due to not understanding the text, and consequently, boredom.

Daniel named teachers and motivation as factors that helped him succeed in school (Daniel, 11/6/14). Daniel explained that “teachers help me understand, something I don’t understand” such as “lessons that they go over” (Daniel, 11/6/14). Daniel mentioned that his current teachers were motivating him to go to a good high school: “Motivate me, motivate me to go to a good high school” (Daniel, 11/6/14). On the other hand, Daniel also shared what did not help him succeed in school: “The teacher just going over the lesson and she doesn’t explain anything” (Daniel, 11/6/14), a classic phenomenon that is discouraged among teachers of students with LD. Daniel shared what he did in such cases: “Ask my classmates, if a teacher doesn’t know, if a teacher explains it to me and I still don’t understand it, sometimes I ask my classmates about it, and they explain it better” (Daniel, 11/6/14). While Daniel sometimes asked his classmates to explain a lesson or a topic, he preferred help from the teacher: “Mostly the teacher . . . cause I think

they can explain it better” (Daniel, 11/6/14). Learning for Daniel, therefore, was about understanding. Daniel’s interactions with his peers and teachers—mostly his teachers—seemed to come from a motivation to understand. His interaction with texts also stemmed from a relationship between motivation and teachers as mediating understanding. Further, Daniel was interested in writing only if it interested him (“When I have to write about a certain subject that interests me” (Daniel, 2/15/15)). Daniel shared the following emotion-laden talk about what goes through his mind when he writes: “What am I going to put next . . . mmmh, worried . . . cause I don’t what choice [to make] would [go with] what word would make a better sentence” (Daniel, 2/15/15). Further, in reflecting on his worries about his writing, Daniel shared, “re-reading it, if it makes sense and if it is right then I keep on writing” (Daniel, 2/15/15).

In addition to reading about subjects that interest him, Daniel liked to read in “silence like no distractions, people talking around me” (Daniel, 2/15/15). Further, in reflecting on what reading and writing helps him accomplish in general, Daniel shared: “My homework . . . read the books that I have to read . . . write the essays that I have to write . . . communicate” (Daniel, 2/15/15). Grades also motivated him: “To do my best and get good grades” (Daniel, 2/15/15), including in Ms. McDonald’s general education language arts class: “To get a good grade for participating. To get a good grade for participation” (Daniel, 2/15/15). Overall, Daniel conceptualized participation not only individually, but interpersonally. This is noteworthy since the professional social and emotional master narratives of LD, which situate learning within the child, might interpret many of the previous

quotations about his literacy practices and reading habitus as iconic medical ways of understanding LD and the following reflection by Daniel as an “intrinsic deficit”:
“Nothing. Only if I get chosen, then I have to do it. When I need to read out loud to my class” (Daniel, 2/15/15).

In juxtaposing how medicalized versus sociocultural lenses of dis/ability provide two different realities to students’ behavior and the purpose and function of schooling, learning and teaching Connor (2013) stated:

Concepts of dis/ability: A medicalized lens: The primary understanding is that dis/ability is a deficit that exists within an individual, and it is therefore something to “cure, accommodate, or endure.” It is fixed, permanent, “owned” by the person. **A sociocultural lens:** Dis/ability lies in the interaction between student characteristics and the context. It is relative to the dynamics enacted.

The purpose of schools: A medicalized lens: schooling is about the mastery of skills and strategies, for example, in reading, writing, and mathematics. Literacy is about deciphering a text. **A sociocultural lens:** Schooling is about the acquisition of discourses, for example, ways of talking and acting associated with a group, such as the class, and non-home ways of talking, thinking, strategizing, knowing about knowing, how to do school and academics “right” and why, and so on. Literacy is about deciphering, and participation in, social practices (p. 500).

If we put on the medical lens or what I refer to as the master narratives of LD perspective, Daniel’s emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD seem to be

iconic medicalized ways of conceptualizing dis/ability and the purpose of literacy. Nevertheless, from a situated perspective, where learning is not individual but social we can see that his relationship with his teachers index a sociocultural lens of learning. From a master narrative perspective of LD regarding the academic and social and emotional dimensions of LD Daniel's depiction of being motivated by his teachers and not necessarily by himself would be interpreted as lacking an internal "locus of control" perhaps being at "risk" for "learned helplessness." Hallahan, Kauffman, and Pullen (2009) explained locus of control and learned helplessness as they relate to the relationship between LD, motivation, feelings and interrelationships in the following way:

Another source of problems for many people with learning disabilities is their motivation, or feelings about their abilities to deal with many of life's challenges and problems. People with learning disabilities may appear content to let events happen without attempting to control or influence them. These individuals have what is referred to as an external, rather than an internal, locus of control. . . . People with this outlook sometimes display learned helplessness: a tendency to give up and expect the worst because they think that no matter how hard they try, they will fail. . . . A vicious cycle develops: The student learns to expect failure in any new situation on the basis of past experience. This expectancy of failure, or learned helplessness, might then cause the student to give up too easily when faced with a difficult or complicated task. As a result, not only does the student fail to learn new skills; she ore he also has another bad experience,

reinforcing feelings of helplessness and even worthlessness—and so the cycle goes (Hallahan et al., 2009, p. 202).

On the one hand, if read from a medical lens perspective, Hallahan et al.'s (2009) explanation is reminiscent of how I am conceptualizing Daniel's emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD: *On the trinity of LD: help + teachers + literacy troubles*. Daniel believed he was labeled with LD and was in special education sometimes because he did not understand or had difficulty with reading and writing and was in need of help while participating in traditional literacy practices within the big d Discourse of schooling. Nevertheless, help was not isolated from who offered or from whom he elicited the help. Hence, since Daniel had literacy troubles, he elicited help from his teachers, alluding to the social interactions that resulted from the trinity of LD. How all stakeholders of the educational system interpret these predicaments matter. That is why it is important to have pluralistic epistemological, ontological and axiological paradigms (Connor et al., 2011) about students' with LD experiences and to not forget that they are social and cultural, contextualized in nature and not decontextualized from cultural-historical activity systems and social milieus.

On being bullied. In his emotion-laden talk Daniel shared experiences of bullying due to being labeled with LD, which were due in part to the ideological and social construction of LD constituting “LD emotions.” Over the past several decades bullying has become a national health risk problem among children, youth and young adults in the US (American Educational Research Association, 2013).

Bullying can be understood as a “form of harassment and violence” (American Educational Research Association, 2013, p. 1). The *Task Force* explained:

Bullying is a highly varied form of aggression where there is systematic use and abuse of power. Bullying can include physical aggression such as hitting and shoving, and verbal aggression, such as name-calling (Espelage, Rose, & Polanin, 2015; Vaillancourt et al., 2008). It can also include social or relational forms of bullying in which a victim is excluded by peers or subjected to humiliation. Bullying can occur face-to-face or through digital media such as text messages, social media, and websites. There are mild, moderate, and severe levels of bullying (American Educational Research Association, 2013, p. 5).

I adopt the above characterization of bullying in this study and also add that bullying can originate in the subject position of being labeled with LD within the big d Discourses and special education.

Daniel’s experiences with bullying were connected to dominant structural ideologies in the American educational system, with its obsession with labeling, classification, and fixing their “intrinsic deficits” and with its “the survival-of-the-show-off-smartest logic” (McDermott et al., 2006) that is a species of both individualism and meritocracy (Dudley-Marling, 2004). Daniel recounted specific instances of peers enacting bullying and verbal aggression such as name-calling, invalidation, and humiliation, akin to the false and oppressive violence of Whiteness (Leonardo, 2009), which is both individual and institutional (Bell, 1992; Blanchett, 2006). These instances are products of the hegemony of labeling and

segregation practices and policies within the big d Discourse of special education, and squarely situated within the history of special education (See Danforth, Taff, & Ferguson, 2006). Kenway and Youdell (2011) stated the following about the role of emotion in education:

Education is almost always positioned as rational – as a social and epistemological endeavor, as an abstract process, as a set of reasoned and logical practices, and as a series of formal spaces the production and use of which is as ‘uncontaminated’ by emotion as possible. Emotion is not formally part of education, its philosophical underpinnings, its policy and curriculum imperatives or, often, even its day-to-day enactments. In the latter case, when emotion is allowed in, it is understood through the filter of educational psychology. This occurs, for instance, in the form of psychologically underpinned discourses of proper, or more often improper, student development. Here we find diagnoses and designations of the maladjusted student, the out of control student, the aberrant student, the student with ‘social, emotional or behavioral difficulties or disturbances’ (Harwood, 2006). These diagnoses and designations serve to identify, sort and sift the ‘abnormal’, emotional student from the ‘normal’, rational student (Youdell, 2006). This sorting and sifting in turn underpins the separating off of these abject, feeling bodies into separate spaces in which they might be contained and their ‘contamination’ of the normal student and normal educational spaces might be avoided (Kenway & Youdell, 2011, p. 132).

Kenway and Youdell (2011) reminds us of the hegemonic relationship between education and emotionality. This relationship enveloped Daniel's emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD. In other words, the common sense assumptions about LD, emotionality and the social construction of LD within educational contexts that has resulted in bullying for Daniel was the ideological apparatus (Althusser, 1971) at work in his experiences.

For example, during one of my initial interviews with Daniel, the vice principal¹⁰, Mrs. Luz, noted how staff members at Nodding Elementary School worked very hard to curtail verbal name-calling after Daniel described his LD the following way:

Reading . . . I don't like to be called learning disability . . . I like to be called like the struggles in reading . . . A learning disability sounds like if you're a kid that was born with a genetic disease or disorder (Daniel, 9/27/14).

Daniel stated it made him feel "sad because like comparing you and that kid that has a genetic disorder" (Daniel, 9/27/14). Daniel here directly addressed how the language and label of LD made him feel. The damaged imagery (Scott, 1997) encoded in the label and nomenclature of "learning disability" did not originate within Daniel or students like him. Mrs. Luz sensed this and it was my understanding that as a representative of Nodding Elementary School she wanted to assure Daniel that this type of "institutionalized bullying" or institutionalized or structural ableism (Linton, 1998) would not be tolerated. Interestingly, Mrs. Luz,

¹⁰ Mrs. Luz was present in the interview room because it was school policy that I could not be alone with the participants during the school day while I was interviewing them.

spoke not only to the school policy against verbal aggression towards students with disabilities like Daniel but also provides insight into her perspectives of him as an academic student through the story of her son who had LD:

I just wanted to, I heard the part about the disability, and so my son has a learning disability, SLD, and his was in reading. And he needed more time to process and so you know the advantage to that, having an IEP, is that when he went to college he utilized that, like, *“Hey, [I]’m an IEP! And I need some more time in my testing.”* So then he became to take it to his advantage; there’s a resource center there to *help* students with IEPs and provide you extra resources services and they even pay someone in the class to be a note taker and then he gets the notes, and he’s not good at handwriting, very good and he writes really really small, so somebody writes for him, he takes it to the, and that way he could listen, you know and he takes it to the library and then puts it under this little machine and it read for him. And you could just put your ear phones and it just reads the lesson he has to reinforce those skills. He comes home and he types and...then he says “Mom, am sure glad I have an IEP! Because I get extra time for testing and for and for I be successful” because the main goal is that you know, he always thought “Oh am never going to go to college, or am not going to do good how am I going to be able to get the same education like everyone else, perform well?” But you know you have you have different strengths, and I saw you in geometry today. And you’re in geometry, you’re really advanced in math. Just work on those skills and he’s a lot like you. He could

build stuff, put stuff together, he's mind is mathematical but he still needs, you know he's always kind of struggled in reading and language arts so so as long as you have a tutor, you have somebody to help you, and utilizing that at the college level but when he was in junior high, he would say, "Mom! I don't like to go to that resource class, mom its embarrassing, all the kids see you go there and they say that's the "Special Kids," and um and so I went to the principal. And I said "You know you need to, I don't want to hear the terms—"Special Needs" or labels around other kids, I don't want our children to feel, like its a disadvantage and feel less than, so we're very cautious with that, teachers are now being trained, you know over the years to not make it, its confidential and also we don't want anybody to feel less, than and we don't want students not to utilize their IEP (Mrs. Luz, 9/27/14).

Although Mrs. Luz attempted to make Daniel feel better and stressed the rational-utilitarian reason for being labeled LD (to receive help and free tutoring), Daniel's emotion-laden talk about conceptualizing his LD (See *on the trinity of LD* section) was perhaps influenced by Mrs. Luz's common-sense presentation of the matter. From a narrative perspective, the ways in which we understand ourselves are not isolated from the narratives available to us in our sociocultural milieus (e.g., Tefera, Gonzalez, & Artiles, 2015; Wortham, 2006). Mrs. Luz invoked her authority as a mother with a son with an LD and as a representative of Nodding Elementary School who was doing everything she could to create a safe school climate. On the other hand, from a student voice perspective, Mrs. Luz's response could be a counter-narrative to the ways in which Daniel really felt about the label LD and

invalidated his experiences on the ground with LD of bullying. Nevertheless, the ways in which Daniel experienced and conceptualized his labeling of LD and being in special education—the good and the ugly—needs to be taken into account.

Moving beyond the binaries inherent in the system of special education and general education is an important progressive step forward to creating a more humane big d Discourse of American education. Daniel continued:

It's **good** and **bad** . . . Probably kids are going to be picking on them and *keep telling them* they have a learning disability . . . You go to **dumb** kid's class. You go to a class with **dumb** kids . . . **Sad** . . . Because the other people *are making fun of the kids with learning disabilities* . . . Cause they say that, "That's the **dumb** class" (shakes head indicating no) I don't believe them" (Daniel, 11/4/14).

Although Daniel was speaking hypothetically, he was aware of these societal messages regarding students with LD. Ideologically negative messages about who students with LD are, what is the significance of LD, and being segregated in special education (e.g., "That's the dumb class") represent the verbal aggressions that occur in interactions with peers, but they are also directly and indirectly institutionalized in schooling policies and practices.

This form of institutional bullying arises since the cultural arrangements of schools create a culture where students rank each other based on ability and disability, impacting students' psycho-social-emotional well-being. For example, Daniel shared the following emotion-laden talk about how he was verbally spoken to for being labeled with LD and his ability differences:

They be like, “Oh, you don’t know how to read this word? Or sometimes they saying comments about it . . . Like I can’t read a certain word, as them, they be like, “You can’t read [that] easy word,” but to me it’s sort of difficult (Daniel, 11/4/14).

Daniel continued: “Bad, a little bit . . . but that just motivates me to like learn more words than them” (Daniel, 11/4/14). Although Daniel resisted imposed value judgments about his ability difference, and on the one hand, refused to allow those verbal aggressions to self-define him, the ideology of “the survival-of-the-show-off-smartest logic” crept into his self-narrativization. Considering Daniel’s focus on learning “more words than them,” one can argue that the accumulation of his own literacy socialization and reading habitus was focused on what NLS scholar Brain Street (1984) would call the autonomous model of literacy. Where literacy is not about the social practices and the ideologies of a group and more expansive views of literacy, but about the psycho-linguistic and discrete understandings of literacy that are reductionist and positivist in nature (e.g., learning of phonics, decontextualized, etc.) (See Connor, 2013; Connor & Valle, 2015).

The emotion-laden talk presented in the theme *on being bullied* due to being labeled with LD add to Daniel’s storyline and represent part of Daniel’s narrativization within the big d Discourse of general education and special education (Gee, 2001). Both discourses are discourses of power (Runswick-Cole & Hodge, 2009). The exercise of being bullied also motivated Daniel to be better. However, these responses were not “neutral” or “objectively” Daniel’s per se. As Foucault emphasized that power is both oppressive and productive (Gannon &

Davis, 2012)— like language and emotion (Ahearn, 2001; Benesch, 2012) both afford agency and limit it—I argue that the artifacts of the discourses of general education and general education or the American educational system as a whole afford and constrain. Just like master narratives afford and constrain the local interpretation strategies and agency constellations, the language used by the students who bullied Daniel adhered to the ideology of “the survival-of-the-show-off-smartest logic.”

Both themes—*on being bullied* and *on the trinity of LD: help + teachers + literacy troubles*—occurred in the same context—Nodding Elementary School—and revealed that Daniel experienced both positive and negative emotionality. For example, the emotions of sad, happy, frustration and boredom were expressed within his emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD. Daniel also experienced emotions such as sadness and happiness at the same time (“Well, sad and happy at the same time . . . cause am asking [for help] if I don’t understand it and I feel sad cause I don’t understand it” (Daniel, 11/4/14). Lastly, Daniel’s emotion-laden talk included emotion implicative WHATs such as “dumb,” “help” (the act of asking and receiving help) and being bullied through responses and comments from peers that were hostile and counted as verbal aggressions against Daniel’s self that I argue he had to reconcile with his self-narrativization within the big d Discourse of both general and special education, both internally and externally.

Daniel’s Emotion-Laden Talk of the Idea of LD

On the meaning of LD: *as resource, trouble with information processing, speech & silence.* Daniel understood the idea of LD in four unique, but related,

ways. These four ways were also tied to how Daniel made meaning-feeling of being labeled with LD and being in special education. I term these four ways as: *On the meaning of LD: as resource, trouble with information processing, speech, and silence.*

Daniel understood his LD as first and foremost as a resource. However, the ways in which he made meaning-feeling about the idea of LD were sociocultural in nature. For example, in the context of Daniel's IEP classification and transition meeting, the reason why he eventually stayed as a student labeled with LD and in special education was because the school psychologist, Ms. June, and Ms. Michaels, the special education resource teacher, still believed he needed the resources. Daniel shared that Ms. Michaels said "that I still need it" (Daniel, 11/6/14). However, as I mentioned above, not all of the multidisciplinary team members believed Daniel still needed to be in special education. For example, Ms. December, his social studies teacher, said the following, according to Daniel: "That I shouldn't, that I should try not having the resources, special education" (Daniel, 11/6/14).

Daniel made sense of the idea of LD in his own life as resource when he shared how he felt about LD: "Good . . . I have made a lot of progress . . . I don't need to go to resource as much as I used to do" (Daniel, 11/6/14). Further, Daniel described his LD in one word he replied: "Resource . . . [because it's] something I need help . . . something you need help in" (Daniel, 11/6/14). Daniel felt "good" regarding this description (Daniel, 11/6/14). Daniel operationalized and experienced his *LD as resource* as a positive notion in his interactions with his

teachers and when enacting his identity as a student with LD at Nodding Elementary School.

Socially and interpersonally *LD as resource* was evident as Daniel walked to his special education resource room. Specifically, Daniel's LD became salient with his friends:

“During class . . . when am going to, oh, when I used to go to the um **resource**, they be asking me, “where was I going,” and I said, “**resource**” . . . last year” (Daniel, 11/6/14).

Here Daniel illustrated that he used the word, “resource,” as code for his special education resource room. However, I argue that this example, along with the others above, defined for Daniel the idea of *LD as resource*. Daniel shared that the first time he heard the label LD was in the second grade (Daniel, 11/6/14) He remembered on the first day of school, Ms. Snow, the second/third grade special education resource teacher, who is still at Nodding Elementary School, was Daniel's teacher and “she read me instructions, whatever we were going to do in there . . . Nouns and verbs” (Daniel, 11/6/14). Ms. Snow worked with the five students in the class as a group and individually, including Daniel, and they were also expected to work collectively and individually (Daniel, 11/6/14). The curriculum and instruction focused on a limited view of literacy as discreet skills and decoding of words that fails to engage students in higher order thinking skills. Daniel's idea of LD as a resource positioned him as in need of basic and narrow views of literacy resources—reifying that LD existed within him.

Like *LD as resource*, *LD as trouble with information processing* did not exist in isolation from Daniel's sociocultural milieu and past cultural-historical practices within the big d Discourse of special education.

The students with the learning disability should get more time on stuff. Like on projects that are due on a certain day, they should get like a week more, probably *a little bit* less or more . . . Cause um some kids with a learning disability don't **process information** [*my emphasis*] like other kids (Daniel, 11/4/14).

Here, Daniel pointed to an iconic characteristic of LD: information-processing. Hallahan et al. (2005) defined information-processing the following way:

We generally refer to pervasive disabilities in cognition as mental retardation. Individuals with learning disabilities have adequate cognitive skills in most areas but difficulty with specific cognitive tasks, such as deploying their attention or processing specific types of information. Cognition includes a wide variety of information-processing skills, including perception, attention, memory, comprehension, and guidance of one's own thinking (see Conte, 1991; Swanson & Conney, 1991; Taylor, 1997; Wong, 1991). One or more of these processes (e.g., attention) may be impaired across all types of academic tasks, leaving the individual with inadequate task-approach skills even though the other cognitive processes are intact. Alternatively, an individual may have difficulty processing information only in a particular area, such as a poor ability to remember

words or word sounds even though memory for other information is unimpaired (p.77).

Connor (2013)—among others such as Ferri and Gregg (1998) and Gallagher, Heshusius, Iano, and Skrtic (2004)—have troubled the paradigmatic ways in which special education conceptualizations have constructed ability and disability. For example, Hallahan et al. (2005) represented the notion of information-processing skills and deficits as decontextualized without taking into account any theory of change, personhood, culture (Rogoff, 2003), neurodiversity (Mooney & Cole, 2000; Mooney, 2007), or any issues of power and privilege (Johnson, 2001) that is part of any discourse (Gee, 2011) especially within the field of education (Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998). In addition, Hallahan et al. (2005), above, purely situated information-processing within the brain of students without taking into account how all information is sociocultural in nature. For example, Meacham (2000) wrote about the relationships between information processing, skills development, and cultural diversity, noting that from a NLS perspective, all are inherently related and one cannot exist without the others:

Studies that combine skill development and social insight (Ball, 1995; Foster, 1995; Gutierrez et al., 1999; Smitherman, 1994) demonstrate the manner in which students form connections between abstract knowledge and their local conditions as a means of addressing vital issues and concerns. Gallimore and Thrap (1990) suggested that this brings abstract concepts to life as they speak beyond singular information boundaries. Literacy in these studies is used to break from and subsequently transform the singular intent

of skill development into opportunities for the exploration of culturally and personally significant social issues, functioning again as a connection point between the two concerns (Meacham, 2000, p. 201).

The influence of the scientific language of the big d Discourse of special education on Daniel's understanding of the idea of LD was self-evident with his use of terms such as *resource* and *information-processing*. The common-sense language and conceptualizations of the orthodoxy of special education (Connor, 2013; Connor & Valle, 2015; Gallagher et al., 2004; Heshusius, 1989) was present in his emotion-laden talk:

Cause I didn't like process information as well as other students . . . Sad a little . . . because like sorta wasn't able to do what the other kids would do, but now I feel happy about it, because now like there like, there be like, "You get extra time on tests, what? I wish I could do that!" (Daniel, 2/15/15).

The complex, contradictory and multi-layered aspects of Daniel's emotion-laden talk about the idea of LD and his experiences regarding the idea of LD within schooling practices are illustrative of the socializing power of schooling intuitions (e.g., Illich, 1971) on the self-narrativization of students. David expressed opposing feelings—**sad** and **happy**—about his view of the fact that he processes information "not as well as other students" (Daniel, 2/15/15). This comparison I interpret as a species of the psycho-social and emotional aspects of disability oppression (Thomas, 1999), rather than something that was inherently problematic with Daniel per se (e.g., low self-esteem).

A third way that Daniel understood his LD was as “speech.” Like Sophia, Daniel was labeled with a Speech and Language Impairment (SLI). I did not interview Daniel about his SLI label, only his LD label. Nevertheless, he might have shared answers to my questions that had to do with his experiences with the special education program at his school that indeed might have been for his SLI label versus his LD and vice versa. However, it is not common practice for special educators to be as explicit with their interactions with students regarding each category and their delivery of services. In fact, classification, assessment and delivery of services or practice often times exist in isolation from one another and certainly do not take into account the intersectionality of disability categories that students might experience beyond for bureaucratic purposes of the school no less than for the healthy youth identity development of students regarding disability. For example, Gill (1997) conceptualized four types of integration in disability identity development: (1) coming to feel we belong, (2) coming home, (3) coming together, and (4) coming out. A limitation of this work is, however, that it did not take into account the role of culture in human development (Rogoff, 2003) and relied on a stage by stage development of identity.

At the time of my interviewing Daniel, he had progressed academically, including with his speech. For example, Daniel was not going to resource class anymore or to speech therapy. Daniel shared that his speech therapist told him to work on his speech (“Speech . . . I need to work on my speech more” (Daniel, 11/5/14)). Nevertheless, although Daniel’s school personnel told him to work on his speech, his teachers and school personnel worked with him on his reading and

writing. For example, Ms. Michaels helped him “by going over the sounds of the letters” and Daniel said he used the skills of phonics “every time I read” to help him both “sound out the word” and understand (Daniel, 11/5/14). These interactions with his teachers informed and shaped how Daniel understood the idea of LD, directly and indirectly. Hence the discourse teachers and multidisciplinary team members have with students, directly and indirectly, shapes the ways in which they make meaning-feeling (Lemke, 2013) about the idea of LD and, I would argue, how they see themselves in relation to the idea of LD. Daniel’s dialogue with his teachers and the multidisciplinary team not only reified linear notions of literacy, but were a window to the expectations, or lack there of, that Daniel was exposed to.

The last way in which Daniel made sense of the idea of LD was a non-example: *silence*. By the theme of *silence*, I mean that others did not discuss the idea of LD with Daniel, and therefore, the meaning of LD was a discourse of *silence*. Our interview time was the longest time that anyone ever just sat and talked about the meaning of LD and gave Daniel the opportunity to ask any questions he might have had about it. Daniel explained no one ever explained to him what LD meant: “Nothing . . . mmm, I don’t think so (shakes his head indicating no) . . . I don’t remember . . . They never told me anything” (Daniel, 11/5/14) (Daniel, 11/5/14).

Daniel’s emotion-laden talk regarding the silence about his LD is reminiscent of Freire’s (2000) notion of the “culture of silence.” Other critical scholars have illuminated this “culture of silence” as it related to how the system of

special education has labeled, described, and characterized students with LD, but has failed to allow the perspectives and voices of students—that is, the paralogy—of students to develop since there is no continuous dialogue about the nature of LD with those labeled as such (Connor, 2008). Gibson (2006) wrote about the culture of silence in the context of ‘voice as discourse’ in educational settings:

Contemporary research into ‘voice as discourse’ alerts one to the continuing presence of barriers in education settings. With reference to the ‘voice’ of those labeled with ‘Special Educational Needs’ and/or ‘Disability’, [. . .] these barriers are the effects of an unconscious commitment to aspects of modernism leading to distortions in understandings. The effect of these distortions is not only that the voices of the ‘disabled’ and other oppressed groups cannot find expression, but that all inhabitants of the institution, including staff and non-disabled peers, are victims of a ‘Culture of Silence,’ an alienation muffling authentic voices rendering dialogue impossible (Gibson, 2006, p. 315-316).

Gibson (2006) here pointed to the discourse of power within schooling that reproduces the social construction of identity markers towards the status quo, directly and indirectly, and consciously and unconsciously, that position students like Daniel within a “culture of silence” about the meaning of the idea of LD.

Hence, Daniel’s first understanding of the idea of LD was *as resource, trouble with information processing, speech, and silence*. Although, Daniel’s understanding repeatedly pointed to *LD as resource, trouble with information processing* and issues with his *speech*, and I argue that the discourse of power

(Foucault, 1980), that is, special education and the field of LD, shaped how he was able to imagine and feel the meaning of LD. This is not surprising given the positivist paradigmatic ways in which the meaning of LD has been institutionalized and cultural-historically, legally, and professionally constructed. These constructions are not neutral artifacts, however, and students not only make sense of them cognitively but emotionally as well. Hence, they are *felt* by students. However, Daniel experienced the big d Discourse of special education as it relates to the meaning of LD from a traditional medical model of disability, and as illustrated through his emotion-laden talk, he questioned and resisted those medical conceptualizations of LD circulating in school and society.

Intersections of disability, race, ethnicity and language and other markers of difference. Daniel problematized the notion of LD as not isolated from language and ethnicity when he shared about his experiences in schooling in ways that highlighted his intersectional identities and their social constructions. Some of Daniel's emotion-laden talk of the idea of LD as they related to his understandings of race, disability, gender and social class made a connection between his ethnicity—Mexican-American, and his first language, Spanish. Daniel's connection did not exist in a historical vacuum. For example, Artiles, Waitoller, and Neal (2011) describe this long history, which Daniel's story illuminates with insights between his ethnicity, language, LD, and other markers of difference such as gender that usually become equity issues:

Race, language, and social class have had a longstanding link to ability differences in the US educational system (Ferri & Connor, 2005). For

instance, historians have documented that immigrant, low-income students, Latinos, Blacks, and other ethnic groups at the turn of the twentieth century were disproportionately placed in programs and institutions for disabled populations which had consequences for the nature of the curriculum available to them and future educational border of average performance zones. However, Chicanos/Latinos and other minority groups were not passive victims of deficit-oriented practices. Indeed, litigation was scattered throughout the twentieth Century (e.g., *Larry P. v. Riles*, 1972) challenging discriminatory practices with disparate results. Most of the struggles involving Latinos focused largely on language and segregation issues. However, the 1970 *Diana [v. State Board of Education]* was different in that the courts examined disability overrepresentation and found the assessment instruments used for determining the presence of an intellectual disability were unfair, subjective, and biased for Chicano/Latino students (Valencia, 2008, chapter 3). Racial minorities have struggled historically to get certain forms of recognition (i.e., rights to education), but have resisted the imposition of other identities (e.g., disabilities) due in part to concerns about misidentification, discriminatory practices, and the long-term consequences of such designations. Thus, these trends suggest that special education has been (borrowing from San Miguel, Jr. & Donato, 2010) “an instrument of reproduction and an important site of contestation” (p. 27) for Chicano/Latino and other student groups (p. 216).

Artiles et al. (2011) pointed to the historical schooling discrimination practices against Chicanos/Latina/os and other ethnic minorities that resulted in structural inequalities such as placing them more within special education and assessing their performance as less than average, among other deficit-oriented policies and practices. Artiles et al. (2011) acknowledge that these structural barriers, however, did not stop Chicanos/Latina/os from resisting and questioning. This historical contextualization is salient in exploring not only the emotion-laden talk of Daniel, but of all this study's participants, considering a key goal of this study is to specifically examine the emotion-laden talk of Latina/o students with LD and to address the previously ignored intersections of LD and ethnicity and other markers of difference such as language (e.g., Artiles & Trent, 1997; Artiles, Trent, & Kuan, 1997; Vasquez III et al., 2011)

Before presenting how Daniel understood the intersections of race, ethnicity, language and disability, I briefly present an overview of his understandings of each of these terms. For Daniel, what came to mind regarding race or ethnicity was "where am from" (Daniel, 11/5/14). Specifically, for race Daniel reflected: "Like your Hispanic or Caucasian or Native American, like that" and again stated: "where do you come from; what's your background" (Daniel, 2/16/15). When I asked him how the words race and Latino related or not related to how he saw himself, he replied: "It doesn't affect me" (Daniel, 2/16/15). However, Daniel answered, "Mexican-American," when I specified about his ethnicity. Daniel associations as it related to gender and social class constituted of normal categories such as "If you're a female or a male" (Daniel, 11/5/14) and

“how rich are you or how poor” (Daniel 11/5/14) or “how wealthy you are” (Daniel, 2/16/15). Daniel replied the following about being a boy, “I guess who I am like nothing” (Daniel, 2/16/15) and replied similarly when I asked what it was like to know that he had an LD: “Nothing” (Daniel, 11/6/14). Daniel stated the following about how he felt being working-class: “Like go above working class, be higher class” (Daniel, 2/16/15).

For each of Daniel’s social identity markers he recounted times that each of them became salient while in school. These emotion-laden talk provide us insight into how Daniel not only further made sense of each of these social identity markers from his perspective, but also their intersections within his sociocultural milieus at Nodding Elementary School. For race, Daniel, shared that he was learning about the Germans and World War II and about the African American civil rights movement for Black history month. Daniel shared:

Martin Luther King . . . We went to go see the Selma movie . . . With the school . . . we went to the theatre, because it was Black history month or something like that . . . we had to do a summary (Daniel, 2/16/15).

For gender, Daniel talked about stereotypes and masculinity and reflected about the stereotype of boys that are more masculine and “have muscles and hair” (Daniel, 11/5/14). Daniel further conceptualized stereotypes the following way: “Yes, um, each person has to be the same” (Daniel, 11/5/14). Daniel here spoke to the dilemma of difference (Ainlay et al., 1986) that stereotypes repress. Nevertheless, within Daniel’s emotion-laden talk, the dilemma of difference and sameness saw-sawed back and forth as it related to his meaning making about each of the social

identity markers and their intersection within his educational and sociocultural milieu. For example, Daniel shared the following positive things that he learned in school about the different identity makers: “About the Salem movie, or whatever it’s called, that everyone has the same rights, no one is different . . . I was just like **sad** about it” (2/16/15).

Daniel further unpacked the topics of gender and masculinity, sharing with me that he considered himself “*a little bit* masculine.” Interestingly enough, however, Daniel went on to share:

mmmhm, I can’t, bullied or something . . . mmmhm, I think yeah, am pretty sure, yeah, when I was like little . . . mmmhm, they took the ball away from me and it got me **mad**, they were just like throwing it back to each other . . . I don’t know I think I was in second grade . . . it was during recess . . . **bad** . . . **Sad** . . . I don’t remember what I did . . . They stopped...I think it was a basketball, I don’t remember . . . I think yeah, basketball” (Daniel, 2/16/15).

When I further questioned Daniel if the root of not being bullied was his masculinity or being a boy, and he said: “Both” (Daniel, 2/16/15). Daniel shared the following about what he learned at school about being a boy which underscored the intersection of gender and academic identity:

To behave like the girls like, I don’t know, in class, not playing around, to be involved to the lesson . . . [This is a] good thing cause they have good grades like, am not saying like all of them, but most of them have a lot of

good grades cause they like cause they're like are paying attention to the lesson and stuff like that (Daniel, 2/16/15).

From a cultural analysis perspective (McDermott et al., 2006) we see here that girls are constructed as smarter—perhaps here we see again a species of the hegemony of smartness at play—who gets “good grades,” “pays attention,” and generally behaves better than the “boys.” Daniel here spoke to not only the stereotypical behavior of “girls,” but within the context of schooling, of what sociologists would call the “ideal type” (Weber, 1904/1949) of a “smart and good student” and how he or she would behave within the big d Discourse of schooling. This “ideal type”—according to Weber (1904/1949) does not exist in reality—and in other words, is the ideological hegemonic norm that students and ideological state apparatus agents judge those who either met or failed to meet the school’s standards of academic behavior. From a Disability Studies perspective, this “ideal type” that Daniel noted about girls’ academic behavior is the antithesis of the master-narratives of the nature of LD. Daniel admitted that he would want to be like the girls (Daniel, 2/16/15). Daniel continued: “being competitive not girls are better than boys, in the middle . . . Like sometimes” (Daniel, 2/16/15). Daniel felt “excited” about this competition in the fact that it motivates him: “Like it motivates me to be better like . . . mmmhm, I don’t know some other stuff, just like the feeling” (Daniel, 2/16/15). From a critical theory perspective, Daniel’s reflections exemplify what historically the big d Discourses of general and special education schooling practices were directly and indirectly designed to cultivate and produce in children and youth (e.g., Eckert, 1989).

Daniel talked about the positive things that he learned at his school about his race and ethnicity. Daniel shared that he learned about the Mexican-American War of 1846 and 1847: “I think they were fighting for California and southern states” (Daniel, 2/16/15). Daniel explained—“doesn’t feel anything”—as to the fact that he was learning about the Mexican-American War as a student of Mexican-American descent (Daniel, 2/16/15).

Daniel shared the following regarding his belief about if there was a difference between having LD if you were White versus Latino, Asian or any other race: “The same thing . . . mmh, because someone might not understand even though if their White or Black, or Asian” (Daniel, 2/15/15). Interestingly enough, however, Daniel shared how having LD would be different for different races: “Different different races have, think different ways like some learn different ways” (Daniel, 2/15/15). Specifically, for Latina/o with LD Daniel shared: “Probably it is cause like Spanish is way different than English, the vowels, consonants how they go, the sight words, like that” (Daniel, 2/15/15). Later Daniel made the following connection between being Mexican-American or Latino and LD and the fact that a distinguishing feature of being Latino was speaking Spanish:

Cause am like new to English and . . . I don’t really see [students] whose first language was English have like a learning disability, but I think, um, you can be born . . . like I don’t know like, their brain doesn’t really work in a certain way. I don’t know, that’s what I think (Daniel, 2/16/15).

Nevertheless, as I asked him—As a Latino with a learning disability what does reading mean to you?—Daniel simply stated: “Reading a book” (Daniel, 2/16/15).

This response points to Daniel's going back and forth between directly and indirectly acknowledging the salience of race or ethnicity and then minimizing its importance. In other words, this going back and forth between the salience and non-salience of social identity markers in academic literacy practices highlights the academic and social identification practices within schooling (Wortham, 2001). Similar to reading, Daniel stated the following when I positioned him as a Latino with a learning disability and then asked him what does writing mean to him: "Writing like a story or something" (Daniel, 2/16/15).

Daniel's final theme here as it relates to the intersections of race, ethnicity, LD, and language points to what Tefera et al. (2015) propose concerning the relationship between learning disabilities and language differences:

[T]he question arises as to whether the disproportionality of emergent bilinguals indexes the creation of a "safety zone" (Lomawaima & McCarty 2006), which is based on ideological constructions of a US ideal. Society draws fluctuating boundaries between what are considered "safe and dangerous cultural difference[s]" in response to perceived threat to the US ideal (Lomawaima & McCarty 2006, p. 5). Schools respond to "dangerous" cultural differences with separate programs, separate curricula, and separate teachers that have been prepared in distinct programs that often serve as a way to erase or lessen those differences, but also to create illusion of safety within boundary between safe and dangerous. Language and ability differences are two such constructs that are regulated within safety zones. We posit that emergent bilinguals' disproportionality in special education

could be regarded as an indicator (among others) of labor produced around safety zones. Artiles (2011) explained how these threats (i.e., race, language, ability differences), or “notions of difference[,] have been interlaced in complicated ways throughout the history of American education” (431). Not only have race, language, and ability been woven together, but they have also been woven into an ideological construct of danger (Artiles, 2011). Different disabilities constitute different degrees of danger to the US ideal. Language and racial differences are threats that have been regulated, in part, through disability identification that largely creates boundaries through separate programs (Tefera et al., 2015, p. 149).

Like Daniel whose insights about how he or other Latina/os like him would experience being a student with LD differently due to their language, Spanish, Tefera et al. (2015) spoke to this intersection. Similar to Daniel’s remarks about gender and masculinity and from my perspective, Daniel’s recounting of the “ideal type” in US schools, Tefera et al. (2015) foregrounded the dilemma of difference as it comes to students of color with LD, within the big d Discourse of general and special education and the enduring injustices within a pluralistic society along race, language, ethnicity, gender, dis/ability and other markers of difference.

CHAPTER 6

BIANCA EDITH PUEBLO: EMBARRASSMENT, HOPE, RELATIONSHIPS, STEREOTYPES

Bianca Edith Pueblo: I think find a **healthy** way to **let it out** . . . Because if like you like keep **holding it in** you'll get like *more* **frustrated**, yeah, you'll get *more* **frustrated** . . . like you'll get **frustrated** to **holding it in** . . . someday it will come out from a different person, when someone tells you about your **abilities** . . . I think it is important because like if you keep **holding it in** and when someone find[s] out that you do have a learning disability they'll probably **make fun of you** (Bianca, 4/11/15).

Bianca Edith Pueblo's Background and Sociocultural Home and School

Contexts

Bianca Edith was 13 years old and in the eighth grade. Bianca had a reading-based LD and SLI. Born in Mall Valley, in a state in the U. S. Southwest, Bianca was monolingual in English. Although Bianca was born in Mall Valley, during the study she and her family lived in the neighboring town of Navidad, next to South Pinole, where Nodding Elementary School was located. Bianca reflected about her neighborhood in the following way: "It's pretty much boring, there's nothing to do over there . . . Like, I don't know I don't have no one to talk to over there, and like I don't have that much friends, over there" (Bianca, 4/11/15). Bianca's relationships were important to her, not only with her friends, but with her teachers and parents.

Across the following background and sociocultural home and school contexts for this case (family, school, and friendships) she used a total of 12 *emotion implicative WHATs* (e.g, math, science, headaches, etc.), four *intensifiers* (i.e., *really, too much, a lot (2)*), one emotion (i.e., happy), and six *feelings* (i.e.,

dislike, frustrated, upset, worry, stress, and calm) of manifestations of emotion (see Table 10 for entire list of manifestations of emotion for Bianca’s emotion-laden talk for the background and sociocultural contexts).

Table 10

Manifestations of Emotion within Bianca Edith Pueblo’s Emotion-Laden Talk about her Background and Sociocultural Contexts

Background and Sociocultural Contexts	Emotion Implicative WHATs (12)	Intensifiers (4)	Emotions (1)	Feelings (6)	Paralinguistic (0)
	Math (2)	A lot (2)	Happy	Dislike	
	Science (2)	Too much		Frustrated	
	Singing	Really		Upset	
	Music			Worry	
	Relationship with her dad or being a daughter			Stress	
	Parent’s relationship			Calm	
	Headache				
	To not know what to do				
	To miss class				
	“Takes me forever”				

Bianca's family. Bianca had “three brothers and three sisters” (Bianca, 4/11/15). Bianca was the middle child, the third-born with two older siblings and three younger ones. Bianca shared: “well, I have from my real mom and dad, I have two brothers, and my dad just had a baby [son] with some other girl in August” (Bianca, 4/11/15). These statements made clear the salience of her relationship with her father and her family structure. Her feelings about her parent's divorce were significant and spoke to the features of her own sociocultural context that Bianca brings with her to school. Students with LD who also experience social and emotional deficits bring with them to school aspects of their home context, including lived experiences from early childhood. These early childhood memories are not necessarily separate from the experiences that children with LD have within school walls and academic tasks. For example, Bianca's relationship with her father and her early childhood memories regarding him were poignant as she reflected on what gives her confidence in school:

My most **confidence** in school would be **singing** cause . . . when I like listen to different . . . **songs** they like I hear like some people sing like . . . when I hear a **music**, like a **song** like that sounds like my life like I can relate to it and it'll make me **feel more confident about what I want to do** . . . well, there is this one **song** that I think of my dad, it's called, *Daddy's Little Girl* by Frankie J, when I listen to it I start thinking of my dad cause how like . . . when I watch the video it like made me **cry** because . . . like I see in the video, in the beginning of the video, that like these **parents are fighting** and like a little girl is under the table . . . I like

think of me and my family, cause when I was little, they used to **fight a lot**, and like I would **cry** for my dad, and yeah (Bianca, 4/11/15).

Here Bianca used the emotion implicative WHATs of 1) singing and songs, 2) music, 3) her relationship with her dad and, being a daughter, and 4) her parents' relationship, which brought up the emotion-laden talk of crying and signified pain due to her parents fighting. For Bianca's parent relationship she used the intensifier a) *a lot* regarding her parent's fighting when she was little. Bianca explicitly talked about confidence and the fact that she would **cry** when she watched and listen to the video of *Daddy's Little Girl* (See Appendix X for full lyrics of *Daddy's Little Girl*, by Frankie J). Further, confidence for Bianca was connected to agency (i.e., "when I hear a **music**, like a **song** like that sounds like my life like I can relate to it and it'll make me **feel more confident about what I want to do**" (Bianca, 4/11/15)) since listening to music gave her confidence and enabled her to do her academic tasks. Further, the fact that Bianca shared negative emotion-laden talk regarding confidence, a positive emotion, about her home life underscores how her relationship with her father and her parents' relationship was also soothed through finding comfort in music in educational contexts. In the video of *Daddy's Little Girl* Bianca resonated with of the striking image of the little girl hiding underneath the table while her parents fought. Music and singing were tools that helped Bianca cope with both her home and academic socioemotional lives.

As a young girl filled with negative emotionality such as pain and fear, Bianca's overall story connects to the image of the little girl underneath the table.

Considering, however, that emotion is not only neurological, the social construction of LD emotion is salient to the philosophical and practical implications of such emotionality and of students like Bianca with an LD.

Hallahan, Lloyd, Kauffman, Weiss, & Martinez (2005) wrote:

Another complicating factor is that many parents of children with learning disabilities and their families is a higher prevalence of family instability and disruption. Researchers have found that children with learning disabilities are more likely than those without such disabilities to experience parental divorce, change of schools, or parental or sibling death or illness (Lorsbach & Frymier, 1992). There is speculation about where such factors are causal. That is, does a child with a learning disability make the family more susceptible to some of these disruptions, or do some of these traumas contribute to the child's learning disability? Regardless of whether there is a causal connection and in which direction it is manifest, family instability makes it difficult for some families to cope with a child who has a learning disability (p. 120).

Hallahan's et al. (2005) perspective here is steeped in a positivist paradigm with an either/or binary-logic—even though they cautioned against the latter—regarding causal relations that end with 1) pathologizing families with children with LD and 2) minimizing the weight of children's sociocultural contexts in relation to LD that children bring with them to schools.

Bianca's academic preferences. Bianca's favorite subject in school was reading: “because I like to read *a lot* because like every time when I read like a

book like I'll picture myself like in that story like where it takes place and all that" (Bianca, 4/11/15). Bianca used the intensifier *a lot* to signify her preference toward reading that was beyond a mere liking. Bianca explained her use of imagination in her reading. Confirmation that Bianca liked to read *a lot* was reflected in her description of the classes in which she was doing well: "mmmh, I don't know exactly but I'll probably say reading cause like reading is my best subject" (Bianca, 4/11/15). Further, Bianca stated "um, I guess it makes me feel **happy**" when she does good in reading (Bianca, 4/11/15). Here Bianca used the emotion category 1) **happy** to describe how she feels regarding her reading.

In contrast, Bianca's least favorite subject was math. Bianca explained:
My least favorite would be **math** because I don't know . . . **algebra** and all that and . . . when I have to . . . do an answer . . . I just . . . get stuck **and I don't know what to do** . . . I **dislike** [it] because **it'll take me forever** just to answer one problem and . . . I get *really* **frustrated** and I'll have a *bad* **headache** (Bianca, 4/11/15).

Math and algebra for Bianca were emotion implicative WHATs that brought up negative emotionality for her. Bianca used the intensifier *really* when she described the fact that she gets **frustrated** when doing math and algebra; she continued to state that she gets **headaches** due to her struggles in math. Further, in addition to her statement, she used the intensifier *bad* to intensify her headaches based on her frustrations with math and algebra. **Headaches** related to math and algebra struggles was an emotion implicative WHAT, and Bianca's feeling of frustration was explicit in her emotion-laden talk above about math and algebra.

What helped Bianca cope with her headaches and succeed in math was to “just how to keep **calm**, and . . . **not worry too much, stress** and all that” (Bianca, 4/11/15). Here Bianca used the following emotion and feeling categories: 1) calm, 2) stress, and 3) stress and minimizer intensifier: too much (i.e., not **worry too much**). Bianca continued to share how she accomplished this: “I try to like **relax**, like . . . **play with my hair**, like **try to laugh** at something” (Bianca, 4/11/15). Bianca used three emotion implicative WHATs here: 1) relax, 2) play with her hair in order to relax and calm down and 3) try to laugh.

Bianca’s least favorite subject in school, math, was also the subject that she struggled with the most in school:

I guess **math** and **science** . . . cause in **science** like I wouldn’t know like . . . when we do like distance times velocity equals, um, I think it was, I don’t know, I can’t explain it, but like I get **stressed a lot** . . . cause like **I don’t know what to do** and all that, and sometimes, **I’ll miss days**, were like doing something like for like work and all that and I wouldn’t know what to do (Bianca, 4/11/15).

Bianca used the emotion implicative WHATs of 1) math and 2) science as she recounted in what classes she struggled the most. In addition, Bianca noted the following emotion implicative WHATs: 3) taking forever to accomplish tasks, 4) to not know what to do, and 5) to miss class. Bianca admitted that she “**doesn’t know what to do**” regarding the academic knowledge of the subject matter of science, which leads to her **stress**. She experienced not only a little stress, but maximized intensification of that feeling by the use of a lot and revealed that she

feels “probably like **upset**” (Bianca, 4/11/15). Here Bianca used the feeling term **upset**. Therefore, math and science represented her most difficult school classes, which ultimately was linked to how she understood her LD. Cumulatively, Bianca used 11 emotion implicative WHATs within her emotion-laden talk about math and algebra, including three intensifiers (i.e., *really*, *too much*, *a lot*) and three feelings (i.e., dislike, frustration, and upset).

On the importance of relationships. Bianca’s least favorite non-academic aspect of school was tied to the importance of relationships undergirding her background and sociocultural context:

My least favorite thing is that . . . like all **the drama that’s happening around** and like **getting in trouble by teachers** and everything and like yeah . . . because cause like if . . . I keep getting in trouble ***a lot*** then **I won’t walk for my promotion or . . . graduate** (Bianca, 4/11/15).

Here Bianca shared three emotion implicative WHATs: 1) being annoyed at school regarding the drama there, 2) not liking to get into trouble, and in turn 3) fearing that she might not graduate with her peers. Her emotions did not exist in a vacuum—apart from social contexts—neither did the emotion implicative WHATs that, consciously and unconsciously, all of the students in this dissertation study have shared with me. For example, what connects these emotion implicative WHATs together across chapters is the role of relationships at school and how these relationships involved not only peers and school personnel such as teachers but encompassed the entire culture of the school.

Bianca's further sharing showed the importance of relationships in her meaning-feeling (Lemke, 2013) regarding confidence in school: "well, Ms. Michaels, she'll like tell me **to try my best and do what you have to do and that like you'll get . . . the hang of it**, and like my friends they would **encourage me too, to do my best**" (Bianca, 4/11/15). A significant protective factor for Bianca's academic socioemotional well-being while at school, encouragement from her special education teacher, Ms. Michaels, and her school friends contributed to her confidence and level of enjoyment at school: "my favorite thing about school is that **I get to get away from the house and be with my friends and talk** about what is going on and everything" (Bianca, 4/11/15).

Bianca's Emotion-Laden Talk about Being Labeled with LD

Embarrassment to ask for assistance from others. Bianca's emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD involved the feeling category of *embarrassment*. In other words, "the politics of LD emotions" on the ground for Bianca involved embarrassment in relation to asking or not asking for help or assistance in academic struggles she encountered. From a traditional special education social and emotional dimensions of LD perspective this is an example of how students like Bianca not only experience academic struggles, but also experience negative social and emotional dimensions that constrain their opportunities to learn. The positivist individualistic and meritocratic logic would follow that since Bianca did not advocate and experienced positive emotionality within schooling contexts, she was considered to have a "deficit" in her academic and social and emotional performances. However, the latter was due to the

cultural standards that undergird theories of personhood and what counts to be a “good” student (Broderick & Leonardo, 2016). These cultural mediational artifacts and tools (Mendoza, Paguyo, & Gutierrez, 2016) are the emotional ideologies about what counts as “asking for help” or “not” that are present in the social interaction, and therefore, lead to psycho-emotional disablism (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2011).

The underlying thread within Bianca’s emotion-laden talk was relationships. For example, Bianca explained that she talks about her LD with her friends to get it “off her chest” (Bianca, 4/11/15).

I probably talk to my **friends** . . . yeah, ill talk to my **friends** about it [her LD and/or academic struggles] like that am **not learning as much as the other kids**, and I don’t know it makes me **feel** . . . well, I won’t be **nervous** about it because that is *kinda* of true about me but like I wouldn’t **care** cause I know that **their not going to make fun of me**, cause I know that they have like, **I know they struggle sometimes in the learning stuff** . . . Cause like when **I hold it in** I don’t know, it gets me *more* **stressed** about it, and then like I can’t explain it, but I get *a little* **stressed** so I talk about it . . . I do it often like almost like every week, like ill talk about [it] [her LD and/or academic struggles] **just to get it off my chest** and to just let people know that **am not that like that smart I guess**, and that I’ll probably need *more* **help** in learning . . . They’ll be like . . . “You’ll try . . . your best and you’ll like, you’ll know what to do and don’t **worry**, don’t **stress** *too much* or like don’t **stress** *too much* or you’ll have your **bad**

headaches like you always do and your going to make your day *more*,
worse than it already is” (Bianca, 4/11/15).

Similar to Sophia, Bianca was caught by the dominant beliefs or cultural mediation and artifacts of “being not-so-smart,” in other words, the hegemony of smartness, which Broderick and Leonardo (2016) reminded us is not isolated from what or who constitutes “good” (e.g., White children) versus “bad” (e.g., Black and Brown bodies) within educational contexts—the big d Discourse of schooling and special education. Further, Bianca explained how she knew that she had an LD: “It makes me feel **different** because like other people are learning faster than I am, and like I *kinda* feel like an **outsider**, with all the **smart** people and people with a Learning Disability” (Bianca, 4/11/15). Bianca reflected on the impact of being labeled LD as involving the ideology or hegemony of smartness, which created a sense of inferiority due to not learning as fast as others. Speed at learning or development, however, is culturally and socially bounded as opposed to purely existing within the neurology of students labeled LD (Rogoff, 2003). For Bianca this false sense of inferiority included feeling different and like an outsider, foregrounding, the complicated position that the label LD creates internally and externally for individuals labeled LD within educational contexts in social relation to others. Bianca, nevertheless, qualified her outsider feeling with the minimizer intensifier *kinda*.

Bianca shared above the kinds of support systems she had in order to deal with her academic struggles. For example, she valued the relationships with her friends and also normalized her experiences, proposing that everyone has

something that they struggle with. Bianca in a sense used her relationships with her friends in order to ‘vent’ (e.g. get it off her chest); however, we can begin to see the ideologically grounded ways in which the thread of relationships was interwoven with the matrix of oppression for Bianca—which was also emotionally-laden.

In comparing herself to others in terms of learning rate, quantity and quality, Bianca evoked the theme of relationships in her emotion-laden talk regarding being labeled LD and LD’s socially constructed nature. Although Bianca shared that she did not care about how others viewed her, her venting and encouragement were meant to curtail the embarrassment and shame that she experienced in interactions that Bianca shared about, such as asking for assistance on academic tasks.

Nevertheless, the embarrassment that Bianca experienced was a product of what schools set up for children such as Bianca to experience: “failure” (McDermott & Varenne, 1999) due to the dominant ideologies based on what counts as participation, “smart,” being a “good” and “abled” student versus a student with LD and emotional and social deficits. These “kinds of persons” (Gee, 2001; Hacking, 1999) constitute the subjectivities that historical and cultural practices within the US system of education have institutionalized and publically recognized. Hence, the social construction of LD and its emotionality that undergirds these “kinds” such as LD is critical to ideologically recognize as being caught up by these systems of thought (Foucault, 1981). These systems of thought are not devoid of emotion, however, and that is why an emotion discourse

(Edwards, 1999) perspective regarding what students, such as Bianca, Sophia and Daniel are experiencing is such an *emotion LD discourse*. Further, an emotion discourse is: “a systematic coherent set of images, metaphors and so on that construct an object in a particular way” (Burr, 1995, p. 184, as cited in Walton, Coyle & Lyons, 2003, p. 46). Therefore, the cultural emotion ideologies (Hochschild, 1990; Lutz, 1990) and in turn the power structures that are embedded within Bianca’s emotion-laden talk—illuminate the complexity of her self-narrativization.

Again, Bianca’s laminating text of relationships within her emotion-laden talk—that is, her self-narrativization—is evidence of the *social relational definition of disability* that Carol Thomas (1999) and other DS scholars who focused on the psycho-emotional dimensions of disability foreground. Bianca’s emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD constituted embarrassment; nevertheless, this negative emotionality and others are indexed in the above quotation in the feeling category of **nervous**, **stress** (4 times)—which were qualified by intensifiers like *more* (*more stressed*), *a little* (*a little stressed*) and *too much* (2) (don’t **stress too much**). Bianca also used the metaphor of “holding it in,” in addition to “just to get it off my chest” to explain her frustrations and stress regarding her academic struggles to do not-so-smart self-narrativization work: that is, “to just let people know that **am not that like that smart I guess**, and that I’ll probably need *more help* in in learning” (Bianca, 4/11/15). Bianca used the intensifier *more* to emphasize that she needed an extraordinary—beyond the normal required or dispensed—degree of help in order to learn.

Bianca expressed a temporal dimension to her experiences of stress and embarrassment. Take for example Bianca's following emotion-laden talk about not wanting to stress her teacher out:

Like, it happens, like it happened ever since we've been getting on the computers, which is January or February, like we had to go onto this website, called Khan Academy, and sometimes I don't get it, and **I don't want to tell him I don't get it, but I don't want him to get *more* stressed** (Bianca, 4/11/15).

From a medical-psychological and social and emotional dimensions of LD perspective, Bianca's emotion-laden talk can be read as self-defeating due to not wanting to bother and stress out her teacher and not communicate her needs in order to learn. Moreover, Bianca characterized the emotionality of her teacher as not only **stressed**, but used the intensifier—*more*—to foreground the significance of her teacher's negative emotionality.

Bianca was a highly self-aware young woman regarding her learning struggles within her educational contexts. Bianca's schooling experiences were not devoid of her sociocultural contexts and background that she carried with her as she participated within and across educational contexts—further illustrating the intertwining of academic and emotional and social processes. For example, within her math class they used the software and program of Khan Academy website to do math assignments, yet Bianca's least favorite subject was math. Bianca's emotion-laden talk spoke to how this embarrassment was evident of not being confident in math, and with asking for help and caring about other's people's

feelings as well as her own. This could be misconstrued as “LD,” however, a cultural mediation praxis perspective (Mendoza et al., 2016) would interrogate the common sense assumptions that mediate the white-middle class ways of being and doing within educational contexts as they relate to learning and teaching.

Bianca’s emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD reflected the idea that asking for assistance brings up embarrassment, internally and externally, within her interactions with others. Embedded within this theme is precisely the meaning of LD for Bianca: that LD means that individual students have learning struggles and that they would need more help than your typical student: “mmmh, I think it would mean that . . . that like um I think it means that I need like *more help*, and like and I can’t explain it good, but I need *more help*” (Bianca, 4/11/15). Here Bianca used the intensifiers *more* twice to emphasize the extraordinary assistance that students like herself needed in order to accomplish tasks in school learning. Nevertheless, situating the help in this way, as a one-way street, as if individuals are not active agents within activity systems such as literacy or academic events enveloped within cultural practices. Bianca compared herself and other students labeled with LD with those who are not when sharing about the significance of being labeled with LD, highlighting the fact that LD identity, hence, disability identity, is in relation to those who are not labeled as such (Gill, 2001). Framing LD as such, nevertheless, undergirds notions of normalcy and positions students like Bianca in need of “perpetual help” and “exceptional” or “abnormal” and ideologically positions students who do not have the label as “not needing help” and able to navigate the educational system as

“individuals” who do not need the “help” of others. This embedded thread of help or the politics of help as undergirding the need of the label LD was also evident in how Bianca understood being labeled as LD: “I guess it would be it, because I *kinda* do need **help**” (Bianca, 4/11/15). Bianca used the minimizer *kinda* as she acknowledged that she does need **help** as she reflected on being labeled with LD. Consequently, the phenomena of *help*—needing help—undergirds Bianca’s understanding of being labeled with LD. Furthermore, Bianca stated the following regarding what she believed it meant to be in special education and how she felt about it: “I get *more help*, like . . . I guess **happy** . . . cause I got to be in this class like to get *more help* and some others don’t get that” (Bianca, 4/11/15). Bianca used the intensifier again *more* twice and expressed the emotion category **happy** regarding being in special education due to the *more help* she receives compared to others. Additionally, when explicitly defining what being labeled with LD means in general we see that Bianca also explicitly compared those labeled as such with those who were not and the need for more help due to academic struggles: “Like, a learning disability would be like you need **help** I guess, you **struggle more** than the other students in class” (Bianca, 4/11/15). Bianca used the intensifier *more* to distinguish those who struggle from those who do not in class.

Although, Bianca spoke frankly about the need for “*more help*” the political emotional economy (Ahmed, 2004) of getting help as it relates to one’s sense of self-narrativization is not without risk: embarrassment. Bianca explained how others may feel about being labeled with LD and experience LD: “I guess their experiences feel like, their like **embarrassed** . . . to tell people that they have

a learning disability . . . I think they **feel** that all the time . . . well, I guess to me . . . I think about it everyday . . . well, *kinda* of like it doesn't **feel** that **embarrassed**" (Bianca, 4/11/15). Bianca qualified her experience of feeling embarrassed about being labeled LD with the minimizer *kinda*.

Bianca, however, elaborated how not all students with LD experienced social and emotional issues such as embarrassment, but further explained that that majority of students labeled with LD experienced this negative emotion category:

I think their experiences are like they'll **struggle** with all . . . their work and . . . They'll probably **feel** like **embarrassed** to . . . to tell, to get **help** from people . . . because some people are not like they don't put out their **feelings** out there as much as other people do (Bianca, 4/11/15).

Bianca acknowledged the difficulty of putting yourself out there and being the recipient of help within educational contexts. Bianca, in other words, was aware of the negative emotion-laden dimension to asking for help. Nevertheless, Bianca felt the embarrassment of not knowing what to do and needing to ask for help when in class: "I feel **frustrated** and **angry** and then am *kind of* **embarrassed** to tell people that I need **help**" (Bianca, 4/11/15). Here Bianca used the emotion categories of frustrated and angry and the feeling category of embarrassed, modified with the minimizer *kind of* as it related to how she feeling being labeled LD in class. Bianca alluded to the social nature of embarrassment as it associated with the need to ask for help from others.

Bianca continued to share that she felt isolated, which further underscores how relationships, or the lack thereof, were related to her being labeled with LD.

Bianca shared that she did not talk to Ms. Michaels about her learning struggles or her LD, and more significantly her math teacher, Mr. T. Given the fact that Bianca understood her LD as being in math, her non-relationship with Mr. T was of paramount significance in contributing to her social construction of LD.

Maybe, I don't [talk to Ms. Michaels about her LD and her feelings about it], I don't think I tell her anything . . . No [tell Mr. T anything about her LD and feelings] . . . No [tell any of her teachers about her LD and feelings] (Bianca, 4/11/15).

Bianca and her teachers' lack of communication about the being labeled with LD and her feelings about it was not only a significant barrier to her opportunities to learn, but to her well-being within educational contexts. Bianca's lack of authentic relationships with her teachers about the meaning of being labeled with LD was a predicament that, directly and indirectly, facilitated Bianca's experiences of disablement at school. Bianca shared that:

It would *kinda* be helpful [to have a relationship with her teachers as it related to her LD and how she felt about her LD and academic struggles] . . . so they can understand that I still need *more help* on the lessons that we're doing" (Bianca, 4/11/15).

In other words, Bianca began to acknowledge the social role of ability and disability and how school systems, and in particular school personnel, emotionally and culturally respond to her academic struggles and needs was critical to facilitating her opportunities to learn. Here we also see that Bianca qualified the

need for help, not simply as help per se, but *more* help than usual, with the intensifier “*more*.”

Help as hope. Bianca, like Sophia, saw the rational-utilitarian benefits of being labeled with LD and being in special education as ideally receiving more help in order to learn. Similar to Sophia and Daniel’s cases, the themes within Bianca’s storyline did not necessarily exist in a vacuum but overlapped. Bianca’s emotion-laden talk regarding how she understood being labeled LD included a sense of hope. This sense of hope was attached to receiving help, but also to her hope that she can learn despite being labeled with LD. For example, Bianca was good at reading, and she expressed how that made her feel as it related to her LD: “Yeah, I think it makes me **feel better**, because . . . even though if I have like a learning disability it makes me **feel good** that am actually like **learning something**” (Bianca, 4/11/15). Here Bianca expressed the value of education and learning that undergirds her participation in school despite the embarrassment and perhaps stigma of being in special education and labeled with LD. Emotionally speaking, Bianca here underscored hope with the feeling categories of “feel better” and “feel good.” Bianca’s LD emotion-laden talk about hope speak to the anticipation and outcome of receiving help that she perceived she needed in order to complete her academic tasks. Viewed through the lens of *help as hope* theme we can see that beneath the embarrassment, what kept Bianca hopeful was her belief in her own educability. “I think it makes me **feel better**, because . . . even though if I have like a learning disability it makes me **feel good that am actually like learning something**” (Bianca, 4/11/15). This might seem trivial, however,

nothing could be further from the truth. Given the power of the ideological system of oppression of disablism, which I argue is emotion-laden, and Bianca's resistance to despair due to the politics of the LD emotion of embarrassment, we can understand her construction—"am actually like learning something"—as a profoundly important act of hope within her self-narrativization. This subtle shift from the hegemonic ideologies of LD that are steeped in deficit thinking, unearthed within the self-narrativizations of Bianca and the other students, is a protective factor of being caught within the big d Discourse of special education as LD and experiencing social and emotional deficits.

Concerning the laminating text of relationships, Bianca shared the following "good stuff" that she received from being in Ms. Michael's special education resource room, focusing on her relationships:

Like, um, like when am in here [Ms. Michaels special education resource room], like **when people know** what's like wrong with me they'll try to **cheer me up** and everything and like I *kinda* get like *more* **help** that I need, and like I don't know like I guess everyone knows what's going on, and what am **struggling** in (Bianca, 4/11/15).

Bianca seemed to get a sense of relief from her relationships within her special education resource room. Being labeled LD and in turn being able to physically be in her resource room provided Bianca protection from her social and emotional struggles. A feeling of comfort was expressed as the "good stuff" that Bianca received in her special education resource room with Ms. Michaels and other labeled peers. The resource room was a safe space to know that she was

understood and for her to share her emotions about not only her LD but her other social and emotional struggles at home and school. Nevertheless, Bianca qualified the fact that she gets *more* help with the minimizer *kinda* (“I *kinda* get like *more help* that I need”). Here Bianca also used the intensifier *more*, as well. After sharing the good stuff about being in special education resource room, Bianca did not have any bad stuff to share (“I don’t think there is, like, I don’t think there is anything” (Bianca, 4/11/15)). The complexity of Bianca’s emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD began to solidify as contradictions emerged between the positive and negative emotionality embedded in her overall story.

Bianca explained the following about being labeled LD: “Well, for me, like it don’t matter like I don’t **care** if I have a learning disability, cause not everybody could be as **smart as other people**” (Bianca, 4/11/15). Here Bianca provided a hope emotion-laden talk regarding being labeled with LD, but at the same time fell prey to rationalizing the hegemony of smartness—stating that “not everybody could be as smart as other people.” While Bianca resisted the hegemonic deficit thinking and associations that come with the label LD by stating that it didn’t matter if she has an LD, she perpetuated the hegemony of smartness that was working through her. The smartness or ableism associated with LD as Bianca experienced it was not only within her self-narrativization but was coupled in her comparisons to others.

Being labeled with LD is not isolated from being in special education. Being labeled grants you access to special education. However, both signifiers are

stigmatized within society and schooling. Nevertheless, for Bianca special education was also a positive force:

For me, it *kinda* means that you get *more help*, you get *more help* when you're with a small group, but when your like with a large group you don't know what to do and your **confused** and **lost** . . . It's okay that am in special education, because I get *more help* than I do with my other teachers (Bianca, 4/11/15).

Here Bianca used the term and emotion implicative WHAT, **help**, three times. Bianca used the positive intensifier *more* three times in connection to **help** and *kinda* as a minimizer intensifier. Here the terms **confusion** and **lost** are emotion implicative WHATs as well. In addition to getting more help from her special education teachers, Bianca associated getting more help through a small group instruction versus the larger general classroom. However, from a critical perspective this can be seen as problematic since who changes is not the system of education that is set up to segregate those more “abled-bodied and mind” than those more “emotionally disabled” by such practices within the general education classroom. Emotionally speaking, those who are labeled with LD and have social and emotional deficits continue to be segregated even though a large majority of students with LD are included within the general education classroom.

Bianca's opinion about labeling children with a learning disability was as follows: “I think it is a good thing . . . so teachers can know that you need *more help* in your work” (Bianca, 4/11/15). Bianca expressed the ideal situation that she saw in special education: *help as hope. Help as hope* from the special

education system, including its teachers is the promise of a special education label such as LD. Nevertheless, the political and emotional nature of being labeled LD and its stigmatization is both a reality and an issue within society and the big d Discourses of schooling and special education. Therefore, Bianca's counter-narrativizations—which included contradictions about her lived experiences with LD—were hopeful, but at the same time ironic. Ironic because in reality, Bianca had trouble with her teachers' supporting her emotionally as she made feeling-meaning about her LD and her academic struggles.

Bianca expressed hope for herself regarding what to do with her LD emotions:

I think find a **healthy** way to **let it out** . . . Because if like you like keep **holding it in** you'll get like *more* **frustrated**, yeah, you'll get *more* **frustrated** . . . like you'll get **frustrated** to **holding it in** . . . someday it will come out from a different person, when someone tells you about your **abilities** . . . I think it is important because like if you keep **holding it in** and when someone find[s] out that you do have a learning disability they'll probably **make fun of you** (Bianca, 4/11/15).

Here Bianca spoke to the dialectic of the social relational model of disability.

Bianca was fully aware of the threat of vulnerability to “come out” as LD, but at the same time she saw the hope and even danger of not “coming out” with one's LD emotions as problematic. Processing those emotions was critical, internally and externally, in order to not be **frustrated**. Bianca used the feeling category frustrated three times above, and twice with the intensifier *more*. An individual's

ability and disability hence are emotionally salient, and how a person makes feeling-meaning about it is critical to overall health within educational contexts. Given the contradictions within Bianca's past and present personal trajectories and self-narrativizations—her core-identity (Gee, 2001)—*help as hope* is not as straight forward for all Latina students with LD at Nodding Elementary School.

Bianca's Emotion-Laden Talk of the Idea of LD

Struggles due to lack of understanding. Within Bianca's emotion-laden talk about the idea of LD another thread at the lexicon level emerged in addition to relationships and help: *academic struggles*. This was evident given that Bianca used the term or a version of it, which I labeled as an emotion implicative WHAT six times within the first two themes and once within the background and sociocultural contexts. In addition to these manifestations of *struggle* within Bianca's emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD *struggles due to not understanding* was a particular way that Bianca understood the general nature of LD as it related to academic tasks.

Bianca's perspective on the meaning of the idea of LD included the fact that some students, including herself, did not learn as much as other students do: "Like, for me it [LD] means that um, like **am not learning as much as the other kids are**, yeah" (Bianca, 4/15/15). Bianca's struggles, therefore, involved her perception that she was not learning as much as other kids were. That Bianca was aware that she was not learning as much as other children points to the social model of disability: not learning or struggling in general due to not understanding includes an emotional and social dimension that affects the psycho-emotional

well-being of students like Bianca. Therefore, to conceptualize LD without the social implications of such a label is misguided. Moreover, Bianca situated her “not learning” as an individual tragedy as opposed to conceptualizing learning and ability and disability as fundamentally social and cultural processes. This was further evidenced when Bianca described her LD: “I think my learning disability is like **math** . . . like when **we have to like graph like the charts** that we get and like I can’t explain it that well” (Bianca, 4/13/15). Here we see that math was an emotion implicative WHAT for Bianca due to the struggles she had with graphing and charts. This is also an example of Bianca’s self-awareness regarding the nature of her own LD. Bianca’s conceptualization of the idea of LD involved the fact that she and others struggled due to not understanding the academic material. However, in both cases, Bianca failed to attribute her and other’s learning struggles as originating from structural issues such as quality of teaching, perpetuating the myth that learning is an individual and meritocratic process.

It would probably be the same [as other students not labeled LD], but without the **struggles**, like that you have . . . Like . . . it feels *kinda* **horrible**, that you like . . . almost everybody gets it but **you’re the only one that doesn’t know what you’re supposed to do** and like am, I don’t know um . . . like, your just like, I can’t explain it, you’re just **afraid** that you’re going to get someone *kind of* **upset**, get **mad**, if you ask for **help** or anything, yeah (Bianca, 4/13/15).

We see that Bianca’s self-narrativizations—that is, her emotion-laden talk about the idea of LD directly referred to those who are not labeled as such. For example,

she couched how it felt to be labeled LD as the same as others, except “without the struggles.” On the one hand, however, Bianca recounted that the feeling of having been labeled is *kinda* **horrible** due to not understanding the academic material. The isolation that being labeled LD is curious since the individual labeled as such feels alone when LD is one of the largest special education categories. As Bianca expressed above, “almost everybody gets it but you’re the only one that doesn’t know what you’re supposed to do.” What can explain this isolation that students with LD feel? Undergirding Bianca’s sense of loneliness due to her struggles in learning was the fear of getting others upset and mad when asking for help. Bianca used the emotion category of **afraid**, **mad**, and feeling category of **upset** and intensifier *kind of* when expressing how one feels LD (“you’re just **afraid** that you’re going to get someone *kind of* **upset**, get **mad**, if you ask for **help** or anything). In other words, Bianca’s *struggles due to not understanding* involved the social construction of emotions such as upset, mad, and afraid.

Bianca further demonstrated this social construction of emotions of LD as she reflected on how she experienced LD: “Well, I like I **struggle** sometimes like to, like I **struggle** sometimes to get **help** from people . . . like am *too* **shy**, **nervous** to ask for **help** like what to do and all that” (Bianca, 4/15/15). The experience of LD, hence, involved the predicament of help due to one’s struggles in understanding academic tasks. Nevertheless, students like Bianca internalize a negative self-narrativization due to not understanding and needing help to accomplish academic tasks. The negative emotionality, as Bianca expressed,

involved but was not limited to shyness and nervousness—these were two of the feeling categories that Bianca shared above—and as we saw in theme one:

embarrassment.

Bianca expressed her feelings of not knowing what to do when confronted with her academic struggles. For example, Bianca stated:

When am in **math class** . . . I know that I have a learning disability and . . . like when I go to **math**, right now **I'll be stuck on a question**, on an answer that **I don't know what to do**, and **it'll take me like forever**, just to do it . . . Well, like, I don't know, I can't explain it but um . . . they *kinda* are **bad thoughts**, because . . . like when I think when I **worry** to much like I get like *really* **frustrated**, and like I *kinda* get **mad** and **I don't feel like doing it** because like its **hard to do** and I get like *completely* **lost** (Bianca, 4/15/15).

Within this emotion-laden talk Bianca shared the deep negative emotionality she felt when her LD became salient. Math class, therefore, was an emotion implicative WHAT, about which Bianca consistently expressed feeling **stuck**, **frustrated**, **worry**, and **lost**. In addition, Bianca modified the fact that she had **bad thoughts** and felt **mad** with the minimizer *kinda*, and **frustrated** with the intensifier *really* and **lost** with *completely* as it related to her math experiences. Therefore, LD moments (McDermott, Raley & Seyer-Ochi, 2009) such as the one described above are not devoid of LD emotions, which are negative for the majority of the time, due to Bianca's struggles in understanding what to do. However, we continue to see the imposition of Bianca's activity and agency due

to the fear of social stigma, even though Bianca stated that LD was not necessarily a big part of her:

I think it's [LD] a small part of me . . . because its like I don't think it's a big . . . deal being labeled with a Learning Disability . . . um because . . . everyone . . . has something that they don't want to share out I guess . . . cause not everybody wants to tell people what they have and they don't want to be **made fun** of by other people (Bianca, 4/15/15).

Bianca explained this fear of being socially discovered as LD due to her struggles, and she attempted to normalize those struggles by stating that everyone had something that they do not want others to know about them. Nevertheless, even though Bianca humanized her experience, the impact of having LD and experiencing the LD emotions was something real that Bianca needed to navigate within the big d Discourse of schooling and special education. What can explain this deep predicament?

LD myths. The negative and positive emotionality so far shared by Bianca within her emotion-laden talk included embarrassment and hope due to her struggles with LD, specifically in math. These struggles, however, I have argued are social in nature due to the relationships that have both afforded and constrained Bianca's opportunity to learn. However, these relationships were also mediated by Bianca's emotion discourses that have had real material consequences for her personal trajectories and self-narrativization within educational contexts—that is, the big d Discourse of general and special education.

Within this last theme, I illustrate that these negative social and emotional contexts that Bianca experienced, however, did not originate per se within her neurology but has to do with the master narratives of LD and what I dub as *LD myths* that circulate about children's abilities and disabilities labeled as such, the latter of which are negative in nature. For example, Bianca shared the following story where she experienced overhearing *LD myths*:

Um I be hearing like from, not people from this school, but other schools, I be hearing that **people with learning disabilities won't get nowhere** for like, I don't know, cause they **struggle with reading, math, and writing and talking** and they say that, **we don't get nowhere, we don't get a good job or like won't be smart** as them, and yeah (Bianca, 4/15/15).

Here Bianca shared what she overheard others say about people with LD life trajectories. The life trajectories of people with LD are characterized as going “nowhere” and that they would not get any “good jobs” and “won't be smart.” Here “not going anywhere,” “not having a good job” and “not being smart” I understand as emotion implicative WHATs, and in addition, as examples of LD myths. The all or nothing perspective about people with LD here also invokes a desperate predicament for students and people with LD. Generally, all or nothing thinking signifies half truths and not reflecting reality. However, true or not, this example is illustrative of the types of *LD myths* in society about students with LD, that directly and indirectly, they navigate. This navigation affects the student's well-being. In addition to *LD myths* about the future life trajectories of people with LD, Bianca shared the struggles that society generally knows people with

LD experience: reading, math, and writing and talking. Although this is true, Bianca pointed to the fact that there must be something wrong with these stories or *LD myths* since the argument is a reductionist one where struggles in these areas will deterministically lead to negative life trajectories. Bianca continued to share where else she experienced exposure to *LD myths*:

Sometimes inside, and then mostly outside of school . . . Sometimes when I go to stores I hear people saying that and then, when sometimes, when I go outside . . . like when I go out to the park or something I hear people talking about people with Learning Disabilities . . . Probably like it was recently . . . It was at um, I think its called El Soso park in, on the west side . . . I was with my cousins . . . I think . . . I can't tell which one said it because there was a lot of people and I heard like, it was like a big crowd so I couldn't tell which is which . . . well like they were just, it was probably like three times . . . that like people with Learning Disabilities **won't get nowhere, they won't have a good education** (Bianca, 4/15/15).

In the above excerpt, the sense of hopelessness can be understood from Bianca's emotion-laden talk, as well as topics outlined earlier, such as struggling with academics and overall deficit thinking about people with LD. Her experience left the following impression on Bianca: "I didn't say nothing I just kept quiet and I was *kinda* like, I was *kinda* like *a little mad*, but then like I didn't **care** what he said cause half of that stuff is aren't true" (Bianca, 4/15/15). Paradoxically, Bianca shared that she was mad—modified with the minimizer a little—and used

the feeling category care, to state she did not care due to the half-truth nature of *LD myths* she overheard. The fact that Bianca was attuned to these *LD myths* points to the sensibility, both internally and externally, that she was cognizant of as a student with LD.

Nevertheless, these *LD myths* are a significant predicament to the lived experiences of students and adults with LD. This challenge points to Thomas' (1999) definition of disability as “a form of social oppression involving the social imposition of restrictions of activity on people with impairments and the socially engendered undermining of their psycho-emotional well-being” (p. 3). For example, Bianca shared the following: “I think the bad part[s] with a Learning Disability is that your **scared** that your going to be **made fun of** and be **called like rude names** and like probably you be **struggle[ing]**, you be **struggling how to do stuff**” (Bianca, 4/18/15). Bianca expressed that students with LD, like herself, experienced being **scared** of being **made fun of** and insulted by others due to their academic **struggles**. Here the term **struggle** and **struggling in how to do stuff** are therefore emotion implicative WHATs, including being **made fun of** and called **rude names** due to one's ability differences.

As Bianca continued to share how students with LD feel about being labeled LD we can begin to see how *LD myths* were connected to fear and, therefore, placed in jeopardy the well-being of students with LD: “I think some people will [be] **scared** to be **who they are** like they just don't want to be, **they don't want people to know that they have a learning disability**, like they just want to keep everything that I guess **embarrassing** inside themselves” (Bianca,

4/18/15). However, this is the first time that Bianca connected the *LD myths*, and the emotionality that comes with it, to the core of who people are. In other words, the stigma of not being “who they are,” according to Bianca, both internally and externally traps people with embarrassment for having LD.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS & LIMITATIONS

The emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD for Sophia Cruz, Daniel Martinez and Bianca Edith Pueblo illuminated individual and collective experiences of psycho-emotional disablement (Thomas, 1999) and the politics of hope. By psycho-emotional disablement I mean to suggest that all three participants experienced structural and individual ableism within the big d Discourses of schooling, special education and LD. While for Sophia this ableism also played out within her home with her siblings and cousins, and for Bianca with friends outside of school (i.e., the park). Specifically, these experiences of disablement involved the hegemony of smartness, not only for Sophia but also Bianca. In addition, while Sophia experienced disability microaggressions because of the salience of her LD label, Daniel experienced being bullied. For Bianca, the combination of negative emotionality and her relationships with others such as her teachers that were tenuous constrained her social activity at school. In addition to these individual and collective experiences of psycho-emotional disablement, being labeled with LD involved the politics of help. By the politics of help I mean that being labeled LD for the student participants involved the salience of help that we saw was played out within the following domains: literacy struggles, their teachers and the emotion category of hope. The need for help within the big d Discourse of schooling, special education and LD for them consisted in their relationship between these factors at school to meet the expectations and norms of the social constructions of learning. The latter of

which, however, was not devoid of emotion. While I have presented throughout the findings chapters student's emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD as separate from their understandings of the idea of LD, as I have stated above, these two research foci do not exist in isolation from one another.

Sophia, Daniel, and Bianca's understandings about the idea of LD involved nomenclature from the big d Discourses that they were enveloped themselves, oppression at their intersections of identity markers, and genuine learning struggles. By the nomenclature from the big d Discourses I refer to the Discourses of schooling, special education and LD where, for example, for Daniel one way he understood the idea of LD was as resource, information processing and speech. In addition to these, we also saw across some of the participants a "culture of silence" about the idea of LD—where not only ongoing discussion and reflectivity about the idea of LD was non-existent, but about basic understandings about what LD is and why they were in special education and labeled with it. The language of the professional knowledge of LD, what Danforth (2009) has called the symbolic complex cultural-historical master narrative then reigns powerful in explaining what the idea of LD is and as we can see with Daniel's example part of this symbolic complex was internalized. Through the subtheme of LDness as polymorphous we saw, however, that the meaning of the idea of LD takes different forms: *LDness as a matter of fact*, *LDness as a special needs kid*, *LDness as a self-fulfilling prophecy*, *LDness as struggling in literacy*, and *LDness as alienation*. These latter permutations in the emotion-laden talk of Sophia signify how the idea of LD takes on different meanings on the ground for those

labeled as such. I understand these multiple meanings as a product of a culture of silence that is institutionalized within the big d Discourse of schooling, special education and LD for those living and labeled with the condition of LD, while there is the production of LD by those who are not labeled with LD in their attempts to control, predict and intervene (Ferguson, Ferguson, & Taylor, 1992) in the lives of children with LD. This predicament was evident in the emotion-laden talk of the students and the parents within this study where the meaning of the idea of LD and what it meant for themselves and their children to be labeled with LD was not a finalized notion: hence, LD was polymorphous.

In addition to, what in turn, from one perspective, was the product of the medical-psychological model of disability institutionalized within the big d Discourse of schooling, special education and LD, nomenclature was how LD oppression was experienced by the student participants due to the idea of LD at its intersections. For example, we witnessed Daniel make sense of his dis/ability at the intersections of ethnicity and language when he came to the realization that he did not see many White-English speaking peers labeled with LD or in special education and struggling with the English language due to having Spanish as their first language. In turn, Bianca's emotion-laden talk provided us with examples of LD myths that she experienced in her social contexts outside of school. From a Disability Studies perspective, we can see how LD is not only a medical-psychological entity but an identity marker akin to race, where the salience of her ability difference came to a fore when others in her peer group expose her to negative life-trajectories regarding people and students with LD. This external

exposure lead to negative ideational meanings about the idea of LD which ran the risk of being internalized by Bianca.

As we witnessed with Sophia, Daniel, and Bianca's emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD having both positive (i.e., help as hope) and negative (i.e., the hegemony of smartness) attributes, reviewed so far, we can see the same thing with the idea of LD (i.e., oppressions at the intersections of identity markers and the nomenclature from the big d Discourse of schooling, special education and LD). Since, lastly, we witnessed the feeling-meaning making (Lemke, 2013) of all the student participants involving real learning struggles. For example, Bianca shared that the idea of LD involved 'struggles due to lack of understanding,' while for Sophia her subthemes of LDness as a slow learner and LD as double-edge sword epitomizes this notion that they experienced real learning struggles and that being labeled with LD was not only a negative aspect.

Below, therefore, I take these main conclusions and findings from Sophia, Daniel, and Bianca and discuss the following literatures: the discursive practices of LD (Reid & Valle, 2005; Connor, 2005), the cultural-historical master narratives of LD and the social and emotional dimensions of LD. Bearing in mind the goal and analytic approach of this study: re-specifying LD through the identification of emotion-laden talk, including their emotion implicative WHATs and intensifiers, thematic analysis, intersectional and cultural-historical approach I also engage in discussion before I layout the implications for theory, research, policy and practice of this study and end with its limitations.

Discursive practices of LD: *Infusing LD emotionality.* At the beginning of each of the findings chapters above I began them with the emotion-laden talk of Sophia, Daniel and Bianca. Here I bring back those voices as I begin my discussion and a quote by Michel Foucault:

Sophia Cruz: “Well, if she did understand that am a *little bit* slow learner then she would’ve understand and she would have taken her time”— (Sophia, 9/17/14).

Daniel Martinez: “Reading . . . I don’t like to be called learning disability . . . I like to be called like the struggles in reading . . . A learning disability sounds like if you’re a kid that was born with a genetic disease or disorder I mean . . . Probably it is cause like Spanish is way different than English, the vowels, constants how they go, the sight words, like that . . . Cause am like new to English and . . . I don’t really see [students] whose first language was English have like a learning disability, but I think um you can be born . . . like I don’t know like, their brain doesn’t really work in a certain way. I don’t know, that’s what I think” (Daniel, 2/16/15).

Bianca Edith Pueblo: “I think find a **healthy** way to **let it out** . . . Because if like you like keep **holding it in** you’ll get like *more* **frustrated**, yeah, you’ll get *more* **frustrated**. . . like you’ll get **frustrated** to **holding it in** . . . someday it will come out from a different person, when someone tells you about your **abilities** . . . I think it is important because like if you keep **holding it in** and when someone find[s] out that you do have a learning disability they’ll probably **make fun of you**” (Bianca, 4/11/15).

Michel Foucault: “A critique does not consist in saying that things are not good the way they are. It consists in seeing what types of assumptions, familiar notions of established, unexamined ways of thinking on the accepted practices are based” (Foucault, 2000, p. 456-457).

I do this to continue to problematize or in Foucault's words, critique, the larger discursive practices of LD. Within these practices, there are historical and cultural moments of both the academic and the social and emotional dimensions of LD (McDermott et al., 2009). The discursive practices do not only exist within the walls of schools. They are played out both internally and externally within and

outside of students and become materialized in their lives as the emotion-laden talk of Sophia, Daniel and Bianca attest.

The discursive practices of LD—by Reid and Valle (2005)—brought together a *reflective turn* (Connor, 2005) in the field of LD. Connor (2005) describes the discursive practices of LD the following way that summarizes this important critique of the field of LD, LD and (special) education:

Reid and Valle have shown that a learning disability is a thing that cannot stand alone. Their multidimensional approach to describing the origins and “nature” of LD combines many discourses and touches on others, highlighting the complexities of this concept. The discourse of LD, therefore, is composed of many interlocking discourses and can only be understood in relation to other discourses. To disentangle LD from connected and overlapping discourses—such as race, class or gender—and treat LD as a pure concept is artificial and misleading (Artiles, in this issue). Lorde (1998) described how each marker of identity informs others in ways that cannot be completely contained, fully measured, or clearly differentiated. Whereas special education may circumscribe LD (along with other disability designations) as an individual condition, the field of disability studies encourages exploration of the disability experience as it relates to the discourses of humanities, law, religion, economics, and the arts, *as well as science* (p.172).

In other words, the discursive practices of LD topic signify a meta-discourse regarding the epistemological, ontological and axiological practices of LD that

takes into account the social construction of LD. However, we have failed to engage deeply with emotionality as it relates to LD. This study contributes to this gap by going deeper into the role of emotion and how it engages with LD. Particularly, in how Sophia, Daniel, and Bianca's self-narrativizations within the big d Discourses of general, special education and LD are emotion-laden. By focusing on the role of emotionality within the discursive practices of LD, we acknowledge that discourse is not devoid of emotion—hence, my use of emotion discourse (Edward, 1999)—methodologically, within this study enabled me to focus on the role of emotionality in Sophia, Daniel, and Bianca's lived experiences with LD labeling and the idea of LD through their emotion-laden talk.

As the discursive practices of LD scholars have highlighted the traditional and dominant “assumptions, familiar notions of established, unexamined ways of thinking on the accepted practices” (Foucault, 2000, p. 456-457) about LD, in the nexus of a vortex of dehumanizing discourses in society and schooling, perpetuate inequity. For example, this is in part due to systems of standardization and neoliberal policies and practices that adhere to individualism and meritocracy that socially position children and students who are different from the “average student” or non-labeled peers and therefore is intolerant to difference (Connor, 2005). In particular, built into the current system of schooling—general, special education and the field of LD—is the “hunt for disability” (Baker, 2002) of “outlawed ontologies” (Artiles, 2011; Wrigley, 1996). Baker describes this hunt the following way and argues that it is a form of new eugenics:

It seems that in education there has been what Foucault (1979) in a different context has referred to as a *swarming* effect. In this case it is around the hunt for and diagnosis of disability as a negative ontology that schools actively seek to name, and . . . remedy with the best of intentions (Baker, 2002, p. 679).

Students like Sophia, Daniel, and Bianca, are keenly aware how they are positioned and perceived by others and how these best intentions end up causing a damaged-emotional-imagery within their self-narrativizations about their academic identities. Added to this, due to their multidimensional identities and their social constructions, we also saw that the nature of the vortex of discourses about their ontologies includes a matrix of oppression. However, due to the power of the medical-psychological model of dis/ability, which are the common sense assumptions within the big d Discourses of LD and special education, we can also see that Sophia, Daniel, and Bianca internalized the validity of the epistemology or paradigm structured within the system that has made sense or what Artiles (1998) would argue has “represented” them as “LD.”

Interrogating the cultural-historical master narratives of LD through gender. One of the cultural-historical master narratives of LD is *LD as a boy who struggles with reading, which is due to intrinsic factors*. Within this study, we can see that Sophia, Daniel, and Bianca internalized this master narrative. Remember, very much like the notion of critique—that to critique is not about saying that things are not good the way they are—the notion of master narrative is not about saying that master narratives are not good, but outlining the sociocultural milieu

that both affords and constraints the local constellations of people's agency. For example, in our case, what could be said about *what and who counts as LD?*

There is research to suggest that girls are very much affected by LD as much as boys, and their stories are a testament to this (Ferri, 1997; Ferri, & Gregg, 1998; Ferri, & Connor, 2010). Therefore, to perpetuate a master narrative that purely focuses on boys with LD is problematic. Infusing equity within master narratives, therefore, is important to move away from the center of discourses of power such as LD to provide a human rights (Runswick-Cole, & Hodge, 2009) approach to all students with LD that is sensitive to the social construction of gender and LD.

For example, Sophia and Bianca's self-narrativizations about being labeled with LD and the idea of LD spoke to *verbal and symbolic violence* that was rooted in *issues of representation* (i.e., the hegemony of smartness; disability microaggressions and its emotionality; LD myths), *relationships* (e.g., embarrassment to ask for assistance from others), *contradiction* (e.g., LD as a double-edged sword; struggles due to not understanding), *agency* (e.g., help as hope; self-advocacy to parent when her teacher was not meeting her needs) and *complexity* (e.g., LDness as X; LD as polymorphous). Nevertheless, these were enveloped by the following themes for Sophia and Bianca as it relates to their background and sociocultural contexts: *the importance of Latina/o students' with LD intersectional social identities within and beyond sociodemographic factors* (e.g., meeting Sophia Cruz and (troubling) sociodemographic and identity factors; on the salience of socioculturally contextualizing Sophia's emotion-laden talk;

meeting Daniel Martinez at his intersections; Daniel's multidimensional identities and literacies; Introducing Bianca Edith Pueblo); *the school and home contexts of Latina/o students' with LD* (e.g., Sophia's outside of school contexts and family members; coming to Nodding Elementary School; Daniel's school community support; Bianca's family; on the importance of relationships within Bianca's contexts); *the labeling of Latina/o students' with LD* (e.g., coming to terms with being labeled LD; Sophia's understanding of her LD; the politics of Daniel's LD classification; Bianca's academic preferences); and *the importance of Latina/o parents' narratives about their children with LD* (e.g., Luciana's perspectives regarding Sophia's LD; meeting and getting to know Daniel's parents and home context; Mia's beliefs about Daniel's and her own LD and Mia's perspectives regarding her community: *Disrupting stereotypes*). Notice that I also included Daniel's background and sociocultural contexts within Sophia and Bianca's former themes as well, which signifies the importance of these factors overlapping across and within gender and problematizes the master narrative of "LD as only a boy who struggles with reading, which is due to intrinsic factors."

The social and emotional dimensions of LD. Across Sophia, Daniel and Bianca's emotion-laden talk we can see how the manifestations of emotion become relevant and mediated their schooling experiences, inside and outside of the big d Discourses of general and special education and LD. However, emotion not as a purely psychological process, but one that is social in nature. Therefore, undergirding the social construction of LD through emotionality, by taking the emotion-laden talk of Latina/o students with LD into account is key in reframing

the paradigmatic ways in which the field of the social and emotional dimensions of LD can begin to transcend the historically “orthogonal relationship between culture and LD” (Artiles et al., 2011). For example, by explicitly engaging traditional sociodemographic factors—such as dis/ability, class, gender, race, ethnicity, language, immigration status, among others—beyond group traits (Artiles et al., 2011) and taking seriously their cultural mediating forces in the lives of students with LD as sites of potential abilities and feeling-meaning (Lemke, 2013) making, that students navigate and make sense of is critical to (re)thinking holistically as opposed to linearly and reductionist as if the academic and social and emotional dimensions of their lives are not interconnected to power-relations as it relates to the social construction of dis/ability and emotionality. This includes being reflective and taking socioculturally and emotionally situated actions *with* students that contributes to their well-beings that do, internally and externally, engage with student’s psycho-emotional aspects of disablism toward individual and societal transformation. This can be done through fighting the culture of silence in schools and in society about the idea of LD and what it means to be labeled as such within educational contexts. The latter can work towards embracing a culture of voice and empowerment about LD and LD emotions.

The pros, cons and fluidity of LD on the ground. The promise of LD and special education, however, did not escape Sophia, Daniel, and Bianca as their emotion-laden talk proved. Nevertheless, Sophia, Daniel, and Bianca all seesawed between the pros and cons of being labeled with LD and saw in

themselves areas of improvement, as it relates to basic reading and writing and other social and emotional skills, that they needed. However, as the dominant assumptions regarding LD would have it these basic reading and writing and social and emotional skills purely exist in the individual and are ahistorical, acultural, asocial and aemotional. This is similar to how the discourse of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) has been constructed and critiqued (See Honkasilta (2016) for a discussion on the master narrative of ADHD (de)constructed by diagnosed children and their parents in Finland and see Freedman (2016) for an analysis of the discourses ADHD in US special education textbooks) for its reliance on a medical master narrative of ADHD and hence, both ADHD and other high-incidence special education categories, such as LD, can be framed as the medicalization of deviant behavior (Conrad, 1975; 2006; Conrad & Schneider, 2010) within compulsory schooling. Therefore, emotionally speaking, within Sophia, Daniel and Bianca's emotion-laden talk about being labeled LD and the idea of LD experienced what Mary Jo Deegan (2010) call "feeling normal" and "feeling disabled." Deegan (2010) states:

A long-term disability is part of a person's everyday life, biography and self. Although recent traumatic disability fundamentally changes the self and relationships with others . . . , any disability ultimately shapes the self and its relationships with the lifeworld . . . If a person experiences an everyday life that is meaningful and accepted, then disability becomes part of a "normal life." In this situation, the person "feels normal" and disability becomes part of that normality and is often unreflexive . . . and

part of one's natural attitude . . . "Feeling normal" incorporates the liminality . . . of being disabled in an able-bodied society. That is, disability in hypermodern society creates a permanent status of being betwixt and between many social statuses not least of which is "being normal" according to an able-bodied standard . . . But "feeling normal with a disability" includes the liminal statuses and experiences as part of the structures of relevance of the lifeworld. Physical disability is part of everyday life and incorporated within the self. When this situation dramatically changes, however, the person may be "feeling disabled," and the disability comes to the forefront of everyday life and consciousness. Understanding of the embodied self and relationships with others are altered, and "feeling disabled" becomes a source of apprehension, discomfort, unhappiness, alienation, and powerlessness (p. 25).

Deegan (2010) continues by characterizing this latter situation as a "colonization of the self"—where all, disabled or not, due to the particular frames that are internalized due to the hegemonic ablest standards in society and in our case the big d Discourse of schooling, special education and the field of LD, incorporate a false consciousness that leads to "feeling disabled." Hence, "feeling disabled" leads to suffering; and in our case, we see that Sophia, Daniel and Bianca's emotion-laden talk included this colonization of the self that involved negative emotionality. The matrix of oppression (Collins, 2000) available to them, and institutionalized, then within the cultural artifact of "LD," therefore, engenders the web in which Sophia, Daniel, and Bianca and others are caught in the everyday

emotional discursive practices of general, special education and LD. In other words, as opposed to purely conceptualizing LD and the social and emotional dimensions of LD as existing within the neurology of Sophia, Daniel and Bianca their emotion-laden talk, as it relates to their lived experiences as students with LD, the colonization of their self is the sociopolitical and cultural-historical construction of their academic identities. Nevertheless, although the negative side of LD was internalized it did not necessarily originate within students such as Sophia, Daniel, and Bianca.

Structure and Agency: *Operationalizing DisCrit*. Amidst the web above of hegemonic structures of general, special education and the field of LD Sophia, Daniel and Bianca's lived experiences serve as case studies that illuminate their agency as Latina/o students with LD. Disability Studies (DS) and the more recent DS and critical race theory (Crit) in education—DisCrit (Connor, Ferri, & Annamma, 2016)—theoretical and methodological framework, that centers the analysis of both race and dis/ability within education and society as mutually constitutive, privilege voices of marginalized populations, traditionally not acknowledged within research (Tenet four of DisCrit). This study contributes to lessening this gap and adheres to this fourth tenet of DisCrit by gathering not only the voices of Sophia, Daniel, and Bianca but also Sophia and Daniel's mothers' voices regarding their children's disabilities and lived experiences at home and school. For example, we saw Sophia's mother's, Luciana, and Sophia's, engagement and advocacy for her daughter to gain not only a quality of education but understanding and tolerance from her teachers regarding Sophia's LD

moments that, unfortunately, engendered discrimination from not only her peers, siblings but also her teachers.

Consequently, DisCrit has seven tenets that undergird its explanatory power. This dissertation study also operationalized several other tenets of DisCrit. By purposely sampling (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) Latina/o students with LD I adhered to the second tenet of DisCrit: “DisCrit values multidimensional identities and troubles singular notions of identity such as race or disability or class or gender or sexuality, and so on” (Annamma et al., 2016, p. 19). Also, tenet three states: “DisCrit emphasizes the social constructions of race and ability and yet recognizes the material and psychological impacts of being labeled as raced or dis/abled, which sets one outside of the western cultural norms” (Annamma et al., 2016, p. 19). By specifically gathering the emotion-laden talk of Sophia, Daniel, and Bianca and highlighting how for Sophia, for example, *LD is a double-edged sword* and she experiences *the hegemony of smartness and disability microaggressions* is evidence for the psychological impact of being labeled as LD. For Daniel, it was the experience of being bullied and the salience of the intersections between his disability, ethnicity, and language that showcases the impact of being labeled LD and his language status and ethnicities within the hegemonic order in both schools and society. Lastly, Bianca’s experiences of “embarrassment to ask for assistance” from others and the laminating element of relationships—or the lack thereof—as constraining her opportunities to learn emphasizes the psychological impact of being labeled LD and experiencing

negative LD emotions or “feeling disabled” and the colonization of the self (Deegan, 2010).

Given the secondary goal of this dissertation study to expose Sophia, Daniel, Bianca and the other participants to the master narratives of LD or in other words, the discursive practices of LD and gather their counter-narratives in the form of emotion-laden talk and understand the latter as the self-narrativizations of the students this study understands the latter as students such as Sophia, Daniel, and Bianca as already being agentive within the master narratives of LD. Within the *narrative as space*, that this study, allowed myself, students, parents, and teachers to have, we engaged in what Connor (2005) attributed Dudley-Marling’s framing of Reid and Valle’s claim of the discursive practice of LD call and literature allowed: that is, “it is instructive to interrogate the process of *meaning-making* in LD” (p. 170, *emphasis in original*). I take this one step further and argue that by engaging in the *narrative as space* that the participants and I did within this study, we engaged in not only interrogating the process of meaning-making in LD but also the *feeling-meaning* (Lemke, 2013) making process of those positioned as “LD.” In so doing, through gathering their paralogy, that is, their emotion-laden talk, each of the participants enacted their agency within the discursive practices of LD from a meta-cognitive and meta-feeling frame.

Implications for policy and practice

In concert with DisCrit’s first and seventh tenet—DisCrit focuses on ways that the forces of racism and ableism circulate interdependently, often in

neutralized and invisible ways, to uphold notions of normalcy (tenet one), and DisCrit requires activism and supports all forms of resistance (tenet seven)—the implications of this dissertation study, I argue call for *a systemic interdisciplinary and collaborative transformation* towards humanization of Latina/o students labeled with LD and *ALL* students labeled with LD who also have social and emotional struggles.

How I, hence operationalize, this call and transformation is by culling from liberation psychology, developed by the late Jesuit priest and senior academic at the University of Central America in San Salvador Ignacio Martín-Baró (1942-1989) (1986) and through a DS and community psychology approach to *resilience*, outlined by Katherine Runswick-Cole and Dan Goodley (2016). Below I outline implications for policy and practice based on Sophia, Daniel and Bianca's emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD and of the idea of LD to and through the tenets of liberation psychology and a DS and community psychology approach to resilience. Given the psycho-emotional impact of the social construction of dis/ability, race, ethnicity, and language status within society and educational contexts critical (special) education pre-service and in-service educators, within the big d Discourses of general, special education, and field of LD, would benefit from an the approach to policies and practices towards a critical revolutionary praxis (Allman, 2007) towards LD emotions of a systemic interdisciplinary and collaborative transformation for the human rights (Runswick-Cole & Hodge, 2009) of students with LD who have social and emotional struggles.

According to Burton & Kagan (2009), Martín-Baró first of all advocated for a liberation psychology that included the development of *conscientization* or critical consciousness (Freire, 2000) by reading not only the word but one's world (tenet one of liberation psychology). Burton and Kagan (2009) theorized "that if there are social-psychological principles that have a wide cross-cultural application, then this is one [*conscientization*], which seems to capture a basic truth about liberation with diverse groups who become self-aware and system-aware actors in diverse situations" (p. 56). This first tenet could be applied to both Latina/o students with LD who have social and emotional struggles along with their pre-service and in-service teachers who work alongside them. For example, "reading" what counts as LD and what it means to be labeled with LD for labeled students is one entry point to enable this first tenet given the imperative findings of this study. That is, the psycho-emotional disablement of students such as Sophia, Daniel and Bianca and the politics of hope. Furthermore, in order to combat the psycho-emotional disablement that they experienced they internally and externally engaged in the politics of hope while in dialogue with me. This, in turn, could be operationalized within the big d Discourses of special education, education and LD. To what extent do we engage in conversations about the social construction of LD? LD emotions? How it feels to be a student labeled with LD? What LD means to them? Implications is has for their position within peer groups? How do emotion and LD relate to one another? I posit that this type of reflexivity could enable a pre-service and in-service teacher with their students about the construct of LD as an ongoing conversation that informs youth

disability identity development. The latter can construct the culture of silence that exists regarding LD that we witnessed Sophia, Daniel and Bianca experience internally, but did not get a chance during their daily lives on the ground with LD to externally make feeling-meaning about it.

This leads to liberation psychology's second tenet—*realismo-critico* and de-ideologization. Martín-Baró was a critical-realist and advocated “it shouldn't be theories that define the problems of our situation, but rather the problems that demand, and so to speak, select, their own theorization” (Martín-Baró, 1998, p. 314 as cited in Burton & Kagan, 2009, p. 57). Theory is meant to support practice, as a scaffold (Burton & Kagan, 2009). In addition, by de-ideologization, according to Burton & Kagan (2009), Martín-Baró did not mean a:

Naïve realism: the nature of the social reality can be difficult to apprehend, not just for the people, but for the theory and the practice of psychology itself. It is therefore necessary to de-ideologize reality, to peel off the layers of ideology (for Martín-Baró the disguised exercise of power) that individualize and naturalize phenomena” (Burton & Kagan, 2009, p. 57).

Through the first tenet we see that a liberation psychology begins with the reading of the word and the world. However, through the second tenet we see that taking into account the real lived realities of students as opposed to standardized and normalized characteristics of individual's abilities and disabilities, for example, is critical for policies and practices to center the real problems of students labeled with LD about the idea of LD and being labeled as such. Martín-Baró's (1998)

second tenet centers us to responding to students with LD's real problems first and in addressing them to consider the best theoretical lens that can assist in problem solving those. From a DisCrit perspective, listening to the voices, or in our case, emotion-laden talk of Latina/o students with LD, will serve critical in apprehending their real problems to work towards solutions. Given my interdisciplinary lens, pre-service and in-service teachers, therefore, working with Latina/o students with LD and ALL students with LD should take an interdisciplinary reflexive stance (Artiles et al., 2011) that takes into account what Artiles (2015) has called the classroom culture, what people bring to the classroom, with their individual identities and what people *do* together in social and emotional interactions that they each contribute.

In-service and pre-service teachers can keep in mind liberation psychology's third tenet—*the social—societal orientation to reality*. This tenet underscores the socially constructed nature of reality and realities as opposed to the medical-psychological models that dominant in society, and in our case schooling, special education and about the nature of LD. In turn, this tenet is a heavy critique of the normalization of individualism and meritocracy within US society and in our case schooling. Furthermore, as Burton and Kagan have noted, “this social or societal orientation is also historical, with a constant sense of how things got to be the way they are, and how this history is ever present in the subjectivity of the people” (2009, p. 57). In the case of my own research, their idea specifically refers to Latina/o students with LD about the idea of LD and being labeled with LD. This tenet is not just about theory, therefore, but also

about practice—an ethical project—due to the “conflictive nature of society and the omnipresence of power” (Burton & Kagan, 2009, p. 57). Like DisCrit and whiteness studies understand ableism and racism as—interdependent, interpersonal and institutional, within this third tenet of liberation psychology, “power is to be understood not just on an interpersonal basis but in terms of its organization in society” (Burton & Kagan, 2009, p. 57). However, as we have seen in Sophia, Daniel and Bianca’s emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD and the idea of LD they clearly understood the rationale-utilitarian reasons for the special education category, LD (e.g., extra help from teachers due to their literacy struggles), but at the same time felt the institutional, historical material-discursive power of being positioned as “LD.” The latter of which causes psycho-emotional disablement (Thomas, 1999). Nevertheless, from a liberation psychology perspective this disablement is part and parcel of power-relations that are produced from what Thomas (1999) would argue: “the social imposition of restrictions of activity on people with impairments and the socially engendered undermining of their psycho-emotional well-being” (p. 3).

Lastly, liberation psychology calls for a methodological eclecticism for the discipline of psychology. This is not the norm within psychology. Similarly to the field of educational psychology being grounded within a historical experimentalism and the field of special education and general education being grounded in a positivist paradigm that often times are resistant to critique along theory, methods and research, liberation psychology’s final tenet of methodological eclecticism is akin to the pluralistic methodologies called by

Connor et al. (2011) for the field of LD. Nevertheless, there are pros and cons to the notion of methodological eclecticism within science given that different disciplines, for example, train and, directly and indirectly, create boundary objects (e.g., LD is a case in point within the field of LD) and engage in boundary work (e.g., such as funding agencies that value and privilege quantitative, evidence-based research and policies and practices over qualitative and alternative paradigms, research and policies and practices) values the freedom of culling from a variety of methodologies and paradigms that are practical, that is, grounded in the real life and social problems of the people—in our case Latina/o students with LD who also have social and emotional dimensions to their LD. Therefore, one benefit from a methodological eclecticism is the flexibility of culling from a variety of theoretical, methodological and applied constructs and tools to the psychological problems of students with LD. For example, Ferri, Gallagher, and Connor (2011) ask the following critical philosophical questions about the academic side of LD: “*What is considered acceptable knowledge about learning disabilities? Who decides? What are the origins of this knowledge? Who uses it, and toward what ends? Who, in the end, benefits?*” (p. 229). From a critical theory perspective, which is not the norm within the field of LD and special education (Danforth & Taff, 2004) such questions do not drive policies and practices. For example, implications from this current study are *what are emotional impacts of being labeled and segregated as “LD”?* However, on the other hand, methodological eclecticism could be a threat to the identity and integrity of a discipline such as special education and in our case LD and the

social and emotional dimensions of LD. Artiles (2005) spoke to this tension as it relates to the future identity of special education and general education as it related to the international and national movement towards inclusive education. For example, the ways in which we train special educators and general educators contributes to the boundary objects of in-service and pre-service special educators versus general educators' personal and professional identities. This latter predicament, unfortunately, creates tensions on the ground for not only teachers but also students. Nevertheless, holding true to a methodological eclecticism liberation psychology approach the *research problems* that social scientists, within and outside of psychology, pursue should not only be aligned with the types of research questions they ask, but with the (ongoing) conceptual frameworks they create and methods and methodologies (i.e., paradigms) they use to the real life and social problems of the people.

For example, one way of operationalizing not only a methodological eclecticism liberation psychology approach along with the other three tenets—of *conscientization, realismo-critico and de-ideologization, and the social—societal orientation to reality*—is through a DS and community psychology approach to resilience regarding psycho-emotional disablement and the importance of the politics of hope that Sophia, Daniel and Bianca shared in their emotion-laden talk about the idea of LD and being labeled. I do this in order to begin to theorize for practice a *systemic interdisciplinary and collaborative transformation for ALL students labeled with LD* who suffer at the intersections of psycho-emotional disablement with other forms of oppression.

A DS and community psychology approach includes eight tenets. The first one is the human right to material resources, or access to “financial, educational, medical, and employment opportunities or assistance, as well as access to food, clothing, and shelter to meet basic needs” (Runswick-Cole & Goodley, 2013, p. 12-13). Sophia spoke candidly about the rational-utilitarian purpose for being labeled with LD and about the idea of LD: “there is like a *big* reason why we’re here [school]” (Sophia, 9/16/14). This is an example of how her emotion-laden talk aligns with this rational-utilitarian purpose, however, one that is mindful of not something “wrong” with students per se, but of granting material resources as it connects the meaning and purpose of LD as socially and materially based in nature. From one perspective, special education and the labeling of children with LD has traditionally aided in the access to material resources in the form of special education teachers and paraprofessionals. We witnessed the vice principal of Nodding Elementary School, Mrs. Luz, speak to the tension of having a label of LD granting educational resources such as extra “free tutoring” that is guaranteed during the school day, for example.

The second tenet of a DS and community psychology approach to resilience is relationships. Bianca’s emotion-laden talk about being labeled LD and about the idea of LD spoke to the importance of relationships. The importance of “relationships with significant others, peers, adults and children/young people within one's family and community” is then a key tenet that can foreground a praxis for students like Bianca. Runswick-Cole and Goodley (2016) gave the following sample question: “In what way does the support of

family and friends enable a sense of hope?” (p. 13). The politics of hope and the trinity of LD which included help and teachers speaks to the importance of relationships for the resilience of not only students’ like Bianca, but Sophia and Daniel as well. As stand-alone frameworks, liberation psychology and DS and community psychology, both emphasize the importance of access to ideational, material and relational and I would also argue emotional resources, hence equity. However, when taken together they can contribute to a praxis that in-service and pre-service teachers alongside with students with LD and ALL students can benefit from.

The third tenet of a DS and community psychology approach to resilience is what I have operationalized as intersectional identity development. Sophia, Daniel and Bianca’s feeling-meaning making about who they are and want to become is a critical social and individual identity developmental process. Given the current non-intersectional identity development framework within the big d Discourse of schooling, special education and the field of LD as it relates to both the academic and social and emotional dimensions of LD, it is important for policies and practices to take seriously not only the social construction of LD and its emotions, but also the intersectional lives of culturally and linguistically diverse and historically marginalized youth such as Latina/o students with LD. Nevertheless, all human beings are culturally and linguistically diverse and have multiple identities therefore taking into account intersectional identity development is critical for schooling policies and practices. For example Runswick-Cole and Goodley (2013) advocate for the importance of both a

“personal and collective sense of self and purpose, self-appraisal of strengths and weaknesses, aspirations, beliefs and values, including spiritual and religious identification” (p. 13). Further, valuing and acknowledging one’s multidimensional identities and how they intersect and are connected to larger systemic systems of power and privilege is critical for developing liberation psychology’s first tenet: *conscientization*. How does a positive self-narrativization emerge within the contexts of a matrix of oppression (Collins, 2000) along intersectional lives? This tenet is salient to not only Daniel’s case study, but to Sophia and Bianca as well. Developing a sense of pride for one’s personal identities is critical to the personal aspects of intersectionality as opposed to the structural and political ones that Kimberly Crenshaw (1993) spoke about. During the moments within my interview session with Daniel where he expressed with me that his neighborhood was not dangerous and that a possible reason why he was labeled with LD was due to the fact that he spoke Spanish as his first language were critical moments in which we were able to see the intersection of dis/ability and language and ethnicity and deficit oriented ideologies about his community and other Mexican-Americans within society. Interestingly, it was Daniel who questioned why he only saw Spanish speaking students labeled with LD, while English speaking students did not need to be labeled with an LD. Furthermore, all human beings have multidimensional identities and due to the social constructions of these identity markers and their emotionality, we see the legacies of historical violence to certain groups—African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, Arab more so than to (in contemporary public schooling and

society) Whites and Asians. Indeed, this legacy is White supremacy alongside ableism that produces a psycho-emotional damage. Nevertheless, in order to combat this legacy that is why there is a need for intersectional identity development to understand that there are allegiances within and across ethnic, racial, cultural, linguistic and dis/abled groups. It is important, however, to remember that there is always a theory of change in a sense with identity groups, where there is both within group differences and human beings are in a state of flux about what it means to be themselves as it relates to being in solidarity with others like them within identity groups (Artiles et al., 2011).

The fourth tenet of a DS and community psychology approach at resilience is being mindful of bodies and minds. This means talking critically and realistically about “the influence of one’s body and mind—including impairment—in relationships with others (Runswick-Cole & Goodley, 2013, p. 13). Building from tenet three above about intersectional identity development the intersectional nature of students’ bodies and minds is of critical importance due to circulating both national and international master narratives of LD that impact the historical-material dialectics (Erevelles, 2011) between those labeled disabled and others within the context of global capitalism and transnationalism. Similarly, McDermott, Edgar, and Scarloss (2011) warn us of this dangerous transnational and global labeling of minds and bodies through the process they call “global norming.” Due to the nineteenth-century industrial revolution and Enlightenment period of rationality and modernity that has become the zeitgeist of today, “global norming” has become omnipresent in the pursuit of democracy, progress,

development, and in the name of education. But this has come at a cost since twentieth and twentieth-first-century nation states have had its say on “how we must educate, measure, and explain children and schooling” enveloped within this zeitgeist (McDermott et. al., 2011, p. 223). In other words, this latter context is what Kolzeski, Artiles, and Waitoller (2014) describe as undergirding US and other major industrialized nation’s practices as “reify[ing] ethnocentrism, ableism, and competition, and a telos of assimilation” (p. 244). Therefore, power, privilege, and difference along not only intersectional makers of identity but nation building and other circulating narratives are critical to student’s lived experiences such as Daniel’s comment about his ethnicity: “to not make Mexicans look bad, cause they want to deport them back to Mexico” (Daniel, 11/5/14).

The fifth tenet is power and control. Amidst this national and transnational “global norming” telos, Sophia, Daniel, and Bianca and the home and school communities they belong to are agentive. According to Runswick-Cole and Goodley (2013) to be resilient is to exercise agency by “experiences of caring for one's self and others; the ability to affect change in one's social and physical environment in order to access health, educational and community resources” (p.13). Power and care—in this case being resilient—are two sides of the same coin, just like Foucault has argued that power both constraints and affords people’s agency. Taking care into account is serious because allowing for the care of the other side of the historical-material dialectic (Erevelles, 2011) is critical for transformative change. The case studies of all the participants spoke to this human right of care. For example, Sophia in the form of LD being a double-edged sword

where the positive side of LD enabled her to go to school and allow her to be herself as it relates to disability or LD: “there’s nothing **bad** about it, there’s *really* not, there’s nothing **bad** about it, its just like just a *little bit* slow at learning some things” (Sophia, 10/14/14). Sophia continued to speak to the importance of not allowing negative thoughts control one’s lives about one’s ability or disability differences such as LD or being a slow learner. Sophia talked about the need for people to think straight:

If you think positive that you can do it, then you believe in yourself, like you’re not thinking too much of yourself that you’re **dumb** like, you’re thinking negative, you’re thinking negative instead of positive . . . to be more positive, instead of being negative all the time saying that you’re the only person who doesn’t know how to read or something but you’re not the only one there’s like a bunch of people who has that, you just don’t know. **You don’t think straight** . . . (Sophia, 10/14/14).

We see here that for Sophia thinking straight would enable one to be positive about oneself. She is similar to Bianca in her desire to let it all out instead of holding it in. Both Bianca and Sophia, in other words, spoke to self-care or the need for self-compassion regarding oneself as it related to their both academic and social and emotional dimensional lives.

Community participation through accompanying is the sixth tenet.

Participating within “one’s community through a host of activities and engagements” (Runswick-Cole & Goodley, 2013, p. 13). Also, to participating within one’s community, what counts as participation with students with LD, such

as Sophia, Daniel and Bianca, can be furthered by using the concept of *accompanying* (Lynd, 2012; B. Rogoff, personal communication, April 28, 2016). I propose instead of the term, directly and indirectly, *help or helping*—since that term is steeped in individualistic and paternalizing, damaged imagery, within the field of LD we can enable a praxis of *accompanying* similar to how Lynd (2012) has advocated for a movement away from the term *organizing* to *accompaniment*. In his book, *Accompanying: Pathways to social change*, Lynd (2012) has the following thesis: “that most (not all) of the movements of the 1960s suffered from a mistaken and superficial conception of social change that we called “organizing” (p. 1). Organizing creates a social hierarchy between the leader or organizer and those who follow or are organized. Accompaniment’s Latin root is “com”—to being together—and “panis”—in eating bread, face to face (Lynd, 2012, p. 2). The concept of accompaniment is described by Lynd (2012) as follows:

The word accompaniment” is an elastic one: “it means just what you’d imagine, and more. *To accompany someone is to go somewhere with him or her, to break bread together, to be present on a journey with a beginning and an end . . . we’re almost never sure about the end . . .*

There’s an element of mystery, of openness, in accompaniment. I’ll keep you company and share your fate for a while. And by “a while,” I don’t mean a little while. Accompaniment is much more about sticking with a task until it’s deemed completed by the person or people being accompanied, rather than by the *accompagneur* (p. 2).

Lynd (2012) culled much of his conceptualization of *accompaniment* by a talk given by Dr. Paul Farmer, “*Accompaniment as Policy*,” (Office of the Special Envoy for Haiti, 2011). The notion of accompaniment or *accompanying*, therefore, can alleviate the painful ways in which Sophia and Daniel experienced the role of helping or the helpee/helper roles they revealed in their emotion-laden talk about the idea of LD and the meaning of LD. We need a shift from only considering ourselves as “teachers” of students with LD to teachers *and* students with mutual respect for self and them as we seek to accompany them as opposed to observe, control, and predict and hence, dehumanize students with LD. Therefore, from a liberation psychology and DS and community psychology approach to resilience in-service and pre-service teachers have the capacity to either disable or enable students to and through the ways in which we interact with them and how we place other students within the classroom who are labeled and non-labeled to accompany them as opposed to positioning them as labeled/disabled and helpee/helper. The latter can contribute to further marginalizing students with LD. Nevertheless, Van der Klift and Kunc (1994) writes:

Clearly, there is nothing wrong with help; friends often help each other. However, it is essential to acknowledge that help is not and can never be the basis of friendship. We must be careful not to over-emphasize the "helper/helpee" aspect of a relationship. Unless help is reciprocal, the inherent inequity between 'helper' and 'helpee' will contaminate the authenticity of a relationship (p. 2).

The next two tenets—social justice (tenet 7) and community cohesion (tenet 8)—can be thought of as continuously engaging in praxis, with all the aforementioned tenets of both liberation psychology and a DS and community psychology approach to resilience—by both in-service and pre-service teachers and students. A keen eye can be kept on equity by focusing on “experiences related to finding a meaningful role in community and a sense of social equality” (Runswick-Cole & Goodley, 2013, p. 13). In addition, we can strive and maintain community cohesion through praxis for “balancing one's personal interests with a sense of responsibility to the greater good; feeling a part of something larger than one's self socially and spiritually (Runswick-Cole & Goodley, 2013, p. 13). Similarly, Blomgren (1993) called for a spiritual-discourse for students with LD in special education for their social and emotional well-being for their dignity as opposed to the medical-psychological model which purely focuses on the cognitive and behavioral aspects of students as both individual and pathological.

The combination of these two approaches—*liberation psychology and a DS and community psychology approach at resilience*—can enable a praxis to engage the emotion-laden talk with not only Latina/o students with LD but all students with LD, who experience social and emotional struggles. The combined 12 tenets allow theorists, researchers, and practitioners—such as pre-service and in-service special and general educators to grapple with the human rights of students with LD for liberation, freedom, and human dignity.

Limitations

The limitations of this study are the following: 1) due to time constraints, I did not incorporate any of the teacher interview data that would have contributed to the cultural-historical developmental design of the study and enriched the findings. 2) In addition, due to time constraints, I did not include Eddie Casanola's case study, which would have contributed to the findings of this dissertation study. 3) Lastly, another limitation of the study, was the fact that I was only able to interview one time both two of the three parents, and further participation by them would have contributed greater insight to the case studies of David and Eddie.

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APPENDIX A

PARENT/TEACHER PRE-INTERVIEW AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND
PROTOCOL CHECK LIST AND VERBAL SCRIPT INSTRUCTIONS

Pre-interview Check List:

- Remind the parent/teacher the reason why I am interviewing them and make sure you say that there are not “correct” or “wrong” answers; also that they are welcomed to share with you any stories, ideas or opinions that they have or heard about the questions I ask.
- Explain that I will ask them questions that relate to their son or daughter’s/student’s Learning Disability, emotions, reading and writing, multiple identities, and their child’s in school and out of school experiences.
- I will read out loud and explain to the parent/teacher permission and consent forms again, even though by this time the parent/teacher has already read and understood this form. As I read out loud I will ask the parent/teacher to read along with me. During this time I will also remind the parent/teacher what and why I am interviewing them for and what I plan to do with the information I collect (i.e., transcribe and analyze it) in order to explore my research questions.
- Explain to the parent/teacher what the equipment I will be using and why. I will inform them about the equipment, the audio-recorder, by showing how I will be using it during the interview and explain why I will record. I will record our interviews because I might forget what she or he says and by recording it will help me remember so I can write about it more accurately later.
- Then, I will make sure that I go over confidentiality and anonymity. Nothing the participant shares will be connected to her or his name. I will inform the participant that ALL names will be changed to pseudonyms (even the names she or he might use while narrating stories to me). All audio-recordings and

transcriptions will be secured so that nobody besides me, the researcher, and the other study team members, can access it. All recordings and transcriptions will be stored in computer with a protected password and within a secured Dropbox account with a password.

- I will communicate to the participant that if they have any questions throughout the 45-90 minute interview that they may feel free to make any comments, ask questions during or even after the interview. I will do this to ensure transparency. I will make sure to communicate that I am very open to follow-up interviews, chats, communication, or questions, etc. Also, I will not forget to affirm and say thank you to the interviewees as they share with me their words, opinions and stories.
- After going over the above bullet points I will begin recording and conduct the interview for 45-90 minutes. I will inform the participant that we will conduct 2-4 individual sessions in order to get through all of the interview protocol/questions.

Protocolo de Entrevista a los Padres

Antecedentes Preguntas:

General

Este primer conjunto de preguntas es acerca de su información básica / personal.

Estoy pidiendo estos con el fin de que se capture en el grabador de audio.

1. ¿Cuál es su nombre?
2. ¿Cuántos años tiene?
3. ¿Dónde vive?
4. ¿Cuánto tiempo ha vivido allí?
5. ¿Dónde más ha vivido?
6. ¿Dónde nació?
7. ¿Cuál es su raza?
8. ¿Cuál es su origen étnico?
9. ¿Cuál es su género?
10. ¿Tiene alguna discapacidad?
11. ¿Cuál es su clase social?

Personal

1. ¿Puede hablarme sobre su familia? ¿Cuántos hijos tiene? ¿En qué grados se encuentran?
2. ¿Puede hablarme sobre su barrio?
3. ¿Qué idioma (s) se habla (n) en su casa? ¿Por quién?
- 4 Para los miembros bilingües: ¿Cuándo utiliza usted español? Inglés?

Acerca de su Hija (o), sus problemas de aprendizaje y en la vida cotidiana

1. ¿Qué es una discapacidad de aprendizaje?
2. ¿Cómo describiría la discapacidad de aprendizaje de su hija (o)?
3. ¿Qué tipo de problemas de aprendizaje tiene X?
4. ¿Cómo le va a X en la escuela?
5. ¿Puede usted hablarme sobre X como estudiante?
6. ¿Puede hablarme sobre X fuera de la escuela?
7. Hábleme de X. ¿Cuáles son sus / sus intereses? Hábleme de su o sus puntos fuertes? ¿Cuáles son las áreas que ella / él necesita para mejorar?
8. ¿Cuándo él / ella aprendió a leer? ¿Cuándo ella / él aprendió a escribir?
9. ¿Cuál es el tema favorito de X? ¿Por qué cree que a ella / él le gusta? ¿Cuál es la materia que menos le gusta a X? ¿Por qué crees que a ella / él le disgusta?
10. ¿En qué clases le está yendo bien en X? ¿Por qué? (Qué es lo que le está ayudando a hacer más fácil para él o ella?). ¿Cómo le hace sentir a que vaya bien en la escuela? ¿Cómo le hace sentir que a X le esté yendo bien en esa / esas clases? (Si tuviera que pensar en una emoción, ¿cuál sería?)
11. ¿En qué clases está batallando X, y por qué? ¿Cómo le hace sentir? ¿Cómo cree que se siente X?
12. ¿Que cosa, en todo caso, le da a X un sentimiento de confianza en la escuela? (¿En qué es X tiene más confianza en la escuela? ¿Cómo te hace sentir eso?)
13. Me ha dicho que habla X y X idiomas. Quiero conocer un poco más acerca de cómo usted utiliza sus idiomas. ¿Cuando lo hace en la escuela, como padre, usted

utiliza su otra lengua en la escuela? Si es así, ¿cuándo y por qué? ¿Cómo se siente cuando usted usa su otro idioma en la escuela? ¿Y por qué?

14. ¿Puede usted decirme acerca de su relación con los maestros de X? (Maestros de educación general y los maestros de educación especial?)

Preguntas sobre Investigación Una pregunta: ¿Cuáles son los estudiantes Latina/os con charla cargada de emociones de LD de ser etiquetados con discapacidad de aprendizaje?

Emociones

General

1. Si menciono el término problema de aprendizaje, ¿qué significa eso para usted?

Una de las razones por las que estoy entrevistando se debe a que su hijo o hija ha sido identificado con un problema de aprendizaje, ¿Cómo se siente usted, como padre, el que que X sea catalogado con un problema de aprendizaje?

2. Algunas personas con dificultades de aprendizaje a veces no les gusta esa etiqueta porque parece ignorar todas las cosas que pueden hacer. ¿Me puede decir algunas cosas en las que X es bueno?

a. ¿Ahora puede decirme algunas cosas en las que X tiene dificultad con la escuela?

b. ¿Puede usted ahora decirme cómo se siente cuando X tiene éxito en la cosa (s) en las que él / ella es bueno? ¿Cómo le hace sentir eso?

3. ¿Cómo se siente acerca de la discapacidad de aprendizaje de X?

4. Ahora que me ha dicho acerca de lo que aquello en lo que X es bueno en la escuela y por qué, ¿Cómo se relacionan esas cosas en las que X es bueno con el apoyo que X percibe y lo que siente acerca de su discapacidad de aprendizaje?

5. Me ha dicho cómo se siente X respecto a su discapacidad de aprendizaje, ¿puede describir cuál es su discapacidad de aprendizaje?

Personal

a. A veces es difícil para las personas con discapacidades de aprendizaje hablar de su discapacidad, ¿Habla con alguien acerca de la discapacidad de aprendizaje de X? Si es así, ¿cómo le hace sentir? ¿Le ayuda o no hablar acerca de la discapacidad de aprendizaje de X? ¿Por qué? ¿Por qué no?

b. ¿Habla con X sobre su discapacidad de aprendizaje?

c. ¿Cuándo se produce la discapacidad de aprendizaje de X? ¿Dentro de la escuela? ¿Fuera de la escuela? ¿Se siente X diferente respecto a su discapacidad de aprendizaje cuando se produce fuera de la escuela vs. dentro de la escuela?

d. Me ha comentado sobre la lucha de X en la escuela. ¿Qué emociones sintió o siente que se relacionan con los problemas de aprendizaje de X?

Escuela

a. Me ha hablado mucho acerca de las experiencias de la X y los sentimientos acerca de la escuela. Por ejemplo, cuando a X le sucedió ... ¿Que significa para X cuando está en la escuela ser un estudiante con una discapacidad de aprendizaje? ¿Cómo le hace sentir a usted?

b. Las escuelas etiquetan a los jóvenes todo el tiempo para ayudarles a entender lo que los estudiantes necesitan respecto a ayuda académica, social y emocional. Sin

embargo, a veces estas etiquetas se considera que generan sentimientos positivos y negativos. Para usted, ¿qué dice la etiqueta, discapacidad de aprendizaje? ¿Qué significa para la comprensión de su hijo o hija como estudiante?

c. ¿Qué piensa usted acerca de las escuelas cuando etiquetan a los hijos? ¿Cree usted que es algo positivo o algo negativo?

d. ¿Cuáles son algunas de las cosas positivas que usted percibe que su hijo o hija ha obtenido al estar en la Educación Especial? Ahora que usted me ha dicho algunas de las cosas buenas. ¿me puede decir algunas de las cosas malas que usted percibe, si las hubiera, a las cuales está expuesto su hijo o hija al estar en la sala de recursos de educación especial, con (nombre del maestro)? ¿Cómo le hace sentir el que su hijo o hija esté en la educación especial?

Narrativas de Contraste (relativas a las emociones)

General

a. En sus propias palabras, ¿sabe usted lo que es un problema de aprendizaje es? ¿Quién le ha hablado de un problema de aprendizaje? ¿Qué le dijeron? ¿Cómo se lo explicaron a usted? ¿Ellos le permiten hacer cualquier pregunta? ¿Tenía sentido lo que decían? ¿Qué emociones revive ahora para que recordó el día que le dijeron que su hijo o hija tiene una discapacidad de aprendizaje? ¿Tiene alguna pregunta para mí, sobre lo que es un problema de aprendizaje es? ¿Qué tipo de emociones siente en este momento?

b. Ahora que usted me ha dicho lo que significa un problema de aprendizaje en sus propias palabras, ¿qué cree que significa que alguien sea etiquetado con un problema de aprendizaje? ¿Qué piensa que significa para su hijo o hija? ¿Cómo

ha sido para usted como madre o padre con un hijo o hija con una discapacidad de aprendizaje? ¿Qué se siente que usted tiene un hijo o hija con una LD?

c. Estoy interesado en cómo se habla acerca de problemas de aprendizaje y de las personas y los niños identificados con problemas de aprendizaje. Por ejemplo, se reconoce que los estudiantes con problemas de aprendizaje suelen tener problemas con la lectura, escritura, matemáticas y comunicación.

i. ¿Qué tipo de historias o ideas ha escuchado acerca de personas o niños con problemas de aprendizaje? Estas historias pueden ser de las conversaciones que ha escuchado dentro de la escuela o fuera de la escuela respecto a su hija o hijo. Estas historias pueden ser de los adultos o los niños o sus amigos o miembros de la familia.

ii. Tómese un instante y piense en un momento en que usted ha estado en una situación en la que alguien contó una historia de LD [o Educación Especial] o hizo un comentario sobre LD [o Educación Especial] ...

1. ¿Qué notó sobre las emociones de la persona que cuenta la historia o hizo el comentario? Por ejemplo, me contó una historia que sucedió ...

2. ¿Qué notó sobre las emociones / respuestas de las personas que escuchan que no tenían LD [o no estaban en Educación Especial]

3. ¿Qué notó sobre las emociones / respuestas de las personas que escuchan tener una LD [o que necesitaban Educación Especial]?

4. Si tuviera que resumir- ¿Cuáles fueron las principales diferencias en la forma en que respondieron todas las personas, un comentario?

Personal

a. Ahora que me ha mencionado su experiencia de ser padre de un estudiante con una discapacidad de aprendizaje puede decirme ¿qué tipo de cosas suceden o le hacen sentir que usted sabe que su hijo o hija tiene una discapacidad de aprendizaje?

b. Me ha mencionado mucho acerca de la discapacidad de aprendizaje de su hija o hijo, ¿con qué frecuencia piensa en su discapacidad de aprendizaje? Cuando ocurre esto? ¿Son estos buenos pensamientos? Si es así, ¿me puede decir acerca de ellos? Si son malos, ¿puede decirme acerca de ellos? Si ellos no son ni buenos ni malos, ¿puede describir las emociones o sentimientos?

c. Por mi parte, tengo una historia que contarte. Cuando estaba en la escuela secundaria, me tomó más tiempo terminar mi trabajo al leer y entendía más lento que la mayoría de los otros estudiantes. Pasé mucho tiempo en mi trabajo. Todavía me paso mucho tiempo hoy en mi trabajo respecto a otros estudiantes. Cuando era más joven esto me hizo sentir enojado y frustrado. Decidí empezar a correr (como deporte) en cuanto llegué a la preparatoria para superar lo lento que yo estaba en la lectura y la escritura. Este es un ejemplo de una de mis historias sobre LD. ¿Puede compartir conmigo alguna historia que pueda tener sobre la discapacidad de aprendizaje de su hijo o su hija?

Escuela

a. ¿Qué significa para X tener una LD en la escuela? ¿Me puede decir cómo X se desenvuelve teniendo una LD en la clase cuando ella o él se esfuerza más en el aprendizaje? Cuando sucede esto? ¿En qué clase? ¿Puede describir lo que sucede? ¿Cómo sabe que está pasando? ¿Cómo se siente cuando esto sucede?

- b. Gracias por compartir conmigo lo que su hijo o hija está aprendiendo en experiencias respecto a LD en la escuela. Por ejemplo, usted ha compartido historias de X ... ¿De qué manera puede un problema de aprendizaje considerarse positivo y / o negativo en la escuela? Dicho esto, ¿cómo que le hacen sentir acerca de su hijo o hija en su relación con su discapacidad de aprendizaje?
- c. El término “problemas de aprendizaje” entró en la ley desde 1968 en los Estados Unidos. Parece que hay muchas interpretaciones de lo que significa ese término, estoy interesado en cómo los estudiantes como su hijo o hija experimentan de ser etiquetados LD en la escuela. ¿Me puede decir cómo ha sido para usted como padre? O ¿Me puede decir lo que pasa en su día con X ... ¿Cómo se siente? ¿Qué significa para usted tener un hijo en educación especial? ¿Cómo se siente?

Etiquetada con LD

General

- a. En su opinión, ¿es algo bueno etiquetar de niños con problemas de aprendizaje? En caso afirmativo, ¿cuáles son las partes buenas acerca de ello? Si no es así, ¿cuáles son las partes malas de ello? ¿Cómo cree que los niños con problemas de aprendizaje se sienten acerca de ser etiquetados? O ¿Por qué? O ¿Por qué no?

Personal

- a. ¿Se acuerdas de la primera vez que escuchó el término discapacidad de aprendizaje? ¿Me puede decir al respecto? ¿Cuándo fue? ¿Dónde estaba? ¿Quién estaba allí? ¿Qué significó para usted?

b. Ahora que me ha dicho la primera vez que escuchó el término LD, ¿se acuerda de la primera vez que alguien le ha dicho que su hijo o hija tiene una discapacidad de aprendizaje? ¿Qué hizo o dijo? ¿Cómo le hizo sentir?

c. En su opinión, ¿ser etiquetado con LD es una gran parte de la vida de su hijo o hija o una pequeña parte? ¿Puede usted explicarse? Muy bien, gracias por compartir. ¿Y cómo le hace sentir eso? ¿Qué tipo de emociones vienen a usted?

Escuela

a. Ahora que usted me ha dicho mucho acerca de su problema de aprendizaje. Por ejemplo, usted considera el LD como X y me ha compartido X ... Estoy interesado en la forma en que entiende la etiqueta LD en su hijo o hija. ¿Me puede decir acerca de cómo usted entiende a su hijo o hija en la etiqueta de la escuela? ¿y en el aprendizaje? ¿Durante las interacciones con los demás? ¿Qué pasaría si su hijo o hija no se hubieran etiquetado con un problema de aprendizaje? ¿Cómo afectaría esto a él o ella en su educación? aprendizaje? ¿Durante las interacciones con los demás?

b. Ahora vamos a hablar acerca de las estrategias y las creencias que tiene su hijo o hija y que le ayudan o funcionan para él o ella en el aprendizaje escolar.

¿Puedes nombrar 1 o 2 cosas que realmente ayudan a él o ella a tener éxito en la escuela?

c. Su hijo o hija tiene la etiqueta LD, ¿hace alguna diferencia de cómo ella o él a ella se percibe como estudiante? ¿Cómo un chico? ¿Cómo una chica? ¿Latina / o? debido al ser etiquetado LD.

d. Su hijo o hija tiene la etiqueta LD, ¿hace alguna diferencia con él o ella o con sus amigos? (Después de todas estas preguntas secundarias, ¿se puede preguntar cómo le hace sentir eso?).

i. ¿Hace alguna diferencia para el/la o sus amigos (del hijo)? ¿Los amigos de usted?

ii. ¿Alguna vez ha hablado de ello con sus amigos? ¿Los amigos de usted?

iii. ¿Sus amigos hablan de ello con los demás? ¿Los amigos de usted?

iv. ¿Cree usted que la gente entienda a su hijo o hija?

v. ¿Sus amigos entienden cómo es la escuela para él o ella? ¿O el/la o sus amigos luchan por entender eso en la escuela? En caso afirmativo, ¿qué te hace decir que sí?

VI. ¿Hace alguna diferencia para usted?

VII. ¿Hay alguna diferencia con respecto a sus hermanos y / o hermanas?

e. ¿Las personas lo tratan igual a ella o él, debido a que tiene un problema de aprendizaje? (Si no, decir: Eso es interesante porque algunos otros estudiantes han dicho que han sido intimidados. Si dicen que sí, oh, estoy interesado en esto ¿Me puede decir cómo él o ella recibió un trato diferente? Entonces, ¿cómo le hacen sentir...? ¿Cuando ocurrió ese hecho a su hijo o hija? (¿Puede hablarme al respecto?)

f. Las reuniones de IEP son una oportunidad para que su hijo o hija, sus maestros, y usted mismo discutan sobre el/la o su progreso como estudiante. ¿Participa usted o su hijo en reuniones de IEP? Si es así, ¿qué se siente cuando usted está allí? ¿Cuál es el propósito de IEP? ¿Qué tan útiles son para usted como padre?

- ¿Qué hacen en estas reuniones? ¿Hay alguien que vaya con usted? ¿En qué idioma es el encuentro llevado a cabo? ¿Hay un intérprete? ¿Quién asiste a estas reuniones? ¿Cuál es su papel?
- g. Cuando usted está en estas reuniones, ¿cómo se siente? ¿Son útiles para usted? Si es así, ¿cómo? ¿Hay alguna preocupación acerca de las reuniones cuando se marcha? ¿O durante la reunión? Si es así, ¿qué / por qué?
- h. ¿Alguno de los profesores le llaman o van a su casa para hablar sobre el progreso de X? Si es así, ¿me puede decir al respecto?
- i. ¿En qué idioma son las reuniones que han mantenido? ¿Es usted consciente de que la escuela ha desarrollado un plan educativo para X? ¿Sabe cuáles son los objetivos de la escuela para él / ella con LD? ¿Sabe cuáles son los objetivos de la escuela son para su lectura? En caso afirmativo: ¿Qué dicen estos documentos acerca de la lectura de X? ¿y al escribir? El maestro ha hecho alguna sugerencia de cosas que usted puede hacer en casa para desarrollar la escritura y lectura de X? Habilidades de lectura? En caso afirmativo: ¿Me puede decir acerca de ellos? ¿Cómo han funcionado?

Relación con el LD

General

- a. Si tuviera que describir a su hijo o hija de LD en una palabra, ¿cuál sería? Si se imagina la LD su hijo o de la hija ¿qué se imagina? ¿Puede visualizar la LD de su hijo o hija? Ahora, ¿puede visualizarse en la imagen? Ahora, ¿puede imaginar a su hijo o hija en la imag? ¿Cómo representarlo? ¿Cómo le hace sentir esta

visualización? Si digo la palabra X (la única palabra que él o ella dice) ¿cómo le hace sentir?

- b. ¿Cómo se siente acerca de la LD de su hijo o de su hija (aquí puede sustituir la palabra o frase que el participante ha estado usando a lo largo de la entrevista que describa o represente la "discapacidad de aprendizaje") en este momento?
- c. ¿Qué se siente al saber que su hijo o hija tiene una discapacidad de aprendizaje?

Personal

- a. Personalmente, durante el día, ¿cómo la discapacidad de aprendizaje de su hija/o le impactan usted? ¿Cómo cree que impacta a su hijo o hija? (Ya sea positiva o negativamente, ¿o ninguno?).
- b. ¿Qué es una algo que usted desearía que otros se enteren respecto a las habilidades de su hijo o hija?
- c. ¿Qué es una cosa que usted desearía que otros entendieran acerca de la discapacidad de aprendizaje de su hijo o de su hija? (Si quiere decírmelo en un momento posterior, está muy bien también.)

Escuela

- a. Si se pudiera decir a los maestros cómo pueden conocer mejor los niños que han sido identificados como LD, ¿qué te gustaría decirle a los maestros?
- b. ¿Qué tipo de cosas le han dicho acerca de la discapacidad de aprendizaje de su hijo o de su hija por parte de su o sus maestros de educación general?
- c. ¿Qué tipo de cosas le han dicho acerca de la discapacidad de aprendizaje de su hijo o de su hija por el resto del personal de la escuela (es decir, los educadores especiales, psicólogos escolares, terapeuta del habla, etc.)?

- d. De todas las cosas que le han dicho en la escuela acerca de su problema de aprendizaje de estas personas diferentes, ¿qué es lo que usted cree o no respecto a pensar que no es cierto? y ¿por qué o por qué no?
- e. De toda esta información, ¿qué preguntas tiene al respecto?

Pregunta sobre la pregunta 2 de Investigación: ¿Cuáles son los estudiantes Latina/os con charla cargada de emociones de LD de la idea de LD ?

Interseccionalidad

General

- a. Ahora que hemos hablado mucho acerca de su hijo o discapacidad de aprendizaje de su hija, quiero que hablemos de algunas otras identidades de su hijo/ hija y de usted.
- i. Cuando digo la palabra discapacidad, ¿Qué es lo que viene a la mente? ¿Qué significa una discapacidad? Cuando digo la palabra deterioro, ¿Qué es lo que viene a la mente? ¿Qué significa el deterioro?
- ii. Cuando digo la palabra raza, ¿Qué es lo que viene a la mente? ¿Qué significa la raza?
- iii. Cuando digo clase, clase socioeconómica, ¿quien es lo que viene a la mente? ¿Qué significa la clase?
- iv. La semana pasada hablamos de género, cuando digo género ahora, ¿Qué es lo que viene a la mente? ¿Qué quiere decir sexo?

Personal

a. Ahora que hablamos de la raza, el género, la clase, y la discapacidad (Si el padre no sabe lo que significan estas palabras, voy a definirlos para él o ella, lo que no es problemático, dado mi postura epistemológica y el punto de vista metodológico que será contribuir a sus narrativas y hablar sobre todas estas cuestiones ya que desde lo epistemológico veo que el conocimiento se construye mutuamente conmigo. Una vez más, de acuerdo con Holstein y Gubrium (1995), desde una perspectiva de entrevistar activa "el entrevistador invita y ayuda a la producción narrativa, lo que sugiere los parámetros del tipo de narrativa que se está solicitando"(p. 41)):

i. Vamos a comparar y contrastar las diferentes clases sociales altas-pobres, clase obrera, clase media. ¿A qué clase social debe principalmente sus propias experiencias? ¿Por qué?

ii. ¿Cómo se relaciona la palabra género respecto a cómo se ve a si mismo? ¿Con qué género se identifica? ¿Por qué?

iii. ¿Cómo se relaciona la palabra discapacidad respecto a cómo se ve a si mismo? ¿Qué significa para usted la discapacidad y cómo se identifica con la noción de una discapacidad?

iv. ¿Cómo se relaciona la palabra raza respecto a cómo se ve a si mismo? ¿Con qué raza se identifica?

v. ¿Cómo se relaciona la palabra Latina/o respecto a cómo se ve a si mismo? ¿Qué significa ser Latina / o para usted?

VI. ¿Cómo se siente acerca de discapacidad, raza, clase y género? ¿Qué experiencias tiene usted sobre cada una, o una combinación de cada uno?

Escuela

Ahora me gustaría que habláramos como su hijo o hija podría estar experimentando la discapacidad, la raza, la clase, el género y cualquier otra forma de diferencias en la escuela.

a. Me ha dicho lo que la raza y la discapacidad significa para usted. ¿En qué momento en la escuela experimenta X la raza y la discapacidad? ¿Cree que su hijo o hija experimenta su raza y su discapacidad juntos? ¿Qué cosas cree usted que él o ella se entera de la raza y la dis / capacidad en la escuela?

i. ¿Qué tan precisas cree que son esas ideas para él o ella?

ii. ¿Cuáles son algunas de las cosas positivas que él o ella ha aprendido?

iii. ¿Cuáles son algunas de las cosas negativas?

iv. ¿De qué manera las cosas positivas que hacen de él o ella se sienten acerca de su raza y discapacidad?

v. ¿Cómo las cosas negativas hacen que él o ella se sienta acerca de su raza y la discapacidad?

VI. ¿Qué tipo de cosas hace que él o ella aprenda acerca de la raza y la discapacidad en sus interacciones en la escuela con ella o con sus compañeros?

¿Y con maestros?

b. Ahora que me has dicho acerca de cómo X experimenta raza y discapacidad en la escuela y que me has dicho que significa el género y la clase X para X, cuando está en la escuela ¿cómo crees que X experimenta su género y clase juntos? ¿Qué clase de cosas ha aprendido X sobre su género y clase juntos en la escuela?

i. ¿Qué tan precisas cree que sean esas ideas para X?

- ii. ¿Cuáles son algunas de las cosas negativas?
- iii. ¿Cómo son las cosas positivas que X sienta sobre el género y la clase?
- iv. ¿Cómo las cosas negativas que X sienta sobre el género y la clase?

Eventos de alfabetización

General

- b. ¿Qué significa la alfabetización para usted? ¿Qué significa la alfabetización a tu familia? ¿Quién en su familia lee? ¿Qué leen? ¿En qué idioma? ¿A él / ella le gusta leer? Si es así, ¿qué? ¿De dónde proceden estas lecturas? Si no, ¿por qué no? ¿Qué es difícil?
- c. ¿Cuándo leyó X? ¿Le lee usted a X?
- d. Háblame de la escritura de X. ¿Cómo cree que él / ella está saliendo por escrito?
- e. Háblame de la lectura de X: ¿Cómo cree que él / ella está haciendo la lectura? Si el padre expresa una preocupación: ¿Por qué cree que él / ella está teniendo esta dificultad / problema? Indicaciones posibles: ¿Qué leen él o ella? ¿En qué idioma (s)?
- f. ¿Lee usted a su hijo o hija en un idioma que no sea inglés?
- g. ¿Qué ayuda a X en la lectura? ¿Qué ayuda a X en la escritura? ¿Hay otros lugares fuera de la casa y la escuela, donde X hace cualquier actividad de lectura que ayudan con la lectura? Háblame de ellos.

Personal

- h. Tome un momento para pensar y sentir lo que significa la lectura para X.
¿Puede decirme lo que esto trae a la mente y cómo se siente para X? (¿Se sintió feliz, triste, emocionado, frustrado?)
- i. Tome un momento para pensar y sentir lo que significa la escritura para X.
¿Puede decirme lo que esto trae a la mente y cómo se siente para X?
- j. Para X, ¿Qué es lo que él o ella le gusta acerca de cómo escribir? ¿Qué no le gusta a X?
- k. Tome un momento para pensar cómo X le gusta leer ¿Puede describirme eso?
- l. Tome un momento para pensar cómo X le gusta escribir. ¿Puede describirme eso?
- m. ¿Quién le enseñó a X a leer? Ahora tome un momento y piense en lo que sentía por X cuando ella o él comenzó a leer. ¿Qué se siente leer ahora para X?
- n. ¿Quién le enseñó X cómo escribir? Ahora tome un momento y piense en lo que sentía por X cuando ella o él comenzó a escribir ¿Cómo se siente escribir ahora para X?

Escuela

- a. Para X, ¿que significa cuando X lee y escribe en la clase del Sr. X? ¿Qué le permite lograr la lectura y la escritura a X? Cuando X lee y escribe en el aula de Mr. X ¿cómo se siente él o ella? Cuando usted está escribiendo o leyendo en la clase del Sr. X que acciones ayudarán a mantenerse en la tarea? ¿Qué significa eso para usted como padre Latina / o de un hijo/ a Latina / os con un problema de aprendizaje?

- b. Para X, cuando él o ella está en el salón de la señora X que lo ayuda a él o ella para participar en la clase? (¿Qué es lo que él o ella hace la mayor parte (o se espera que lo hacen) del día?) ¿Qué le ayuda a el / ella participar cuando él o ella tiene que leer y escribir?
- c. Cuando X escribe en el salón de la señora X, ¿cómo se siente? ¿Qué significa eso para usted como padre latina / o de un estudiante latina / o con dificultades de aprendizaje?
- d. Cuando se lee en el salón de la señora X, ¿cómo se siente? ¿Qué significa eso para usted como padre latina / o de un estudiante latina / o con dificultades de aprendizaje?

Narrativas maestras de Problemas de Aprendizaje

General

Al igual que he compartido con ustedes antes, cuando estaba en cuarto grado se me etiquetó con dificultades de aprendizaje. Esto se debió al hecho de que cuando tenía 2 años de edad qtuve una fiebre severa que me hizo experimentar convulsiones. Debido a esto tuve problemas para leer y escribir cuando era un niño y en la escuela me indicaron tener un problema de aprendizaje. Hay una gran cantidad de información en la sociedad acerca de lo que es un problema de aprendizaje. Estoy interesado en las opiniones de los estudiantes acerca de sus problemas de aprendizaje.

- a. Me has dicho sobre la experiencia de X con las dificultades de aprendizaje. Un punto de vista sobre los problemas de aprendizaje es que el problema está en el cerebro de una persona. ¿Cuál cree que influye en su LD?

b. Tú me has contado de los puntos fuertes de X, X, X, X y algunas de sus áreas que él o ella lucha con, X, X, X. Una comprensión acerca de un problema de aprendizaje es que las personas etiquetadas con él carecen de las competencias básicas, como la lectura y la escritura. Tome un momento para pensar acerca de esto, ¿qué piensa usted de esto? ¿Cómo le hace sentir?

Personal

a. Otro punto de vista con respecto a las personas con discapacidades de aprendizaje es que tienden a no verse muy bien en comparación con aquellos sin dificultades de aprendizaje. En su experiencia como padre latina / o con un hijo o hija con una discapacidad de aprendizaje, ¿cómo ves a X en relación a su LD y cómo se siente y piensa él o ella de si mismo?

Escuela

- a. Uno de los puntos de vista sobre algunos estudiantes con discapacidad de aprendizaje es que sus emociones tienden a ser más negativas que positivas. A veces, esto afecta a sus relaciones con sus amigos y / o profesores. Según su experiencia, estando en la escuela, ¿qué significa para X tener una discapacidad de aprendizaje y cómo se relaciona con sus compañeros socialmente? ¿Qué le viene a la mente? ¿Cómo le hace sentir eso?
- b. ¿Qué le ha comentado el maestro acerca de como lee X?
- c. ¿Qué le ha comentado el maestro acerca de como escribe X?
- d. Entiendo que X va al salón de clases del Sr. / Sra. X durante una parte del día. ¿Qué es lo que él o ella hacen allí? ¿Cuál es su comprensión de la razón por la que él o ella va allí?

e. ¿Cómo compararía la lectura y la escritura de X, mientras está en la escuela en la clase de X respecto al aula de X y cuando usted y X leen en casa?

Sondeo

- ¿Qué quiere decir?
- ¿Cómo te sentiste?
- ¿Qué emociones le llegaron a usted?
- No estoy seguro de que yo te estoy siguiendo.
- ¿Podrías explicar eso?
- ¿Qué le dijiste entonces?
- ¿En qué estabas pensando en ese momento?
- Dame un ejemplo.
- Hábleme al respecto
- Llévame a través de la experiencia.

Nota: Los sondeos fueron adoptados de Bogdan y Biklen (2007), p. 104. Las preguntas son sólo ejemplos de los tipos de preguntas que haré, hay más preguntas que se le realizarán.

APPENDIX B

STUDENT PRE-INTERVIEW AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND PROTOCOL

CHECK LIST AND VERBAL SCRIPT INSTRUCTIONS

Pre-interview Check List:

- Remind the participant the reason why I am interviewing them and make sure you say that there are not “correct” or “wrong” answers; also that they are welcomed to share with you any stories, ideas or opinions that they have or heard about the questions I ask.
- Explain that I will ask them questions that relate to general, personal and school.
- I will read out loud and explain to the participant the child assent form. As I read out loud I will ask the participant to read along with me. After I read the child assent form I will ask her or him to sign and date it. During this time I will also remind the participant what and why I am interviewing them for and what I plan to do with the information I collect (i.e., transcribe and analyze it) in order to explore my research questions.
- Explain to the participant what the equipment I will be using and why. I will inform the individual students about the equipment, the video recorder, by showing how I will be using it during the interview and explain why I will record. I will record our interviews because I might forget what she or he says and by recording it will help me remember so I can write about it more accurately later.
- Then, I will make sure that I go over confidentiality and anonymity. Nothing the individual student shares will be connected to her or his name. I will inform the student that ALL names will be changed to pseudonyms (even the names she or he might use while narrating stories to me). All video recordings and transcriptions will be secured so that nobody besides myself and my dissertation chair, Dr. Alfredo J. Artiles, can access it. All recordings and transcriptions will

be stored in computer with a protected password and within a secured Dropbox account with a password.

- I will communicate to the individual student that if they have any questions throughout the 45 minute interview that they may feel free to make any comments, ask questions during or even after the interview. I will do this to ensure transparency. I will make sure to communicate that I am very open to follow-up interviews, chats, communication, or questions, etc. Also, I will not forget to affirm and say thank you to the interviewees as they share with me their words, opinions and stories.
- After going over the above bullet points I will begin recording and conduct the interview for 45 minutes. I will inform the student that we will conduct 4-6 individual sessions in order to get through all of the interview protocol/questions.

Student Interview Protocol

Background Questions:

General

- a. These first couple of questions have to do with basic information about yourself so I can make sure I have these basic answers recorded.
 - i. What is your name?
 - ii. What grade are you in?
 - iii. How old are you?
- b. Some of these other basic information questions have to do with where you were born and how many languages you speak.
 - i. How many languages do you speak?
 - ii. Do you speak a language other than English? If so, what is it?
 - iii. Can you tell me about times that you speak your other language(s)?
 - iv. Where were you born?
 - (If the student, was born in another country, beside the United States, I will ask her or him: How old were you when you came to the United States?).

Personal

- a. Okay, these next questions are a little bit more personal; so I can get to know you a little more:

- a. Now that you've told me where you were born, X, can you tell me where do you live (or your neighborhood) now? Can you tell me what it's like there for you?
- b. Do you have brothers and/or sisters? If so, how many? Which one are you? Are you the youngest, middle child or the oldest child?
- c. For you, how is being male different from being female to you?

School

- a. Now these next set of questions have to do with school.
 - a. What is your *favorite* subject in school? Why do you like it?
 - b. What is your *least* favorite subject in school? Why do you dislike it? (Or why do you not like X? Why is subject x blank for you?)
 - c. In what classes are you doing good in? and why? (Whats helping you make it easier for you?) How does it make you feel to be doing good in that/those classes? (If you were to think of one emotion, what would it be?)
 - d. In what classes are you struggling in? and why? How does it make you feel to be struggling in that/those classes? (And how does that make you feel?)
 - e. What is your *favorite* thing about school? and why?
 - f. What is your *least* favorite thing about school? and why?
 - g. What, if anything, gives you a feeling of confidence in school? (What are you most confident in, in school? What are you confident about?)

- h. You've told me that you speak X and X... I want to know a little more about how you use your languages. Do you use your other language while at school? If so, when and why? How does it make you feel when you use your other language in school? And why?

Questions about Research Question One: What are Latina/o students with LD's emotion-laden talk about being labeled LD?

Emotions

General

- a. If I say the term learning disability, what does that mean to you? One of the reasons why am interviewing you is because you have been identified as having a learning disability, how does being labeled with a learning disability feel to you?
- b. Some people with learning disabilities sometimes don't like that label because it seems to ignore all the stuff they can do. Can you tell me some things you are good at?
 - a. Now can you tell me some things you are having difficulty with at school?
 - b. Can you now tell me how you feel when you succeed at the thing(s) you are good at?
- c. Now that you have told me about what you are good at in school and why, how are those things that are you are good at in any way related to what helps you and feel about your learning disability?

- d. You've told me about your how you feel regarding your learning disability, can you describe what is your learning disability?

Personal

- a. Sometimes its hard for people with learning disabilities to talk about their disability, do you talk to anyone about your learning disability? If so, how does it make you feel? Does it help or does it make things not good for you to talk about your learning disability? Why? Why, not?
- b. You've told me about times in school where you experienced your learning disability, can you tell me when that occurs if you are outside of school? Does your learning disability feel different to you when it occurs outside of school?
- c. You've told me about your struggle in school about X what emotions did you feel or are feeling now based on that story as it relate to your learning disability?

School

- a. You've told me a lot about your experiences and feeling about school. For example, the time that you X...When at school can you tell me what it means to be a student with a learning disability for you? and how does it feel?
- b. I know that you go from your resource room and your general education room and back throughout the day at school. Please take a moment to think about what goes through your mind as you do this throughout the

day. Can you describe what goes through your mind as you do this? Can you tell me how it makes you feel?

- c. Schools label kids all the time to help them understand what students need help with academically. However, sometimes these labels are seen as having positive and negative affects. For you, what does the label, learning disability, mean for understanding yourself as a student?
- d. During the day you are in your special education resource room, with (teacher's name), like you've talked to me about. Can you tell me about some of the good stuff that you get from being there? Now that you've told me some of the good stuff can you tell me some of the bad stuff, if any, from being in your special education resource room, with (teacher's name)? You've given me some good information about being in special education, how does it make you feel to be in special education?

Counter (Emotion) Narratives

General

- a. In your own words, can you tell what a learning disability is? Who has spoken to you about a learning disability? What did they tell you? How did they explain it to you? Did they allow you to ask any questions? Did it make sense what they were saying? What emotions come up now for you as you remember the day you were told? Do you have any questions for me, about what a learning disability is? What kind of emotions are you feeling right now?

- b. Now that you have told me what a learning disability means in your own words, what do you think it means for someone to be labeled with a learning disability? What are their experiences like with their learning disability? How do you think they feel about it?
- c. Am interested in how learning disabilities and people and kids labeled with learning disabilities are talked about. For example, its sort of known that students with learning disabilities generally have trouble with reading, writing, math and communication.
 - i. What sort of stories or ideas have you heard about people or kids with learning disabilities? These could be from conversations you've heard or were a part of inside school or outside school. These stories could be from adults or children or your friends.
 - ii. Take a moment and think about a time when you've been in a situation where somebody told a story of LD [or Special Ed?] or made a comment about LD [or Special Ed?]...
 - 1. What did you notice about the emotions of the person who told the story or made the comment? For example, you told me a story that happened....
 - 2. What did you notice about the emotions/responses of people listening who **did not** have LD [were not in Special Ed?]?

3. What did you notice about the emotions/responses of people listening who **did** have LD [were not in Special Ed?]?
4. If you had to sum it up—what were the main differences in how all people responded to the story or comment?

Personal

- a. Now that you have told me your experience being a student with a learning disability can you tell me what sort of things happen or make you feel that you know you have a learning disability?
- b. You've told me a lot about your learning disability, how often do you think about your learning disability? When does it occur? Are these good thoughts? If so, can you tell me about them? If they are bad, can you tell me about them? If they are neither good or bad, can you describe the emotions or feelings?
- c. So, I have a story, to tell you. When I was in middle school, it took me longer to finish my work since I read and understood slower than most of the other students. I spent so much time on my work. I still spend a lot of time today on my work than other students. When I was younger this made me angry and frustrated. I decided when I got to high school to start running so I can overcome for how slow I was at reading and writing. This is an example of one of my LD stories. Can you share any stories you may have about your learning disability with me?

School

- a. Can you tell me when you feel learning disabled in class? Can you tell me that times in class when you struggle the most in learning? When does it happen? In what classes? Can you describe what happens? How do you know it is happening? How does it make you feel when this happens?
- b. You've told me about time when your learning disability happens. For example, X...Now can you tell me when your learning disability happens at school? How does that make you feel? Are the feelings different from when your learning disability happens at school verse outside of school?
- c. Thank you for sharing with me when your learning disability happens at school. For example, you have shared stories about X...In what ways might a learning disability be considered positive and/or negative in school? Saying that, how does that make you feel about yourself and your learning disability?
- d. The term learning disabilities came into law since 1968 in the United States. There seems to be many understandings of what that term means, I am interested in how students like yourself experience being labeled LD has been for them at school. Can you tell me how it has been for you at school? Or Can you tell me what happens in your day, when you get to school, throughout the day, do you stay in one room all day? Do you go to different classes and what sort of thoughts and feelings, emotions are you having throughout the day? How does it feel? How does it mean to be in special education? How does it feel?

Labeled with LD

General

- a. In your opinion, is labeling kids with learning disabilities a good thing? If yes, what are the good parts about it? If not, what are the bad parts about it? How do you think kids with learning disabilities feel about being labeled? Or How come? Or Why not?

Personal

- a. Can you remember the first time you heard the label learning disability? Can you tell me about it? When was it? Where was it? Who was there? What did it mean to you?
- b. Now that you have told me the first time you first heard the label LD, do you remember the time when someone first told you you had a learning disability? What did he or she say? How did it make you feel?
- c. Is being learning disabled a big part of you or a small part of you? Can you explain? Okay, thank you for sharing. And how does that make you feel? What kind of emotions come up for you?

School

- a. Now that you have told me a lot about your learning disability. For example, you consider your LD as X and you have shared with me X...Am interested in how you understand the label LD in your own life. Can you tell me about how you understand your label at school? and learning? During interactions with others? What if you were not labeled with a learning disability? How would that affect your schooling? learning? During interactions with others?

- b. Now lets talk about what strategies and beliefs you have that help you figure out what works for you in school learning. Can you name 1 or 2 things that really help you succeed in school? Or So, what works for you when you learn in school?
- a. You've told me about times that your learning disability is happening while at school, what sort of things do you do during those moments to help yourself (learn, stay on task, behave, etc.). What does not help you with your learning disability?

or
- b. Can you tell me about a time when you know things are not going well in class or struggling, what are some of the things that you have done in the past to not struggle anymore? (e.g., hand up, talking to a friend, etc.).

What does not help you with your learning disability?
- c. You have been given this label LD, does it make a difference how you see yourself as a learner? Boy? Female? Latina/o?
- d. You have been given this label LD, does it make a difference with the friends you have? (After all these subquestions, you can ask how does that make you feel?).
 - i. Does it make a difference to your friends?
 - ii. Have you ever talked about it with your friends?
 - iii. Do your friends talk about it with each other?
 - iv. Do you think people understand you?

- v. Do you think your friends understand school is like for you? Or Do you think your friends understand your struggles in school? If yes, what makes you say yes?
- vi. Does it make a difference to your parents?
- vii. Does it make a difference to your brothers and sisters?
- e. Do people treat you the same due to having a learning disability? (If no, say: That's interesting because some other students have said they have been bullied. If they say yes, oh, am interested in this. Can you tell me how you were treated differently? So how does that make you feel when that incident occurred? (Can you tell me about it?))
- f. Your IEPs meetings are a chance for your teachers, your parents and you to discuss your progress as a student. Do you participate in your IEPs? If so, what does it feel like when you are there? What was is the purpose of IEPs? How helpful was it for you?

Relationship to LD

General

- a. If you were to describe your LD in one word, what would it be? If you were to draw your LD what would you draw? Can you draw your LD? Now, can you add yourself in the drawing? How would you represent it? How does this drawing make you feel? If I say the word X (the one word she or he said) how does it make you feel?
- b. How do you feel about your learning disability or (here I can substitute the word or phrase that the student has been using throughout the interview

that describes or represents for s/he their “Learning Disability”) right now?

- c. What is it like to know that you have a learning disability?

Personal

- c. Personally, during the day, how does your learning disability impact you? (either positively or negatively, or neither?).
- d. What is one thing that you would wish others would know about your abilities?
- e. What is one thing that you would wish others would understand about your learning disability? (If you would like to tell me at a later time, that is fine too.)

School

- a. If you could tell teachers how they can better understand kids who have been identified as LD, what would you like to tell those teachers?
- b. What kinds of things have you been told about your learning disability by your general education teachers?
- c. What kinds of things have you been told about your learning disability by other staff at the school (i.e., special educators, school psychologists, speech therapist, etc.).
- d. From all of the things that you have been told at school about your learning disability by these different people what do you believe or is true or disbelieve or think is not true? and why or why not?
- e. From all of this information, what do you have questions about?

Question about Research Question 2): What are Latina/o students with LD's emotion-laden talk of the idea of LD?

Intersectionality

General

- a. Now that we have talked a lot about your learning disability I want us to talk about some of your other identities (Here be aware that you might have to do some teaching about these words or defining these words a little bit for the students. Also, throughout this section, and all of the sections of the interview protocol, I could ask the student how she is feeling about the topics now, during the interview).
 - i. When I say the word disability, what comes to mind? What does a disability mean? When I say the word impairment, what comes to mind? What does impairment mean?
 - ii. When I say the word race, what comes to mind? What does race mean?
 - iii. When I say class, socioeconomic class, what comes to mind? What does class mean?
 - iv. Last week we talked about gender, when I say gender now, what comes to mind? What does gender mean?

Personal

- a. Now that we talked about race, gender, class, and disability (If the student does not know what these words mean, I will define them for her or him; this is not problematic, given my epistemological stance and

methodological point of view that I will be contributing to their narratives and talk about all these issues since epistemologically I see knowledge being co-constructed with me. Again, according to Holstein and Gubrium (1995), from an active interviewing perspective “the interviewer invites and assists narrative production, suggesting the parameters of the sort of narrative being solicited” (p. 41):

- i. Lets compare and contrast the different social classes—poor, working class, middle class, upper class. What social class mostly reflects your own experiences? Why?
 - ii. How does the word gender relate or not relate to how you see yourself? What gender do you identify as? Why?
 - iii. How does the word disability relate or not relate to how you see yourself? What does disability mean to you and how do you identify with the notion of a disability?
 - iv. How does the word race relate or not relate to how you see yourself? What race do you identify as?
 - v. How does the word Latina/o relate or not relate to how you see yourself? What does being Latina/o mean to you?
 - vi. How do you feel about your disability, race, class, and gender? What experiences do you have about each or a combination of each?
- b. What does being Latina/o with a learning disability, working class or poor mean to you?

- c. What other identities do you have? How are these influenced within your other identities and are an indication of who you are and becoming?

School

Now I would like us to talk how you may be experiencing disability, race, class, gender and any other form of differences at school.

- a. You've told me that race and disability means X for you. When at school how do you experience your race and your disability together? What kinds of things do you learn about race and disability at school?
 - i. How accurate do you think those ideas are for you?
 - ii. What are some of the positive things that you learn?
 - iii. What are some of the negative things?
 - iv. How do the positive things make you feel about your race and disability?
 - v. How do the negative things make you feel about your race and disability?
 - vi. What kinds of things do you learn about race and disability from your interactions in school with your peers? teachers?
 - vii. When that happened how did you feel?
- b. Now that you have told me about how you experience race and disability at school and you've told me that gender and class means X for you, when at school how do you experience your gender and class together? What sort of things have you learned about your gender and your class together at school?

- i. How accurate do you think those ideas are for you?
 - ii. What are some of the negative things?
 - iii. How do the positive things make you feel about your gender and class?
 - iv. How do the negative things make you feel about your gender and class?
 - v. What kinds of things do you learn about gender and class from your interactions in school with your peers? teachers?
 - vi. When that happened how did you feel?
- c. Now that we have talked about race and disability and gender and class, and you've told me about your experiences of both now I would like to talk about how you experience all of these realities:
- i. What are you taught about race, disabilities, gender and class together at school?
 - ii. What are some differences between the information you learned about these from school, and your own experience of it?

Literacy Events

General

- a. You've told me about some of your strengths and what you like in school and some of your difficulties in school and what do you don't like in school. I now want to talk about your experiences in school as you read and write as they relate to you who you are and becoming.

- i. Remember you told me about your experience during Mrs. X's class when you were...tell me more about your experience about that situation. What did reading mean for you? What did writing mean for you? How was writing related to any of your identities?

Personal

- b. Take a moment to think and feel what reading means for you. Can you tell me what this brings to mind and how you feel? (Did you feel happy, sad, excited, frustrated? As a Latina/o with a Learning Disability what does reading mean to you?
- c. Take a moment to think and feel what writing means for you. Can you tell me what this brings to mind and how you feel? As a Latina/o with a Learning Disability what does writing mean to you?
- d. For you, what do you like about writing? What do you dislike?
- e. Take a moment to think how you like to read? Can you describe it to me?
- f. Take a moment to think about how you like to write? Can you describe it to me?
- g. Who taught you how to read? Now take a moment to how did it first feel to read? How does it feel to read now?
- h. Who taught you how to write? Now take a moment to think how did it first feel to write? How does it feel to write now?
- i. When you read, what goes through your mind? how do you feel?
- j. When you write, what goes through your mind? how do you feel?

School

- a. For you, what does it mean when you read and write in Mr. X's classroom? What does reading and writing help you accomplish? When you are writing and reading in Mr. X's classroom how do you feel? When you are writing or reading in Mr. X's classroom what actions help you stay on task? What does that mean to you as a Latina/o student with a Learning Disability?
- b. For you, when you are in Mrs. X's classroom what helps you participate in class? (What do you do most (or expected to do) of the day?) What helps you participate when you have to read and write? You've told me about the X lesson that Mrs. X did for you, what were your thoughts and feelings during that activity? What does that mean to you as a Latina/o student with a Learning Disability?
- c. When you write in Mrs. X's classroom, how do you feel? What does that mean to you as a Latina/o student with a Learning Disability?
- d. When you read in Mrs. X's classroom, how do you feel? What does that mean to you as a Latina/o student with a Learning Disability?

Master Narratives of Learning Disabilities

General

Like I have shared with you before, when I was in fourth grade I was labeled with a Learning Disability. This was due to the fact that when I was 2 years old I had a severe fever which caused me to experience seizures. Due to this I had trouble reading and writing as a young boy and my school labeled me as having a

Learning Disability. There is a lot of information out in society about what a Learning Disability is. I am interested in student's opinions about their Learning Disabilities.

- a. You've told me about your experience with a Learning Disability. One view about learning disabilities is that the problem is which a person's brain. What do you believe influences your LD?
- b. You've told me about your strengths, X, X, X and some of your areas that you struggle with, X, X, X. One understanding about a learning disability is that people labeled with it lack basic skills, like reading and writing. Take a moment to think about this, what do you think about this? How does it make you feel?

Personal

- a. Another view regarding people with Learning Disabilities is that they tend to not see themselves very highly when compared to those without a Learning Disability. In your experience as a Latina/o with a Learning Disability, who do you see yourself in relation to your LD and how you feel and think about yourself?

School

- a. One of the views about some students with LD is that their emotions tend to me more negative than positive. Sometimes this affects their relationships with their friends and/or teachers. In your experience, when at school what does it mean for you to have a Learning Disability and how

you relate to your peers socially? What comes to mind? How does that make you feel?

- b. You've told me a lot about your strengths and areas that you could improve on while at school. Think about the types when you are reading and writing at school. Do you think having a learning disability is different for a student if they're white, black, Asian, native American, or Latina/o? Is LD the same for all races? Is it different for Latina/o in any way?

The following are probes that I may use throughout the pre-interview and interview protocol.

- What do you mean?
- How were you feeling?
- What emotions came up for you?
- I'm not sure that I am following you.
- Would you explain that?
- What did you say then?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- Give me an example.
- Tell me about it.
- Take me through the experience.

Note: The Probes were Adopted from Bogdan & Biklen (2007), p. 104.

APPENDIX C

TEACHER PRE-INTERVIEW AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND PROTOCOL

CHECK LIST AND VERBAL SCRIPT INSTRUCTIONS

Pre-interview Check List:

- Remind the parent/teacher the reason why I am interviewing them and make sure you say that there are not “correct” or “wrong” answers; also that they are welcomed to share with you any stories, ideas or opinions that they have or heard about the questions I ask.
- Explain that I will ask them questions that relate to their son or daughter’s/student’s Learning Disability, emotions, reading and writing, multiple identities, and their child’s in school and out of school experiences.
- I will read out loud and explain to the parent/teacher permission and consent forms again, even though by this time the parent/teacher has already read and understood this form. As I read out loud I will ask the parent/teacher to read along with me. During this time I will also remind the parent/teacher what and why I am interviewing them for and what I plan to do with the information I collect (i.e., transcribe and analyze it) in order to explore my research questions.
- Explain to the parent/teacher what the equipment I will be using and why. I will inform them about the equipment, the audio-recorder, by showing how I will be using it during the interview and explain why I will record. I will record our interviews because I might forget what she or he says and by recording it will help me remember so I can write about it more accurately later.
- Then, I will make sure that I go over confidentiality and anonymity. Nothing the participant shares will be connected to her or his name. I will inform the participant that ALL names will be changed to pseudonyms (even the names she or he might use while narrating stories to me). All audio-recordings and

transcriptions will be secured so that nobody besides me, the researcher, and the other study team members, can access it. All recordings and transcriptions will be stored in computer with a protected password and within a secured Dropbox account with a password.

- I will communicate to the participant that if they have any questions throughout the 45-90 minute interview that they may feel free to make any comments, ask questions during or even after the interview. I will do this to ensure transparency. I will make sure to communicate that I am very open to follow-up interviews, chats, communication, or questions, etc. Also, I will not forget to affirm and say thank you to the interviewees as they share with me their words, opinions and stories.
- After going over the above bullet points I will begin recording and conduct the interview for 45-90 minutes. I will inform the participant that we will conduct 2-4 individual sessions in order to get through all of the interview protocol/questions.

General and Special Education Teacher Interview Protocol

Background Questions:

General

This first set of questions is about your basic/personal information. I am asking these in order for me to capture them on the audio recorder.

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. Where do you live?
4. How long have you lived there?
5. Where else have you lived?
6. Where were you born?
7. What is your race?
8. What is your ethnicity?
9. What is your gender?
10. Do you have a disability?
11. What is your social class?
12. How do you experience being X while at school?

Personal Life

1. Can you tell me about your neighborhood?
2. What language(s) is (are) spoken in your home? By whom?

Professional Life

1. Why did you become a teacher?
2. How long have you been teaching for?

3. Why did you choice this school to work at?
4. What is a learning disability?
5. How would you describe X's learning disability?
6. What type of learning disability does X have?
7. How is X doing in school?
8. Can you tell me about X as a student in your class?
9. Can you tell me about X as a peer to his classmates?
10. Is there anything else you would like to share about X as a student with an learning disability?
11. Tell me about X. What are his/her interests? Tell me about her or his strengths? What are areas that s/he needs to improve on?
12. Can you tell me about X as a reader? As a writer? As a communicator?
13. What is X's favorite subject? Why do you think s/he likes it? What is X's least favorite subject? Why do you think s/he dislikes it?
14. In what classes is X doing good in? Why? (What is helping him or her to make it easier for him or her?). How does it make him feel to do well in school? How does it make you feel for X to be doing good in that/those classes? (If you were to think of one emotion, what would it be?)
15. In what classes is X struggling in? and why? How does it make you feel? How do you think X feels?
16. What gives X a feeling of confidence in school? (What is X's most confident in, in school? How does that make you feel?)

17. You've told me that you speak X and X... I want to know a little more about how you use your languages. When at school, as a teacher, do you use your other language while at school? If so, when and why? How does it make you feel when you use your other language in school? And why?

18. Can you tell me about your relationship with X's parents and other teachers?

Questions about Research Question One: What are Latina/o students with LD's emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD?

Emotions

General

1. If I say the term learning disability, what does that mean to you? One of the reasons why am interviewing you is because you are X's teacher. I am conducting a study that looks at the lived experiences of Latina/o students with LD. How does it feel for you as a teacher to have students who are labeled with LD?
2. Some people with learning disabilities sometimes don't like that label because it seems to ignore all the stuff they can do. Can you tell me some things A, B, C, and D is good at?
 - a. Now can you tell me some things that A, B, C, and D has difficulty with at school?
 - b. Can you now tell me how you feel when A, B, C, and D succeeds at the thing(s) that s/he is good at? How does that make you feel, as a teacher?
3. How does A, B, C, and D feel about his learning disability?

4. Now that you have told me about what A, B, C, and D is good at in school and why, how are those things that A, B, C, and D is good at in any way related to what helps him and feel about his learning disability?
5. You've told me how A, B, C, and D feels regarding her or his learning disability, can you describe what is her or his learning disability is?

Personal

- d. Do you talk with A, B, C, and D about his or her learning disability?
- e. When does A, B, C, and D's learning disability occur? Within school?
- f. You've told me about A, B, C, and D's struggle in school about X what emotions did you feel or are feeling now based on that story as it relate to A, B, C, and D's learning disability?

School

- e. You've told me a lot about A, B, C, and D's experiences and feeling about school. For example, the time that X....When A, B, C, and D is at school can you tell me what it means for her or him to be a student with a learning disability? and how does make you feel?
- f. Schools label kids all the time to help them understand what students need help with academically, socially and emotionally. However, sometimes these labels are seen as having positive and negative affects. For you, what does the label, learning disability, mean for understanding you're A, B, C, and D as a student?
- g. What do you think about schools labeling children? Do you think it's a positive thing or a negative thing?

- h. What are some positive things that you perceive A, B, C, and D has gotten from being in Special Education? Now that you've told me some of the good stuff can you tell me some of the bad stuff, if any, that you perceive A, B, C, and D being in their special education resource room, with (teacher's name)? How does it make you feel that A, B, C, and D is in special education?

Counter (Emotion) Narratives

General

- d. In your own words, can you tell what a learning disability is? Who has spoken to you or did you learn about a learning disability? What did they tell you? How did they explain it to you? Did they allow you to ask any questions? Did it make sense what they were saying? How did you feel? Do you have any questions for me, about what a learning disability is? What kind of emotions are you feeling right now?
- e. Now that you have told me what a learning disability means in your own words, what do you think it means for someone to be labeled with a learning disability? What do you think it means to A, B, C, and D?
- f. Am interested in how learning disabilities and people and kids labeled with learning disabilities are talked about. For example, its sort of known that students with learning disabilities generally have trouble with reading, writing, math and communication.
- i. What sort of stories or ideas have you heard about people or kids with learning disabilities? These could be from conversations

you've heard or were a part of inside school or outside of school.

These stories could be from adults or children or your friends or family members.

- ii. Take a moment and think about a time when you've been in a situation where somebody told a story of LD [or Special Ed?] or made a comment about LD [or Special Ed?]...
 1. What did you notice about the emotions of the person who told the story or made the comment? For example, you told me a story that happened....
 2. What did you notice about the emotions/responses of people listening who **did not** have LD [were not in Special Ed?]?
 3. What did you notice about the emotions/responses of people listening who **did** have LD [were in Special Ed?]?
 4. If you had to sum it up—what were the main differences in how all people responded to the story or comment?

Personal

- d. What is it like for you to be a teacher of Special Education? What is your experience like?
- e. You've told me a lot about A, B, C, and D's learning disability, how often do you think about his or her learning disability? When does it occur? Are

these good thoughts? If so, can you tell me about them? If they are bad, can you tell me about them? If they are neither good or bad, can you describe the emotions or feelings?

- f. So, I have a story, to tell you. When I was in middle school, it took me longer to finish my work since I read and understood slower than most of the other students. I spent so much time on my work. I still spend a lot of time today on my work than other students. When I was younger this made me angry and frustrated. I decided when I got to high school to start running so I can overcome for how slow I was at reading and writing. This is an example of one of my LD stories. Can you share any stories you may have about A, B, C, and D learning disability with me?

School

- e. What does it mean for A, B, C and D to be LD at school? Can you tell me how A, B, C, and D experiences being LD in class when she or he struggles most in learning? When does it happen? In what classes? Can you describe what happens? How do you know it is happening? How does it make you feel when this happens?
- f. Thank you for sharing with me when A, B, C, and D experiences being learning disability at school. For example, you have shared stories about X...In what ways might a learning disability be considered positive and/or negative in school? Saying that, how does that make you feel about A, B, C, and D as it relates to his or her learning disability?

- g. The term learning disabilities came into law since 1968 in the United States. There seems to be many understandings of what that term means, I am interested in how students like A, B, C, and D experience being labeled LD has been for them at school. Can you tell me how it has been for you as a teacher?

Labeled with LD

General

- b. In your opinion, is labeling kids with learning disabilities a good thing? If yes, what are the good parts about it? If not, what are the bad parts about it? How do you think kids with learning disabilities feel about being labeled? Or How come? Or why not?

Personal

- d. Can you remember the first time you heard the term learning disability? Can you tell me about it? When was it? Where was it? Who was there? What did it mean to you?
- e. I know that you have shared with me that you have been identified with a Learning Disability. How has being labeled with a LD or having ADHD influenced the way you teach A, B, C, and D.
- f. In your opinion, is being learning disabled a big part of A, B, C, and D's life or a small part? Can you explain? Okay, thank you for sharing. And how does that make you feel? What kind of emotions come up for you?

School

- g. Now that you have told me a lot about A, B, C, and D's learning disability. For example, you consider A, B, C, and D's LD as X and you have shared with me X...Am interested in how you understand the label LD in A, B, C, and D's life. Can you tell me about how you understand A, B, C, and D's label at school? and learning? During interactions with others? What if A, B, C, and D were not labeled with a learning disability? How would that affect her or his schooling? learning? During interactions with others?
- h. Now lets talk about what strategies and beliefs that A, B, C, and D have that help him or her figure out what works for her or him in school learning. Can you name 1 or 2 things that really help her or him succeed in school?
- i. A, B, C, and D has been given the label LD, does it make a difference how she or he sees her or himself as a learner? due to being labeled LD?
- j. Do people treat her or him the same due to having a learning disability? (If no, say: That's interesting because some other students have said they have been bullied. If they say yes, oh, am interested in this. Can you tell me how he or she was treated differently? So how does that make you feel when that incident occurred to your son or daughter? (Can you tell me about it?)
- k. During A, B, C, and D's IEPs meetings how do you perceive X's participation? How do you perceive X's parent's participation? Who attends these meetings? What is their role? How do you feel during X's

IEPs meeting? How do you perceive A, B, C and D's other teacher's participation? What is the purpose of IEPs? How helpful are they for you as a teacher of A, B, C, and D? What do you do at these meetings?

- l. Are they helpful for you? If so, how? Are there any concerns about the meetings when you leave? Or during? If so, what/why?
- m. Do you call any of the parents or go to their home to talk about A, B, C and/or D's progress? If so, can you tell me about it?
- n. In what language are the meetings held? Can I have a copy of A, B, C, and D's IEP documents. What are the school's goals for A, B, C, and D? What the school's goals are for his/her reading? If yes: What do these papers say about X's reading? writing? Have you suggested any strategies to A, B, C, and D's parents to try at home to develop X's writing and reading skills? Reading skills? If yes: Can you tell me about them? Do you know how those are working for them?

Relationship to LD

General

- d. If you were to describe A, B, C, and D's LD in one word, what would it be? If you were to draw A, B, C, and D's LD what would you draw? Can you draw A, B, C, and D's LD? Now, can you add yourself in the drawing? Now can you draw A, B, C and D in the drawing? How would you represent it? How does this drawing make you feel? If I say the word X (the one word she or he said) how does it make you feel?

- e. How do you feel about A, B, C, and D's learning disability or (here I can substitute the word or phrase that the participant has been using throughout the interview that describes or represents for s/he their "Learning Disability") right now?

Personal

- f. How do you think A, B, C, and D's LD impact her or him? (either positively or negatively, or neither?).
- g. What is one thing that you would wish others would know about A, B, C, and D's abilities?
- h. What is one thing that you would wish others would understand about A, B, C, and D's learning disability?

School

- f. If you could tell teachers how they can better understand kids who have been identified as LD, what would you like to tell those teachers?
- g. What kinds of things have you been told about A, B, C and D's learning disability by her or his general education teachers?
- h. What kinds of things have you been told about A, B, C, and D's learning disability by other staff at the school (i.e., special educators, school psychologists, speech therapist, etc.).
- i. From all of the things that you have been told at school about A, B, C, and D's learning disability by these different people, what do you believe or is true or disbelieve or think is not true? and why or why not?
- j. From all of this information, what do you have questions about for them?

Question about Research Questions 2) What are Latina/o students with LD's emotion-laden talk about being labeled with LD?

Intersectionality

General

- b. Now that we have talked a lot about A, B, C and D's learning disability I want us to talk about some of your and your student's other identities.
 - i. When I say the word disability, what comes to mind? What does a disability mean? When I say the word impairment, what comes to mind? What does impairment mean?
 - ii. When I say the word race, what comes to mind? What does race mean?
 - iii. When I say class, socioeconomic class, what comes to mind? What does class mean?
 - iv. Last week we talked about gender, when I say gender now, what comes to mind? What does gender mean?

Personal

- k. Now that we talked about race, gender, class, and disability (If the teacher does not know what these words mean, I will define them for her or him; this is not problematic, given my epistemological stance and methodological point of view that I will be contributing to their narratives and talk about all these issues since epistemologically I see knowledge being co-constructed with me. Again, according to Holstein and Gubrium (1995), from an active interviewing perspective "the interviewer invites

and assists narrative production, suggesting the parameters of the sort of narrative being solicited” (p. 41)):

- i. Lets compare and contrast the different social classes—poor, working class, middle class, upper class. What social class mostly reflects your own experiences? Why?
- ii. How does the word gender relate or not relate to how you see yourself? What gender do you identify as? Why?
- iii. How does the word disability relate or not relate to how you see yourself? What does disability mean to you and how do you identify with the notion of a disability?
- iv. How does the word race relate or not relate to how you see yourself? What race do you identify as?
- v. How do you feel about your disability, race, class, and gender? What experiences do you have about each or a combination of each?

School

Now I would like us to talk how A, B, C, and D might be experiencing disability, race, class, gender and any other form of differences while at school.

- d. You’ve told me that race and disability means X for you. When at school how might X experience race and disability? Do you think A, B, C and D experiences her or his race and his disability together? What kinds of things do you think he or she learns about race and dis/ability at school?

- i. How accurate do you think those ideas are for him or her?
 - ii. What are some of the positive things that he or she has learned?
 - iii. What are some of the negative things?
 - iv. How do the positive things make him or her feel about his or her race and disability?
 - v. How do the negative things make him or her feel about his or her race and disability?
 - vi. What kinds of things does he or she learn about race and disability from his or her interactions in school with her or his peers? With you? Other teachers?
- e. Now that you have told me about how A, B, C, and D experiences race and disability at school and you've told me that gender and class means X for X, when at school how do you think A, B, C, and D experiences his or her gender and class together? What sort of things has X learned about his or her gender and class together at school?
- i. How accurate do you think those ideas are for A, B, C, and D?
 - ii. What are some of the negative things?
 - iii. How do the positive things make you feel about A, B, C, and D's gender and class?
 - iv. How do the negative things make you feel about A, B, C, and D's gender and class?

Literacy Events

General

- l. What does literacy mean to you? When does A, B, C, and D read? Do you read to A, B, C, and D?
- m. Tell me about A, B, C, and D's writing. How do you think he/she is coming along in writing?
- n. Tell me about A, B, C, and D's reading: How do you think he/she is coming along in reading? If teacher expresses a concern: Why do you think he/she is having this difficulty/problem? Possible prompts: What does he/she read? In which language (s)?
- o. What helps A, B, C, and D's read? What helps A, B, C, and D's write?

Personal

- p. Take a moment to think and feel what reading means for A, B, C and D. Can you tell me what this brings to mind and how you feel for A, B, C, and D? (Did you feel happy, sad, excited, frustrated?)
- q. Take a moment to think and feel what writing means for A, B, C, and D. Can you tell me what this brings to mind and how you feel for A, B, C, and D?
- r. For A, B, C, and D, what does he or she like about writing? What does A, B, C, and D dislike?
- s. Take a moment to think how A, B, C, and D likes to read? Can you describe it to me?
- t. Take a moment to think how A, B, C, and D likes to write? Can you describe it to me?

- u. Who taught A, B, C, and D how to read? Now take a moment think how it felt for A, B, C, and D when she or him first began to read. How does it feel to read now for A, B, C, and D?
- v. Who taught A, B, C, and D how to write? Now take a moment to think how did it first feel for A, B, C, and D to write? How does it feel to write now for A, B, C, and D?

School

- e. For A, B, C, and D, what does it mean when A, B, C, and D reads and writes in your class and Mr. X's classroom? What does reading and writing help A, B, C, and D accomplish? When A, B, C, and D is writing and reading in your class and Mr. X's classroom how does she or he feel? When you are writing or reading in Mr. X's classroom what actions help you stay on task?
- f. For A, B, C, and D, when she or he is in your and Mrs. X's classroom what helps her or him participate in class? (What does she or he do most (or expected to do) of the day?) What helps her or him participate when she or he has to read and write?
- g. When A, B, C, and D writes in your and or Mrs. X's classroom, how does s/he feel?
- h. When A, B, C, and D reads in your room and or Mrs. X's classroom, how do you feel?

Master Narratives of Learning Disabilities

General

Like I have shared with you before, when I was in fourth grade I was labeled with a Learning Disability. This was due to the fact that when I was 2 years old I had a severe fever which caused me to experience seizures. Due to this I had trouble reading and writing as a young boy and my school labeled me as having a Learning Disability. There is a lot of information out in society about what a Learning Disability is. I am interested in student's opinions about their Learning Disabilities.

- a. You've told me about A, B, C, and D's experience with a Learning Disability. One view about learning disabilities is that the problem is with a person's brain. What do you believe influences A, B, C, and D's LD?
- b. You've told me about A, B, C, and D's strengths, X, X, X and some of his or her areas that she or he struggles with, X, X, X. One understanding about a learning disability is that people labeled with it lack basic skills, like reading and writing. Take a moment to think about this, what do you think about this? How does it make you feel?

Personal

- b. Another view regarding people with Learning Disabilities is that they tend to not see themselves very highly when compared to those without a Learning Disability. In your experience working with your students what do you think about this?
- c. In your experience as a teacher with an LD, what do you think about this?

School

- c. One of the views about some students with LD is that their emotions tend to be more negative than positive. Sometimes this affects their relationships with their friends and/or teachers. In your experience, when at school what does it mean for A, B, C, and D to have a Learning Disability and how it relates to his or her peers socially? What comes to mind? How does that make you feel?
- d. I understand that A, B, C, and D goes to your class and then to Mr./Ms. X classroom for part of the day. What does he or she do there? What is your understanding of the reason she or he goes there?
- e. How would you compare A, B, C, and D reading and writing while at school in X's classroom versus X's classroom?

Probes

- What do you mean?
- How were you feeling?
- What emotions came up for you?
- I'm not sure that I am following you.
- Would you explain that?
- What did you say then?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- Give me an example.
- Tell me about it.
- Take me through the experience.

Note: The Probes were Adopted from Bogdan & Biklen (2007), p. 104. The questions are only examples of the types I will ask, there are more questions that will be asked.