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Organizing Learning for Transformation in College Outreach Programmes

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A master narrative exists that operates to preclude Mexican migrant students from college access. By ethnographically examining the experiences of Mexican migrant students in the UCLA Migrant Student Leadership Institute, I describe counterstories that show how Mexican migrant students disrupt the assumptions of the master narrative. Findings suggest that attending to the social organization of learning in college outreach programmes can afford transformative learning opportunities that fracture the master narrative, and provide for new potentialities to emerge in Mexican migrant students' struggles for educational opportunity. The UCLA Migrant Student Leadership Institute is used as an exemplary case showing how pedagogical interventions, such as college outreach programmes, can mediate college access for underrepresented students.

INTRODUCTION

A master narrative exists in the United States that operates to disallow a college education for Mexican migrant students. The Migrant Student Leadership Institute (MSLI) disrupts the master narrative about Mexican migrant educational opportunity. The MSLI represents a fracturing¹ of pedagogical possibility within the hostile and deficit-laden discourse through which Mexican migrant students struggle to persist toward college access. Specifically, in this article, I ask and answer the question: How does MSLI mediate college-going for Mexican migrant students? I argue that the social organization of learning in MSLI allows it to serve as a pedagogical intervention that supports and fosters students'

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college-going in transformative ways, disrupting the master narrative about Mexican migrant students and higher education. I present an ethnographic discussion of students' college-going experiences following the MSLI as a counter-story to the master narrative. These experiences exemplify the new potentialities for students to engage in the social practice of college-going.

THE MASTER NARRATIVE AND MEXICAN MIGRANT EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Master narratives operate to normalize the oppressive conditions within society by telling stories from the perspective of the dominant social group, in order to sustain their racial and class privilege (Dixson & Rousseau, 2007). According to Yosso (2006), stories from the dominant voices in society "perpetuate myths that darker skin and poverty correlate with bad neighborhoods and bad schools" (p. 9). These discursive configurations render the perspectives and experiences of nondominant groups illegitimate and deficient in reference to the dominant group. The master narrative that precludes Mexican migrant students from educational opportunity is founded on assumptions about Mexican migrant students such as: They do not deserve college admission because they do not care about education, and they do not have the intellectual ability for college admission. These assumptions stem from deficit-oriented interpretations of the sociocultural (including educational) contexts through which Mexican migrant students participate in U.S. society. This article contributes a counter-narrative to these deficit-oriented assumptions that pervade the social contexts of Mexican migrant students' educational opportunity.

This master narrative has been well documented by scholars working within LatCrit and Critical Race theoretical frameworks (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Solórzano & Ornelas, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Yosso, 2006), as well as by sociocultural theorists engaged with Latino, specifically Mexican, and most particularly Mexican migrant communities (Gutiérrez, 2006; Gutiérrez & Jaramillo, 2006; McCormick, 2003; Orellana, 2001). Yet, the master narrative and the sting of its dehumanizing power persist. The master narrative's longevity can be explained, in part, by examining the social and educational contexts in which Mexican migrant students participate in college-going. These contexts are not specific to a subaltern identity of "Mexican migrant student", but rather emerge from the myriad of social and cultural identifiers to which Mexican migrant students are subjected to. Specifically, racialized identifiers such as Latino, class identifiers such as poor, geographic identifiers such as rural or urban, and nationalistic identifiers such as "illegal" or undocumented interact with socio-educational identifiers such as English language learner, first-generation student, and under-represented. Mexican migrant

students' college-going contexts emerge from differential intersections of these (and undoubtedly other) social constructs.

In education, these intersections often are accompanied by specific material inequities. For example, the schools that Mexican migrant students typically attend are associated with fewer available college-preparatory courses, adequately qualified teachers, and counsellors available to guide the application process (McDonough, 2005; Nuñez, 2007; Oakes, Rogers, Lipton, & Morrell, 2002; Oakes et al, 2006). Furthermore, the mobility, poverty, and lower-parental education levels that Mexican migrant students and their families face have been shown to be associated with more challenging paths to college (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000; Gildersleeve, 2006; Long, 2004; McDonough, 1997; Price, 2004; Ream, 2005; St. John, 2003). Finally, as most Mexican migrant students are either immigrants themselves or the first generation children of immigrants, cultural ties to the global phenomenon of human migration subject students to a litany of socially repressive and culturally *irrelevant* expectations for modes and forms of family participation in education (Auerbach, 2004; Gildersleeve, 2006; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; Tierney & Auerbach, 2005).

These contexts have been produced and, recursively, aggressively appropriated as cannon fodder for social and educational policies that have fostered a hostile political climate for Mexican migrant students. This hostility is evident in anti-immigrant legislation such as California Proposition 187, which tried to refute the state's responsibility for educating and protecting the public health of Mexican immigrants and effectively barring bilingual education programmes. Anti-affirmative action movements, such as California's Proposition 209, have been shown to discourage underrepresented students from applying to public universities (Brown & Hirschman, 2006; McDonough, 1999). Enrolments of Latino and African American students have been shown to decline in light of these policies, especially at state flagship universities (Contreras, 2005). Furthermore, educational policies that encourage magnet schools, charter schools, and advanced placement tracks within schools serve to further (de)track underrepresented students out of college preparatory curriculum (McDonough, 1997, 2004; Oakes, 1985). The hostility that Mexican migrant students face as they struggle to come to know college access perhaps can be seen most clearly in the contemporary controversies over the once bipartisan supported "DREAM Act".² In its earliest and most supported versions, the DREAM Act would have allowed states to extend in-state tuition benefits to undocumented students and provided a pathway to citizenship for all immigrant students. Following the hotly contested and failed immigration reform efforts of the U.S. Congress, such as the dehumanizing U.S. House Resolution 4437,³ the DREAM Act has been revised into a military recruitment technology, which has served to further polarize social and political views of immigration.⁴

Ultimately, the master narrative, as constituted in part by neoliberal and neoconservative maligned interpretations and appropriation of the social contexts of Mexican migrant students' college-going, has produced the tragic outcome of Mexican migrant students being among the *most* underrepresented communities in higher education (Nuñez, 2007; Nuñez & Jaramillo, 2005). In order to address this historic underrepresentation, many educators turn to college outreach programmes (Tierney, Corwin, & Colyar, 2005). Unfortunately, most college outreach programmes function from a framework that reinscribes the master narrative (Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005). Typical college outreach programmes, despite their good intentions, position their students as deficient in academic ability, college knowledge, and/or cultural and social capital necessary to get into college (McDonough, 2005; Tierney, et. al, 2005; Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005). Typical programmes reduce outreach to remedial and basic skills learning education. These deficit-oriented programmes continue to populate the educational landscape, despite calls for culturally relevant and academically rigorous college preparatory experiences, especially in programmes geared toward Latino students (Conchas, 2006; Gandara, 2002; Gibson & Bejnéz, 2002; Perna, 2005; Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005).

Concerns about programmes' relationship to specific cultural communities (e.g., Mexican migrant students) and the pedagogical foundations from which programmes perform their work are absent from studies of college outreach. To this end, in this article, I attend to the social organization of learning within the MSLI, describing how it pedagogically engages participants and mediates students' college-going in transformative ways. I illustrate the transformative potential of the MSLI in the context of college outreach programmes by describing students' salient experiences learned from my on-going ethnographic work with 12 participants from the 2005 MSLI. I argue that attending to the social organization of learning is a paramount concern for outreach programmes seeking to disrupt the master narrative about marginalized students' participation in higher education.

UNDERSTANDING COLLEGE-GOING FOR MEXICAN MIGRANT STUDENTS

College choice and college access research, including studies of outreach programmes, traditionally have relied heavily on narrow, discrete developmental stage models of student choice processes (e.g., Hossler & Gallagher, 1987) or class-based (and privileged) models of cultural and social reproduction (e.g., McDonough, 1997) to examine and explain persistent inequality in college access (Gildersleeve, 2006; McDonough & Gildersleeve, 2005). Researchers rarely have focused analyses on how students participate in the project of college

choice, based on understanding of the postsecondary opportunities as informed by the broader project of college access within the seemingly discretely procedural project of college admissions. I draw on sociocultural theories of learning and development in order to understand college choice, access, and admissions as an interrelated and intersectional process of sense-making in which students participate over time (Cole, 1996; Gutiérrez, 2002; Moll, 2000; Rogoff, 2003). College access is reconceived as a learning activity, operationalized for inquiry as college-going literacy (Gildersleeve, 2006). College-going literacy focuses on how students “read” and “write” about their educational opportunity, within the structural constraints that delimit their culturally mediated understandings of what it means to come to know college access.

Using college-going literacy as a framework for studying how the MSLI mediated students’ college-going—their process of coming to know college access—my analysis focused on students’ cultural practices and the moments in their college-going literacy development wherein their practices were extended toward college access. I call these moments *transformative learning opportunities*. They were the culmination of influences that brought together specific mediating forces (e.g., artefacts such as a campus visit or people such as college mentors) that allowed students to expand their capacity for knowing college as a reality in their lives. The college-going literacy framework affords research a lens through which to study and understand the role that the social organization of learning within an outreach programme might play in relation to students’ broader project of getting to college. Understanding how various forces—be they artefacts like college-preparatory curriculum or the permeating social discourse, such as the master narrative—mediate students’ college-going allows analysis to work across influences and illustrate ways that different elements in students’ choice, access, and admissions generate transformative learning opportunities. Furthermore, the college-going literacy model treats college access as an historic social process, acknowledging the longstanding conditions of domination and marginalization that are manifesting in contemporary processes of college-going. At stake in this article are the intersecting historical activities of the role that outreach programmes play in students’ college-going and the social organization of learning in the MSLI.

Most important to note about the college-going literacy model for understanding college access is the emphasis and focus on *learning*. If educational opportunities emerge from a socially constructed practice of college-going, then individuals can *learn* how to make them a reality by coming to know their constituent parts. If educational opportunity is learned, then it can be taught. Indeed, the master narrative has been teaching educational opportunity for as long as schools and colleges have been around. Disruptions in the master narrative, like the disruption examined in this article, as exemplified by students from the 2005 MSLI, demonstrate innovative ways to teach educational opportunity for a more just and equitable society.

METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

In order to analyse the intersections of outreach, college-going and the social organization of learning in MSLI, I relied on data gathered from a broader critical ethnographic inquiry into Mexican migrant students' college-going (see Gildersleeve, 2006). I served as an instructor in the 2005 MSLI and invited 40 students with whom I had regular, sustained contact to participate in the broader study. Fifteen students agreed, and 12 ultimately participated. Four of the students were female. Eight were male. One-third of the students, who were all male, were undocumented migrants (i.e., did not hold legal residency/citizenship in the United States). All 12 were identified as Mexican or Mexican-American. Students lived in eight counties across the state of California from as far south as the Mexican–United States border to as far north as the San Francisco Bay area.

Data used for the analyses reported in this article included ethnographic participation and interviews (Carspecken 1996; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000; Spradley, 1979) with the 12 student participants. I met with the students on a monthly basis over the year following their summer with MSLI. The goal of the data collection was to document students' everyday experiences in college-going, as embedded within their everyday repertoires of practice (Gutiérrez, 2002).

The analyses represented in this article sought to uncover how MSLI influenced students' college-going. Preliminary analysis focused on the specific references that students made to MSLI during our ethnographic encounters. From these moments in the inquiry, multiple salient themes emerged that linked students' experiences within MSLI to their current ways of reading and writing about their college-going lives. I then reviewed these thematic salient experiences and conducted a genealogical analysis (Vygotsky, 1978), seeking to understand how they came about in students' lives. I wanted to know the social conditions that allowed these exceptional experiences to form. In answering the question, "How does MSLI mediate Mexican migrant students' college-going", I came to understand that MSLI served as a site of access for students, where multiple activities converged—outreach, schooling experiences, family life, the social organization of learning in MSLI, and the pervasive master narrative.

In the remainder of this article, I provide a counternarrative to Mexican migrant student deficiency, as represented in the master narrative, through my brief description of the social organization of learning in MSLI and my depictions of how MSLI influenced students' development of college-going literacies. This article challenges the master narrative's assumption that outreach for Mexican migrant youth must be remedial and focus on basic learning skills and strategies. In these ways, this article counters the master narrative, documenting a fracture in *the world as it is*—a fracture wherein *the world as it could be* might emerge. This fracture is an on-going process of reification that began in *Teatro* (see Gutiérrez, Hunter & Arzubiaga, this issue) in which students constantly broached, examined,

and problematized *the world as it is* in order to imagine *the world as it could be*, even if only to practice that world in the historical moment of MSLI.

THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF LEARNING IN THE MSLI

The most important distinction in the social organization of learning in the MSLI, in comparison to dominant outreach programmes, is the focus on sociocritical literacies (Gutiérrez, 2001, 2005). As explained in Nuñez's (2007) evaluation of the college access outcomes of MSLI, "sociocritical literacy is defined as the capacity to identify and critique social and political inequalities that affect educational attainment" (p. 6). The MSLI privileges the development of sociocritical literacies over the development of basic skills that focus on remedial education of Mathematics, English, Science and/or Social Studies. Further, typical college entrance activities, such as filling out applications, practising the SAT, and learning about different colleges take on a supplemental role, rather than a primary role in the academic activity of the programme. Instead of taking centre stage, these activities are made available to students in evening and weekend workshops, while the core of the curriculum in and outside of the (in)formal classroom focuses on critical reading and writing about social issues that affect students' home cultural communities. As explained by Gutiérrez, Hunter, and Arzubiaga (this issue), MSLI worked to re-mediate education for migrant students.

The master narrative holds that Mexican migrant students require remedial assistance in English language development, basic skills in core academic subjects, and generic, decontextualized college entrance information in order to make educational opportunity even a remote possibility. The MSLI relied on sociocultural theories of learning and development to foster students' sociocritical literacies, wherein they could use hybrid language practices and vacillate between expert and novice roles. These dimensions to the social organization of learning within the outreach programme supported the cultural contextualization of learning, enabling students to engage in social critique and imagine social responses to the inequalities they identified in their communities. The MSLI stands as a unique case of college outreach programmes in its explicit and intentional attention to the social organization of learning, within its sociocultural foundations of learning and development.

DEVELOPING AND PRACTICING COLLEGE-GOING LITERACY

Across our ethnographic engagement, students were eager to share how they saw MSLI influencing their college-going lives with me. "It's like MSLI has changed how I see everything", was a common assertion as we began to talk

about students' participation in college-going. When I would ask students to explain further, they would often elaborate, as Nené, from the greater Monterey Bay area did:

Before, when something came up that made me think down on me or my family . . . something that would probably keep me from getting to go to college . . . like hearing the price of tuition at UCLA or something, right . . . before I would just give up. But now, like, that's just their way of keeping me down, you know? . . . And not like I never heard of scholarships before, but like, I never really believed in that stuff. Now I think, hey—let's figure out what my family qualifies for and let's make sure the [college] counselor isn't jerking me around.

Nené attributes his increased capacity to understand and respond to financial inequalities in the cost of attending university to his experience in MSLI. When I pushed Nené a bit further to ask what it was about MSLI that helped him reframe his financial situation this way, he shared, "Like the way we did things. It's like I'm living MSLI now. Like that problem posing stuff.⁵ I'm posing problems all the time and figuring them out with other people."

Nené's direct example of how MSLI influenced his college-going qualitatively explains how the re-mediation of academic literacy assisted Nené in the development and practice of his college-going literacy. As witnessed in his reflections above, he directs his everyday experiences toward college attendance in ways previously unavailable to him. His "posing problems all the time" is a testimony to his on-going development and practice of his college-going literacy.

For the rest of this section, I focus on one problem commonly posed to Mexican migrant students in college-going: making college a reality in students' imagined futures. Although there are a number of pragmatic concerns related to getting into college (e.g., academic preparation, financing, filling out applications), they are somewhat fixed rules that students must follow in order to gain admission. Making college a reality in students' imagined futures, however, is less-explicit, less-fixed, and more organic in students' development. This practice previously has been named predisposition in college choice literature and has been tied to parents' attitudes, levels of education, and students' self-efficacy (Hossler, Schmit, & Vesper, 1999). Organizing outreach for learning, however, afforded MSLI the opportunity to shift from making up for a lack of college predisposition to fostering college as a meaningful and possible reality in students' imagined futures. The examples I depict below are exemplary of common sets of practices that I learned of from my encounters with students. They are representative of the myriad ways that students attributed MSLI in the development and practice of their college-going literacy.

THE PROBLEM OF MAKING COLLEGE REAL

An important piece of attaining college access is aspiring to postsecondary education. However, developing aspirations for college is only part of the puzzle. Sustaining those aspirations, and imagining oneself in college is a qualitatively different set of processes. Lorena, a Mexican migrant student living near the Mexico–United States border explained, “Yeah, everyone says they wanna go to college, but, before MSLI, I had no idea what that really meant. College? What’s that? It’s for white people.” The master narrative works to delegitimize students’ aspirations, forcing them to challenge hegemonic notions of who and what college is for.

Cristina, from Los Angeles, connected her newly imagined self directly to MSLI:

Driving past this place as a kid, I never thought it was for me. Just look at the cars in the parking lot. I mean, it’s in the middle of Beverly Hills, basically. But now, being here. Like, I can see myself here. And it’s more than just being here. Like, MSLI is no campus visit. Like, we’re here—in class, in *teatro*, in the dorms, in everything. It’s like, ownership. I’m a part of something here, whether the mainstream likes it or not. And I can come here.

Cristina’s reflections begin to hint at what the rest of this section hopes to illuminate: when students applied their developing sociocritical literacies toward higher education opportunity, they generated a college-going literacy, a practice of reconstituting the activity of college-going in such a way that disrupts the master narrative and makes higher education a possibility in students’ everyday lives.

Meritocratic ideals often cloak college access discourse and contribute to the sustainability of the master narrative. Scholars have theorized and documented “merit” in college access as a constructed ideal that holds little-to-no relationship with postsecondary educational outcomes (Baez, 2004; Oakes et al., 2002; McDonough, 1994). However, acknowledging these false claims of the meritocracy does not excuse students from dealing with its consequences. MSLI’s critical stance on social opportunity afforded students the possibility to understand college access as a complex system of sociopolitical intersections of privilege and inequality. These understandings deconstructed the mainstream college access ideology.

One organizing theme within the MSLI curriculum focused on socioeconomic privilege and marginalization. By investigating the connections between transnational economic policies, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement, and its everyday consequences for people’s social opportunities, students were afforded the opportunity to examine how dominant groups, and the policies that support them, subordinate non-dominant communities. Translated into concerns of college access, it allowed students to

understand that meritocracy was the dominant framework of college access, but they understood it as hegemonic social practice.

Carlitos, from the Central Valley, articulated the transition from understanding critique of ideology to practicing critique of ideologies in his college-going life as such:

After MSLI, I see it everywhere. My eyes are opened up. I can't not see it anymore. It is capitalism. The work. The competition . . . The manipulation of the demand or the supply. . . . Even the grades that I get. I get good grades. But, that means that someone isn't getting good grades. . . . And they wouldn't let me in to the English class that I needed, because I speak Spanish. But I want to [and effectively can] speak English. But they won't let me in, and that's like, capitalism, too. Like, I just didn't have what they think deserves what I want. It gives me a headache, but . . . I'm looking for the ways to get in. I . . . I want to be an astronomer, so MSLI helped me understand that I need to do more things than just study. I need to get the right classes. I need to ask questions. I need to do a lot, and I need to get support. Like you guys.

For Carlitos, deconstructing the meritocratic and hegemonic practices of educational opportunity in the U.S. was clearly connected to capitalism. Understanding that nothing was guaranteed from this mainstream ideology enabled him to recognize additional actions he could take toward his goal of becoming an astronomer. Specifically, Carlitos recognized that there were further questions he needed to ask, demands he needed to make, and that he did not need to do it alone.

Armando, a Spanish-dominant speaking Mexican migrant student from the East San Francisco Bay area, struggled to see himself in college prior to MSLI. He knew that college would afford him and his family better social and economic opportunities, but worried that he did not really know what college was, nor feel like he belonged there. As a Spanish-dominant student, he was made to feel incompetent in his high school, despite the fact that he had excelled in his Spanish language instruction during middle school.

MSLI afforded Armando the opportunity to transform his academic identity. MSLI was an intensive writing experience. Students were asked to complete four major writing assignments across the 4-week institute. Each assignment focused on a different academic genre of writing (e.g., autobiography). Students received feedback on their writing, but no grades were ever given. Further, students could write in whatever language they felt they could best express themselves, be it Spanish, English, or a hybridization of the two. The focus was on using students' entire linguistic toolkit and the production of academic written communication.

In reflecting on the academic work in the MSLI, Armando shared,

I became a good boy. A good schoolboy because of MSLI. I could speak in English or Spanish, so I learned a lot better. I'm still doing better. . . . And now I plan to go

to the community college so that I can transfer and get my degree. I didn't know that I could do that before. . . . But I've been to UCLA now, and I want to go back. I know it now.

The significance of the hybrid language practices valued by MSLI cannot be overstated. While hanging out one visit, Armando shared with me:

I'm not afraid to speak English with you, because if I mess up, you won't punish me or like me less. And if I just want to speak Spanish, I know you ask me for help in figuring out what I'm saying. You won't just make me feel stupid. It's like, we're both teachers, like we're more the same. So why shouldn't I get to go back to UCLA.

Armando's participation in MSLI demonstrated to him that speaking Spanish did not preclude him from being smart, nor should it necessarily restrict him from participating in higher education. Furthermore, Armando's participation disrupted traditional, static roles of teacher and student, further instantiating the worthiness of his intellectual contribution. This hybridity of language and expert/novice roles in MSLI afforded him the transformative learning opportunity needed to recognize how he might negotiate his developing language skills with his future educational opportunities.

FRACTURING THE MASTER NARRATIVE—LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE MIGRANT STUDENT LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

The fracture in the master narrative co-constructed by students and the broader MSLI experience is a reorganization of college-going for Mexican migrant students. The master narrative would hold that they do not belong at UCLA, they do not have the academic ability to attend UCLA, and that they do not even care to come to UCLA, hence, the dominant activity of college-going has structured Mexican migrant students into non-college preparatory curriculums, toward diminished social aspirations, and into low-wage jobs. Whereas, the fractured activity of college-going interrogates each of these hegemonic rules and recasts college-going as an inherent pathway for Mexican migrant students. Through the practices of social critique, response, and action for change, Mexican migrant students apply their sociocritical literacies toward participation in higher education, developing a college-going literacy. Before concluding, I share a collection of brief examples of transformative learning opportunities in students' college-going literacy development—moments where students applied their sociocritical literacies toward their higher education opportunity.

Cristina, from Los Angeles, for example, took her high school's administration to task for the ways they were tracking students in/out of advanced placement courses. She demanded to be let into the courses that she knew would make

her most competitive for college admission. The master narrative would have held Cristina into accepting her position in the school as a “regular” student, rather than a student with a stake in her own future.

Carlitos, from the Central Valley, investigated the federal DREAM Act and California’s local version, AB540. He organized a teach-in around issues of financing higher education for undocumented immigrants, like himself. He convinced his counsellor to investigate scholarships that do not require a proof of citizenship. The master narrative would have written Carlitos off as an illegal immigrant who could not engage in social mobility, rather than an historical actor struggling for social opportunity.

Reynaldo, from the Imperial Valley on the Mexico–United States border, was admitted to multiple 4-year universities, but chose to enrol in a special matriculation agreement programme between his local community college and a satellite branch of San Diego State University. Reynaldo explained his decision as one that put his family first:

I want to major in math and probably teach math eventually. This program is for math majors. And I want to teach in my hometown. And this program is all in my hometown. My family can’t afford to pay anything for my college. This program will pay for everything. I’m going to college because of my family. So, even though a lot of people are like, why aren’t you going to this [more prestigious] university? I’m like, I’m going to the best college for me. The best for my family.

The master narrative might have allowed Reynaldo to serve as a token of migrant achievement, especially had he chosen to attend one of the prestigious universities in California. However, Reynaldo authors his own version of higher education opportunity, disrupting the normative script of meritocracy and reifying his family’s involvement in his academic achievement. His family’s contribution was rendered invisible by the master narrative, but takes a central and organizing role in his practice of college-going.

Matias, from the Central Valley, connected the immigrant rights protests of 2006 to the educational inequality he witnessed in his home community. He organized a student group at his high school that marched from the school to city hall drawing attention to an overrepresentation of immigrant students in his school’s special education courses and an underrepresentation in their college preparatory curriculum. The master narrative expects lower academic achievement and reinforces hegemonic excuses for migrant students’ lower academic attainment. Matias called out the master narrative and named the tracking practices as partly responsible for migrant educational conditions.

These examples demonstrate how students incorporated their MSLI experiences in their everyday lives as college-going subjects. To say that MSLI was wholly responsible for the ways that these students disrupted the master narrative is disingenuous. However, each of them recall their experiences in MSLI, with

poignant specificity, as markers of where and when they re-engaged in college-going in new and different ways. Other authors in this volume have documented the ways that sociocritical literacies were practiced within MSLI. My critical ethnographic engagement with students shows how students practiced their sociocritical literacies post-MSLI. Specifically, it documents the ways that students direct their sociocritical literacies toward higher education, generating a new college-going literacy. In these college-going literacies, students read and write their educational opportunities in relation to the inequities they recognize and work against in their everyday lives.

CONCLUSIONS

By focusing on *learning* and the remediation of academic literacies in the MSLI, rather than on acquiring certain knowledge sets, tips for success in college admissions, or the basic skills of remedial education, students were afforded the opportunity to take action toward enhancing their educational opportunities. Students engaged in “reading” their educational opportunity by examining the social inequalities their home cultural communities faced. Students engaged in “writing” their educational opportunities by deciphering how to address these inequalities. The social organization of learning in the MSLI focused on the development of sociocritical literacies, which built the capacity for the development of college-going literacy.

The fracture depicted herein calls into question the sites of access to transformative learning that are made available to Mexican migrant students. Although the MSLI reconfigured students’ educational potentialities in relation to college-going, schooling itself remains tied to a hegemonic bloc that supports the master narrative. Yet, at the same time, many, if not most of the ways that students practiced the sociocritical literacies developed during MSLI sought to foster college-going literacy not just for their personal gains, but effecting change across their communities. The college-going literacy of these Mexican migrant students seemed tied to broader systemic concerns and an obligation to their communities. Further work can be done to investigate the collective notions of identity, belonging, and community that outreach focusing on sociocritical literacies might engender, and the relation between identity, belonging, and community to accessing college opportunities.

A master narrative exists that precludes Mexican migrant students from college access. This master narrative is based on assumptions about Mexican migrant students, their ability to learn, and the modes of preparation that are appropriate to get them into college. The MSLI serves as a pedagogical intervention in students’ college-going that supports and fosters students’ college-going literacy, in part, by the new potentialities afforded by its social organization of

learning. These accounts of how college-going was made more plausible are counterstories to the master narrative of Mexican migrant students' educational opportunity. They highlight how attending to the social organization of learning in college outreach is paramount to effecting change in how educational opportunity can be engaged by and for non-dominant cultural communities. The MSLI mediated students' access to college in transformative ways, remediating what college access could mean, without remediating students' literacies to basic skills and strategies. To this extent, this article is a counterstory to the master narrative. It documents a fracture in the dominant understanding of college access for Mexican migrant students. Within this fracture, Mexican migrant students' college-going is rendered plausible and a view of *world as it could be* emerges.

ENDNOTES

¹A "fracture" in this sense disrupts normative and expected social behaviour in micro, macro, and mezzo levels of analysis (see Weis & Fine, 2004).

²2001, U.S. Senate Bill 1545, The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act was a drafted federal legislation that sought to afford states the opportunity to extend in-state tuition benefits to undocumented students. It was originally introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives as HR 1918, The Student Adjustment Bill.

³2005, U.S. House Resolution 4437 was a drafted federal legislation that sought to revise current immigration law and further restrict the rights of undocumented immigrants in the United States.

⁴One current version of the DREAM Act has been offered as an amendment to U.S. Senate Bill 1547, The Department of Defense authorization bill. In this amendment, undocumented immigrants could gain legal residency by participating in the U.S. Armed Forces (Justice for Immigrants, 2007).

⁵"That problem posing stuff" is a reference to Freire's Pedagogy of the oppressed (1973).

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