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Oral History Master of Arts Thesis



Foundational Documents for
Culture Without Borders Language Collective, LLC
A Sustainable World Language School

  - Thank you for reading my thesis!

OHMA Thesis - Overview + General Acknowledgements

Concept

My OHMA thesis is a collection of foundational texts to turn my friends and my organization, Culture Without Borders Language Collective (CWB), into a self-sustaining and life-sustaining community school and economic venture. This thesis has four parts: a Philosophy of Language [and] Education essay, a business plan, a community-generated language-learning text called the Song as Artifact project, and a methodological reflection. More information on each component is on the next page.

Acknowledgments + Gratitude


These documents come out of several educational programs and learning communities I've been a part of since September 2022, including:

- Jeanne Lambert's ESL Teaching Practicum, run through the [Certificate in Teaching English program](#) at The New School,
- Basic Entrepreneurship Training, coordinated by [NY Designs](#) and hosted by the [Small Business Development Center](#) at La Guardia Community College – in collaboration with Tamecca Seril of [Element 9](#), [Nadia Aristide](#) of [Maroon Strategist](#), [Diana Benjamin](#) of [New Genesis Pathfinder](#), [Ryan Letts](#) of the [Cleonmaye Corporation](#), and [Evelyn Carrasco](#) of Bismarley & Associates
- The [Taking Care of Business](#) ten-week business plan writing seminar at CAMBA Small Business Services,
- The [PowerUp! Business Plan Competition](#) at the Brooklyn Public Library,
- South Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation's [Plan for Growth](#) program for small businesses,

and, of course,

-  Columbia University's [Oral History Master of Arts \(OHMA\)](#) program, which has been a social, academic, and political home to me for the last year.

The OHMA thesis has served, for me, as a structure within which to organize, articulate, and test my vision for our school and our business. For this and much more, I am deeply grateful to OHMA – especially the people who populated this program during the 2022-2023 academic year.

Thank you. 

Component Parts of Thesis

The following four documents make up my OHMA thesis:

Philosophy of Language [and] Education - begins on p. 4

(4 pages + references)

I wrote this paper in Jeanne Lambert's ESL teaching practicum. This document, written in first person singular from my perspective, outlines my story, beliefs and commitments as a language teacher at this point in time.

Business Plan - begins on p. 10

(29 pages + references)

This plan offers an overview of the origin story, mission, vision, values, structure, and plans for Culture Without Borders Language Collective. The plan is written in first person plural, from the perspective of CWB's co-founders and community at large.

Song as Artifact Materials - begins on p. 43

(77 pages + References)

This document, the bulkiest part of my thesis, is a bilingual (English/Spanish) collection of interviews, excerpts, and conversation prompts about music and songs. Over the last year, more than thirty different members of our community have contributed to this volume by offering interviews, translating and editing excerpts, assisting in curriculum design, and carrying out project management. \$600 in combined grant funding from OHMA and Columbia's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences made it possible for us to offer financial compensation to co-producers for their work. This collection of bilingual interviews, excerpts, and conversation prompts will serve as the foundational text for CWB's first ever monetized language-learning program, [Conversaciones Sonoras](#), which will begin in January/February 2024.

Methodological Reflection - begins on p. 126

(17 pages + References)

Behind these three foundational texts are two+ years' worth of conversations with friends and advisors – experts on various topics – about how to Do This Thing of starting a school and a business. Some of these conversations were recorded as oral-history-style interviews, in the context of my OHMA coursework. My methodological reflection is structured as a dialogue between me, my thesis advisors, and other admired thinkers and friends. This essay pulls together quotes and thoughts from a selection of interviews I conducted, as well as other relevant texts, to articulate CWB's methodology of schoolbuilding, research and education so far – and to amplify and resonate some people whose work and thinking give life to ours.

Why is this an oral history thesis?

When I first came in contact with the term oral history, it rocked my world – I was bowled over that this field existed. I had professional experience in biographical legal writing, language interpretation in a medical setting, conversational language teaching, transcript editing, and surveillance of recorded phone calls. The term “oral history” drew a circle around all these different things that I’d previously understood as separate. Not only did oral history integrate most of the jobs I’d done and found worthwhile, it also came at these practices with a sense of moral integrity and coherence – and with the bars, barriers, and conventional, artificial, instrumentalizing boundaries of professional society removed.

I learned the term “oral history” during a moment of crisis in my life: I was exhausted by the standardized, efficiency- and privacy-based boundaries of the medical field. I was outraged at the ways the legal system can be totally morally void. I was disillusioned with the hierarchical nature of the language-teaching program I was working for. I was fuming at professionalism in general. The COVID pandemic was raging, I was becoming politicized, and, overall, I was very disappointed in the world and in people.

In the community of people who identified as oral historians, I found a seemingly unending pool of thinkers, writers, students, teachers and activists who were practicing a form of research and a way of being in the world that made sense. Oral historians fostered and developed meaningful relationships across difference. They valued conversation with others about life as a valid way to learn. They understood every human being as an expert with important knowledge to share. They strived toward a fairer and more egalitarian reality. They worked together to develop flexible and truly ethical ways of relating to others. I was in awe of this community of people, I still am.

Oral history introduced and reinforced a lot of important concepts for me: ongoing consent, intersubjectivity, politically engaged and life-based learning, reciprocity, perspective awareness, valorization of experiential knowledge and wisdom, care, listening, shared authority, to name some. And oral history felt like a way out – like a way to keep developing my professional skills, but in the service of something positive, meaningful, worthwhile and uncontradicted.

Not long after I learned the term “oral history,” I co-founded CWB as a community organization. We established early that our mission was to teach languages through friendship. Oral history struck me as a very useful tool, both for language-learning and for cultivating relationships. So far, this hypothesis is proving true. 😊

Someday I will write a longer, better essay on how what we’re doing is and isn’t oral history from my perspective. For now, I think we are an oral history project because – proudly, and gratefully – we emerge out of an oral history context, and we are guided by oral history principles, ethics and values. We are an oral history project because CWB Language Collective is a deeply oral history informed and oral history inspired endeavor. And oral history or not, all parts of this project are an OHMA thesis: a resonance and coming together of the knowledge, skills, community, wisdom, resources, guidance, freedom, and example that this wonderful program has given me.

PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE [and] EDUCATION

-About Me-

My name is Lindsay Szper, and I'm a language teacher. I grew up in a mostly monolingual home, and I communicate with both of my parents in English, but multilingualism and language teaching run in my family. My paternal grandparents both taught languages. My grandmother (from Lithuania) spoke eight languages, and my grandfather (from Poland) spoke 11. I've been learning languages since I was five and teaching them since I was seventeen. I'm fluent in English, Spanish and French, conversational in American Sign Language, and I've studied several other languages just for fun.



Language has always made sense to me, both in how it works and in why it matters. Often in colloquial speech people talk about “language barriers.” I used to use this term, too. But I’ve come to think language isn’t a barrier at all; it’s a medium_[1] — for thinking, communication, participation, self-expression, storytelling, education, and most importantly to me relationships.



I am in many ways a successful product of conventional, classroom-based second language education, but I think the typical classroom model for second language learning is often missing an essential component: friendships with native or strong users of the new language.

I think friendship is vitally important — not only as a language-teaching tool, but also as a means by which to cultivate understanding, dismantle artificial barriers between people, build bridges across difference, and start repairing our broken world.

In July of 2021, in collaboration with several friends, many of whom used to be ESL students, I co-founded Culture Without Borders Language Collective (CWB), a community school that teaches world languages through friendship.

-Core Values-

At CWB and in other learning communities I facilitate, six fundamental core values¹ underlie my philosophy of teaching, learning, and being together:

- **Amor** - love
- **Paciencia** - patience
- **Fé** - faith
- **Tolerancia** - tolerance
- **Educación** - respect, courtesy, morality, education
- **Convivencia** - shared experiences, sharing in life, living together



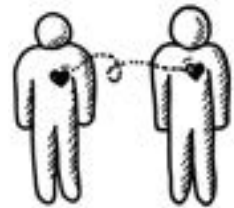
Amor



Paciencia y fé



tolerancia y educación



convivencia

¹ The first five of these values come directly from Maribel Santana de Florentino, a founding member of CWB, who also gave our collective its name.

-Guiding Beliefs-

Below are several beliefs about language [and] education that also guide my language teaching practice:

- **“There is no such thing as an uneducated person.”**² Life is school. Experience is education.³ Each person’s biography, their particular path through time and life, is unique and irreplicable. We all have much to teach and learn from each other.
- **People and reality are text. Everyone and everything is teacher.**
- **Language transcends the narrow boundaries of academic disciplines.** We can learn language from absolutely anything made of language. We should learn using texts of genuine interest and relevance to our lives.
- **Vocabulary often precedes understanding and participation.** Understanding of key terms (in grammar learning, content learning, skills learning and theoretical learning) is an essential early step.
- **Language is patterns, and the same grammatical patterns apply across many genres of text and interaction.** In general, I prefer to teach language patterns through thoughtful self-expression and critical reflection, rather than through transactional and so-called “life skills” language and interactions.
- **A person’s primary/strong languages are not an interference; they’re an essential tool for learning and understanding.** Teachers and learners should choose their language of expression based on which language most facilitates learning in a given moment.
- **Translation, when practiced mindfully, is welcome and encouraged in the learning environments I facilitate.** Becoming bilingual involves a complex process of self-translation that closely mirrors the process of translating a text.
- **There is no better tool for learning a language than friendly, supportive relationships in that language.** Language and relationships are essential to one another. People bring a language alive, and friends — who care about us and are invested in us as full human beings — can be very effective teachers of language and much more.
- **Language class is an ideal environment in which to study and reflect critically on culture and global affairs – and to think, imagine, and move together toward a better future.**

-Commitments-

In my role as a language teacher and the co-founder of a world language school, I strive to design, facilitate, and support educational experiences that are:

² Ernani Maria Fiore,^[2] on Paulo Freire’s methods of literacy education (Spanish translation by Jorge Mellado, English translation is mine): “No hay hombre absolutamente inculto: El hombre ‘se hominiza’ expresando y diciendo su mundo. Ahí comienza la historia y la cultura. (There is no such thing as a completely uneducated person: The human being ‘comes into their humanity’ by expressing and putting words to their world. This is where history and culture begin.)”

³ David Dunbar

- **Relationship-based** – Educational experiences and materials scaffold meaningful interaction and reciprocal/relational teaching and learning.
- **Practical, fun, and relevant** – Educational experiences and materials emerge in response to the needs, interests, strengths, and resources of our community.
- **Biographical (human-first, life-based, person-specific)** - Members of our community teach what we know, and we teach from experience. We show up to workshops, classes, and events as we can and as our full selves, and we welcome each other wholly, as we come and as who we are.
- **Anti-disciplinary?, transversal** - We question the usefulness of disciplines in learning. We operate trans-disciplinarily, applying skills and tools across subjects, industries, genres, and projects.
- **Essayistic** – We encourage “a merging of casual anecdotes and autobiography with intellectual insight”.⁴ We support cultural criticism⁵, experimental research⁶, experimental performance⁷, and experimentation in general. We commit to *trying*⁸ – in the senses of: 1) putting in genuine effort in all that we do together, 2) engaging in intellectual exploration⁹, and 3) striving to articulate and respond constructively to the problems of our time.
- **Transformative** – We are concerned with positively changing ourselves and our world, and with creating a more just reality. We believe positive change is possible on a global level, and that one way positive change happens is through education, “one person at a time, with effort and humanity.”¹⁰



⁴ “Michel Eyquem, Sieur de Montaigne [...] was one of the most significant philosophers of the French Renaissance. He is known for popularizing the essay as a literary genre. His work is noted for its merging of casual anecdote and autobiography with intellectual insight.”^[3]

⁵ Montaigne’s essays were works of cultural criticism: “Montaigne saw his age as one of dissimulation, corruption, violence, and hypocrisy, and it is therefore not surprising that the point of departure of the *Essays* is situated in negativity. [...] Montaigne’s much-discussed skepticism results from that initial negativity, as he questions the possibility of all knowing and sees the human being as a creature of weakness and failure, of inconstancy and uncertainty, of incapacity and fragmentation, or, as he wrote in the first of the essays, as “a marvelously vain, diverse, and undulating thing.”^[4]

⁶ The Spanish word “ensayo” (which translates to “essay”), is also the word for “clinical trial,” “ensayo clínico.”

⁷ In Spanish “ensayo” is also the word for “theater rehearsal, “ensayo teatral.”

⁸ In French the word “essai” is the most commonly used word for “a try,” “an attempt.”

⁹ “The French title of [Montaigne’s] work, *Essais*, or ‘Attempts,’ [...] implies not a transmission of proven knowledge or of confident opinion but a project of trial and error, of tentative exploration. [...] The title indicates an intellectual attitude of questioning and of continuous assessment.”^[4]

¹⁰ “I used to believe that I needed to ascend to great heights to enact change in the world. I wanted to revolutionize the education of every child. While my passion remains great, I have concentrated my focus. I want to truly connect with my students individually, to know them as human beings before anything else. I want to be a part of the community I work with. I no longer think sweeping, depersonalized reforms are the best way to make change; now I think it happens one person at a time, with effort and humanity.” - Zoe Pelletier^[5]

PHILOSOPHY of LANGUAGE [and] EDUCATION - SOURCES CITED

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Culture Without Borders Language Collective, LLC
Business Plan



Submitted to OHMA Program
January 16, 2024

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Plan prepared by
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1. Executive Summary

-About Us-

We're Ruth and Lindsay, co-founders and co-coordinators of Culture Without Borders (CWB), a community school that teaches world languages through friendship. Through CWB we facilitate dialogue, knowledge-sharing, global citizenship, personal growth, meaningful relationships, and *fun* through language education. We have been growing and operating organically as a community organization since July, 2021. This year we took a leap and are transforming our informal, self-managed community into an organized and sustainable economic venture.



-CWB Origin + Mission-

CWB started out as an online English as a Second Language (ESL) class in 2021. Ruth was a student in a level one ESL class that Lindsay was teaching. Ruth is a motivated and diligent student. She worked hard and got all A's on all her formal assessments. But she left that class, and her several years of English instruction prior, feeling like she didn't really speak the language. In the spring of 2021, as the end of the semester neared, Ruth told Lindsay, "What I need to actually learn English is a friend. My work is in Spanish, my friends speak Spanish, my daughter speaks Spanish. How am I going to actually learn this language if I don't have anyone to talk with?"

Since this conversation, the two of us have been working together and with others to design and offer friendly, low-or-no-cost in-person and virtual English and Spanish learning experiences. Our language school offers a platform to make friends and share knowledge, skills, and experiences globally, multilingually and in community. **Our mission is to improve ourselves and our world through language education, friendship, and ethical economic activity.**

-Vision-

We strive toward a world in which...

- education is a right, not a commodity;
- the practice of economy is about meeting needs, not hoarding wealth;
- cohabitants of this planet understand one another as friends and global citizens, not threats, subjects, or foreign nationals.

-Core Values-

At CWB six fundamental core values¹¹ underlie our daily operations and philosophy of teaching, learning, working and being together:

- **Amor** - love
- **Paciencia** - patience
- **Fé** - faith
- **Tolerancia** - tolerance
- **Educación** - respect, courtesy, morality, education
- **Convivencia** - shared experiences, sharing in life, living together



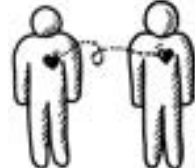
Amor



Paciencia y fé



tolerancia y educación



convivencia

-Guiding Beliefs-

Several fundamental beliefs also guide us:

- Language is a medium and an environment, not a discipline or a barrier.
- Every person has things to learn and things to teach.
- There is no better tool for learning a language than friendly, supportive relationships in that language.
- Friendship, education, and shared languages are vital tools for positive change at the individual, local, and global levels.

¹¹ The first five of these values come directly from CWB co-founder, Maribel Santana de Florentino, who also gave our collective its name.

-Earned Income Strategy-

As we grow our community organization into a sustainable economic venture, we plan to begin charging for some of our community-based programs, while still keeping some programs financially free for people who are not in a position to pay. In time we will expand our operations to include business-to-business sales — including sale of our existing programs to organizations that align with our mission, as well as sale of industry-specific training and language-themed social events to corporations, nonprofits, and organizations of all sizes. We expect our B2B programs to eventually generate the majority of our organization’s revenue.

2. Business Description

-Concept + Accomplishments-

Culture Without Borders Language Collective is an online and in-person language teaching organization. We offer practical, fun, community-oriented language-learning experiences to learners of English and Spanish in New York City and globally. For the past two and a half years, friends and supporters of our collective have coordinated, hosted and participated in free and low-cost English and Spanish programs online and in the NYC area.

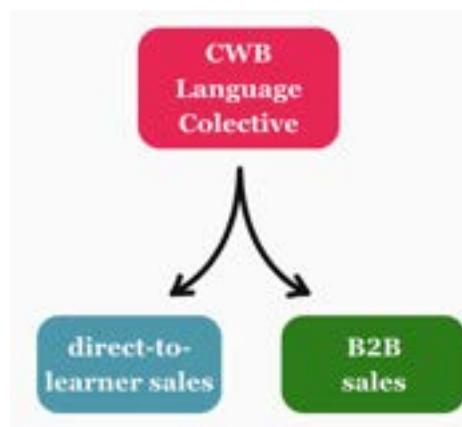
Our first in-person event was a potluck picnic in Central Park in July, 2021. Since then, we’ve done all kinds of fun stuff together. For example, In September 2021, we took a trip to the Bronx Zoo. In December, 2021 Noemí, from Guatemala, taught a group of us to make tamales and chuchitos at Lindsay and Chris’s apartment in Carroll Gardens. In February 2023 Sam, from Brooklyn, and Robert, who has roots in Mexico and Sunset Park, taught us to play billiards bilingually at [Ha-Weeda Tavern](#), then took us for Mexican food at [Isabella’s](#). In July 2023, Yu, from Dalian China, led an outing to [Shu Jiao Fu Zou](#) restaurant on Grand Street, for Chinese street food and English conversation in Manhattan’s Chinatown.¹² CWB has organized excursions to Riis beach, the Metropolitan Museum, Wilkens Fir and Fruit Farm, and more. In total we’ve hosted 18 in-person events. We have also developed and hosted online language-learning programs for English and Spanish learners, including a weekly online English practice group since July, 2022.

Additionally, we coordinate two research initiatives: The Second Language Research Project, which collects bi+lingual people’s stories and strategies for language learning, and the Friends and Experts project, which collects and disseminates expertise from our community on all manner of topics. We are currently developing a learner-researcher program that will allow people to participate in our monetized programs at no financial cost, in exchange for reflection on their language-learning experience.

¹² A selection of photos from the events mentioned here are included in the appendix to this plan on p. 28.

-Business Model-

As our community and our organization grow – and as we restructure as a self-sustaining and life-sustaining economic venture – we recognize the need to generate substantial and reliable monetary revenue. CWB’s business model splits our revenue into two streams: programs sold directly to language learners and programs sold to business-to-business. We will price our direct-to-learner programs at affordable prices that sustain our educators and encourage learners to value our programs. When selling to businesses — especially large corporations and nonprofits with substantial purchasing power — we will seek higher profit margins.



Revenue Streams	Description of Offerings
Direct-to-Learner Language Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethically monetized continuation of our friendship-based language teaching organization; financially sustainable, small profit margins • Sells English and Spanish language-learning experiences directly to language learners • Offers both drop-in and cohort-based language programs • Sells monthly subscriptions for flexible, online programming • Hosts affordable or free in-person events to foster community for English and Spanish learners • Provides a platform for members of our community to share skills and knowledge and earn income • Compensates educators fairly and keeps programs affordable for students • Committed to keeping programs financially free for those who need it
Business to Business Language Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More profitable arm of our operation, intended to eventually cover co-owners’ salaries and operational costs for our company; leftover funds are reinvested in language education for the common good • Sells language education business-to-business, including to small businesses, nonprofits, and large corporations • Sells existing programs to socially engaged and aligned organizations, to serve their target population • Designs and delivers language-immersion social events for team building in the workplace • Designs and delivers customized English/Spanish training on industry-specific vocabulary • Determines pricing fairly and transparently, in collaboration with each organization’s staff and according to each organization’s needs and purchasing power

-Products, Prices + Descriptions-

Direct-to-Learner Programs + Prices		
Product	Description	Price
<p>12-week English/Spanish Bilingual Conversation Program (pilot launching in January 2024)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Linear, cohort-based program that uses recorded interviews with community members to prompt lively conversations about music, language, culture, and other universal topics. ● Up to 20 people per cohort, intermediate-level and up ● Includes homework ● Intensive, one-on-one feedback from the teacher ● Strong conversation/fluency focus 	<p>Tiered - pick-your-price: \$60/80/\$100 per month for 3 months</p>
<p>Language Gym (in development; launching Spring, 2024)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Non-linear, drop-in program ● Adaptable, differentiated activities for learners of various levels ● Unlimited access to flexible programming ● No homework ● Individualized feedback every 4 weeks 	<p>\$45/mo for access to ~ 3 hrs of weekly drop-in classes</p>
<p>10-week English Listening/Speaking Program (in development; launching spring 2024)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Linear, cohort-based program using YouTube videos and interviews with language experts ● Intensive feedback ● Cohorts of up to 20 English learners from all over the world ● Participants discuss a broad range of themes, build global language practice communities, improve their listening skills, and increase their confidence in speaking English. 	<p>~ \$120/ for 2 months (\$240 total)</p>
<p>12-week English/Spanish cohort-based programs (in development; launching spring/summer 2024)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Linear, cohort-based programs developed by members of the CWB community. ● Weekly Homework ● Final project ● Intensive midpoint and end-of-program feedback 	<p>~ \$100/mo for 3 months (\$300 total)</p>

<p>8-week WhatsApp-Based English Pronunciation Program (in development; launching summer 2024)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly asynchronous program, run through WhatsApp • Cohorts of up to 6 English learners from around the world • Systematic, step-by-step guidance through the sound system of standardized North American English • Daily prompts from instructors to learn and practice specific English sounds • Participation from students via voice notes in the cohort’s WhatsApp group • Instructor tracks individual learners’ participation and provides progress reports. • Final synchronous meeting in which all available participants meet virtually. 	<p>~ \$150/mo for 2 months (\$300 total)</p>
<p>Language Party - Public</p>	<p>Language immersion events and activities, including bilingual supper clubs and tasting menus.</p>	<p>\$0-150 (sliding scale)</p>
<p>Language party - Private</p>	<p>Cooking and language instructors from CWB travel to private households to teach language through cooking.</p>	<p>\$1200 for up to 15 people</p>

<p>Business to Business Programs + Prices</p>			
<p>Product</p>	<p>Description</p>	<p>Nonprofit or Small Business price</p>	<p>Large corp. price</p>
<p>Language Party for team building</p>	<p>Language immersion social events (e.g. cooking class, paint and sip) sold to non-profits or small businesses, offered to the buyer’s employees.</p>	<p>\$500-2,500</p>	<p>\$5,000-\$10,000</p>
<p>Industry-specific language training, per day</p>	<p>Customized, industry-specific language training for bilingual or bilingual-aspiring staff to increase employees’ confidence in the professional environment and foster collaboration and communication across linguistic differences.</p>	<p>\$500-2,500</p>	<p>\$5,000-\$10,000</p>
<p>Cohort-based English/Spanish programs</p>	<p>Linear, cohort-based programs sold to nonprofits or corporations, for the benefit of their employees or target population</p>	<p>varies</p>	<p>varies</p>

-Rationale for Pricing-

Our pricing for our direct-to-learner programs is based on a review of prices of 14 competitors. The goal of our direct-to-learner prices is to price our services in a way that encourages learners to value and commit to our programs, without overburdening them financially. Competitors' prices for B2B training programs are more difficult to find online. Our prices for these trainings are based on recommendations from friends and consultants with experience and knowledge about non-profit and corporate training budgets.

-Financial Accessibility Mechanisms-

At CWB we understand education as a right, not a commodity, and we commit to keeping our programs free for those who need them to be. Our Wednesday night English practice group, which has always been free, will stay free. We will also open up a once-weekly Spanish practice group that will always stay free. In January when we launch our first classes, we will also offer the opportunity for members of our community to fund full or partial scholarships. By September 2024, we hope to launch a learner-researcher program, which will allow a predetermined number of English and Spanish learners to participate in each of our monetized programs at no financial cost, in exchange for tracking their language-learning process and reporting on their experience with our collective and as adult language learners.

-Legal Structure, Name, + Intellectual Property-

We will register our business in New York State as an LLC, under the name Culture Without Borders Language Collective. At CWB, we question the notion of intellectual property,¹³ but we are mindful of intellectual property law and – more importantly – we commit to ethical use and distribution of creative and intellectual work. When we commercialize a creative collaboration for profit, we work carefully to establish mutually agreeable terms of commercialization, and to distribute earnings fairly.

-Start-Up Costs-

We anticipate the following start-up costs, to be covered with a grant Lindsay received in 2022, as well as a small contribution from the community fund CWB raised over the last two years:

- \$210 LLC registration fee
- \$490 in LLC publication fees

¹³ “I think it is essential to recognize that nobody in the world ever invents anything. That is, we never create anything from zero. [...] The effort to always look for individual names of who came up with an idea first to me seems to be an awful exercise in the privatization of knowledge and politics, when it is always collective and always a process that doesn't appear out of nowhere.” - Amaia Perez-Orozco, Spanish feminist economic thinker, [Colectiva XXX](#)_[1]

-Monthly Tech, Legal, Banking and Supply Costs, Y1-

During our first year we anticipate \$311 in monthly spending on software, web hosting, and office supplies:

Bank Service Fees	15
General Liability Insurance	30
Square Space Web Hosting	65
Trint Transcription Software	60
Hindenburg Audio Editing Software	12
Google Drive Storage	4
Canva Pro Graphic Design Subscription	15
Quickbooks	45
Zoom Professional Account	16
Office Supplies	50
TOTAL GENERAL & ADMISTRATIVE	311

-Financial and Curricular Plans-

Our first monetized language-learning program will be called Conversaciones Sonoras Bilingual Conversation Club. Conversaciones Sonoras is a 12-week, linear, cohort-based course for English and Spanish learners. We will commercialize the pilot version of this program using a tiered choose-what-you-pay model, with three payment tiers of \$60/\$80/\$100 per month for three months. Participants will be asked to select their payment tier based on their financial situation, with the understanding that those who have more disposable income should opt to pay more than those with less. We will aim to have a minimum of 30 paying students by February 10, 2024, for a minimum gross monthly profit of \$1800/month. We will subtract our \$311 in operating expenses from the \$1800, then Estefanía and Lindsay will split the remaining monthly income up to \$1489. If learners choose the middle and upper payment tiers and we bring in more than \$1800/month in sales from the Conversaciones Sonoras project, we will direct the additional income to our business bank account, to begin building savings and financial stability for our business.

As a way to raise start-up funds and cover our basic costs, we will also begin selling branded merchandise¹⁴ through our online storefront. As our time and capacity allow, we will also host ticketed online and in-person language-practice events and workshops to raise money for our collective and/or generate income for our team.

¹⁴ Sustainably produced in collaboration with [Acaso Clothing](#), [Folkus](#) paper goods, and [Doequo](#) journals



By the spring of 2024 we expect to launch our “language gym” program, a flexible non-linear program that gives learners access to several English and Spanish practice spaces at various times during the week. This program will be drop-in and will include individualized feedback from facilitator-instructors on a 4-week cycle. The language gym costs \$45/month. In the spring we will also offer additional cohort-based courses (with homework, project-based learning and intensive individualized feedback) at higher prices, likely ~\$100/month.

In the summer, to accommodate language-learner and instructor travel and shifting schedules, we will launch a mostly asynchronous WhatsApp-based daily pronunciation practice program for English learners. Financial and curricular plans beyond Summer, 2024 are still in development. In the early months of 2024 our equipo motor (presented in detail on pp 18-22) will discuss financial and curricular plans in detail and come to consensus around our curricular and financial goals and key performance indicators for the full first year of our operation.

During the first quarter of our operations, only instructor-facilitators will take monetary pay; other work by the core team/equipo motor will be reciprocated with financially free participation in the Conversaciones Sonoras program and unlimited individualized support in their second+ language learning. By the spring, once we have more course offerings and more revenue coming in, we hope to be able to pay for non-instructor-facilitator work (like marketing, research, bookkeeping, etc.) As soon as we have the digital and operational infrastructure to do this, members of the equipo motor will be invited to offer their skills through ticketed workshops that bring in revenue for them and for our school. All team members other than the two co-owners of the business will be paid as independent contractors during our first year of business. As our business makes more money our people will make more money. The specifics of how to split and allocate revenue will be carefully and respectfully negotiated as a team.

3. Market Analysis and Target Market

-Target Market + Need - Direct-to-Learner-

Our target markets for direct-to-learner online language education are individuals learning English and Spanish. In a 2014 report The British Council estimated that total English learners worldwide could reach 2 billion by 2020.¹⁵ In a 2021 report, Instituto Cervantes estimated that there were 24 million Spanish learners globally.¹⁶ For our in-person offerings, CWB will continue growing our community in New York City – widely reported as the most multilingual city in the world, and home to 1.8 million New Yorkers with low English proficiency (almost 25% of the city’s population).¹⁷

The need for language learning increases as our world experiences surges in migration (up more than 300% globally since 1970¹⁸) and digital connectedness. (Internet use was up a staggering 1,355% from 2000-2020.¹⁹) The need for quality Spanish language education in the United States is particularly acute: The US is poised to become the world’s second most numerous Spanish-speaking country by 2060,²⁰ but the US Census Bureau reported in 2019 that 78% of this country’s population only spoke English.²¹ In New York City specifically, English (dark blue) and Spanish (red) represent the most commonly spoken, or second most-commonly spoken, home languages in the majority of neighborhoods within the five boroughs (see statistical maps on next page).²²

¹⁵ Foreword to [“The English Effect” 2014 report](#) by The British Council^[2]

¹⁶ “El Español, una lengua Viva” [Instituto Cervantes](#)^[3]

¹⁷ As reported by [NYC.gov](#)^[4]

¹⁸ International Organization for Migration, [World Migration Report 2022](#)^[5]

¹⁹ As reported by Syed Balki and [WPbeginner.com](#)^[6]

²⁰ “El Español, una lengua Viva” [Instituto Cervantes](#)^[3]

²¹ “Language Use in the United States: 2019” - [US Census Bureau](#)^[7]

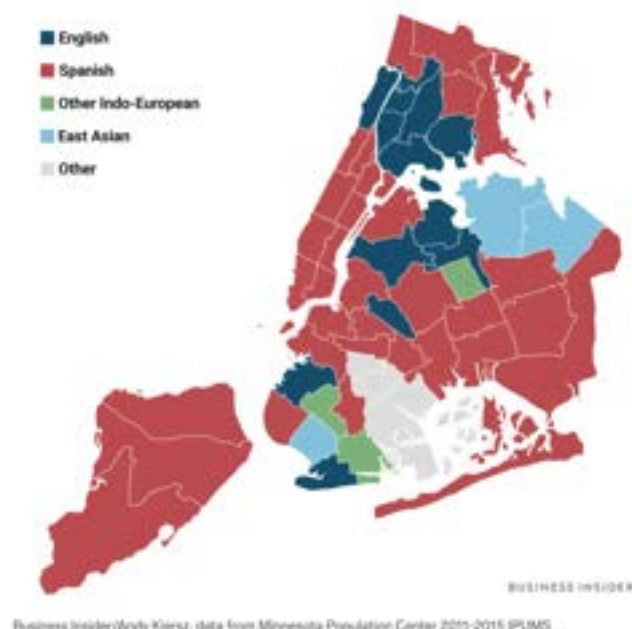
²² Maps from [businessinsider.com](#)^[8]

-Target Market + Need: Business-to-Business Sales-

The most commonly spoken language in most neighborhoods is English.



The No. 2 most commonly spoken language in most neighborhoods is Spanish.



There is a very demonstrable need for high-level multilingualism in the workplace in particular. In an article published in 2019 (before the COVID pandemic and the corresponding surge in remote work), Harvard Business School reported that 89% of corporate employees served on at least one global team, and 62% had colleagues from three or more cultures.²³ Looking just at the US, New American Economy (NAE) reports that between 2010 and 2015, the number of job advertisements for bilingual workers in this country more than doubled.²⁴

As we develop our B2B language programs, we will tap into our own areas of linguistic expertise. Before coming to this country Ruth worked for 21 years in a bank in the DR, making her way from cashier to assistant manager of operations of the mortgage loans and vehicle certifications department – a position which included addressing customer complaints. Lindsay grew up in a medical family, has a national certification in healthcare interpreting, and worked for several years as a medical interpreter. NAE’s report identifies customer service representatives as the #1 occupation in need of bilingual workers. This list also includes bank

²³ “6 Tips for Managing Global International Teams” - [Harvard Business School](#)^[9]

²⁴ “Not Lost in Translation” - [New American Economy](#)^[10]

tellers, financial branch and department managers, loan officers, and operations managers, and five of the 25 highest-demand occupations fall in the medical field.²⁵

Business advisors also suggest partnering with local organizations that serve immigrant populations to sell them our pre-made English practice programs. Additionally, we have recently partnered with Estefanía Fernández, a friend and language professional based in Trujillo, Peru. Estefanía has ties to several private schools in her region that she suspects would be interested in English programs for their students to practice online with native English speakers.

-CWB Community (Growth, Composition + Characteristics)-

Since our inaugural potluck picnic in July 2021, CWB has grown from a founding group of about 25 people to a global community of over 180 supporters, currently living in at least six countries and with roots all over the world. Our organization has no substantial web presence at this time; we have grown over 700% in size in two years, exclusively through in-person outreach and word of mouth.

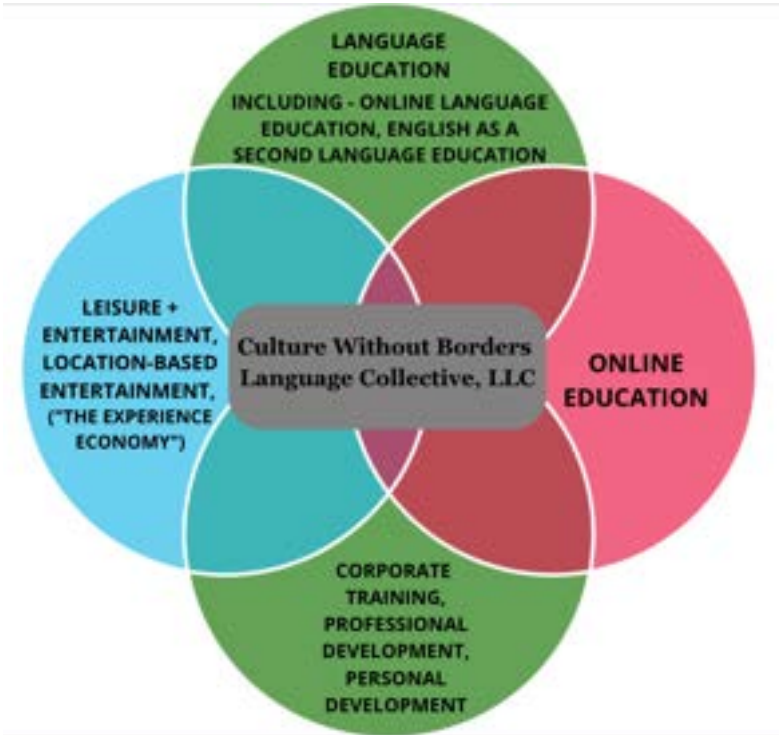
Our organization's greatest strength is the diversity of our community. We work across continents, age groups, socioeconomic strata, and identity lines. We are teachers, students, social workers, technicians, lawyers, home health aides, youth, retired people... We have friends and supporters in Syria, France, Arizona, China, Texas, Minnesota, Turkey, Spain... We are united by curiosity about the world, desire to learn languages, and commitment to our organization's core values. Preliminary data from a survey of our community indicate that respondents can pay between \$20-200 per month for language classes²⁶. Results of this survey suggest high levels of interest in courses that cover conversation (76.9% of respondents), listening (51.3% of respondents), and pronunciation (51.3% of respondents).

²⁵ "Not Lost in Translation" - [New American Economy](#)_[10]

²⁶ CWB [Primary Research Google Forms Survey](#) from August 2023_[11]

4. **Industry Analysis and Trends**

CWB operates at the intersection of several sectors of the market economy, including:



language education, online education, corporate training, and leisure/entertainment. All of these segments are forecasted to grow, and some segments – language education and online language education – have a projected compound annual growth rate of over 20% for the next several years. Analysts and common sense point to increased globalization, migration, access to the internet, and demand for international communication and a multilingual workforce as reasons for growth in the [online] language education market.

A selection of relevant projections for market sector growth is included in the appendix to this business plan. Overall, trends in the global market economy suggest that now is an opportune time to enter the language education market. It appears that there is ample space for us in the growing industries in which we intend to operate.

Our business strategy responds to several trends in our various industries, including:

- Moves in the field of education toward student-centered learning²⁷
- Pandemic-accelerated popularity of hybrid online/in-person learning²⁸
- Increased access to language learning on cell phones²⁹ (CWB does most of our coordination and communication with language learners through WhatsApp.)

²⁷ See: “What is Student-Centered Learning?” by [Mitchell Jay](#)_[12]

²⁸ the fastest-growing methodology within the global English language learning industry, according to [Meticulous Research](#)_[13]

²⁹ See: “Have a Mobile Device? Use it to Learn New Language,” published by [inlingua](#)_[14]

Zooming out, CWB’s business strategy also responds lucidly and proactively to several important trends in our economy at large — understanding “the economy” both in the narrow, market sense as “the system by which goods and services are produced, sold, and bought,”³⁰ and also more broadly, in the ecological sense, as a system by which living beings sustain life and meet their collective needs.

Trend	Response
Astounding accumulation of wealth and market share by large multinational corporations ³¹	Sale of our products to large corporations for the benefit of their employees and at prices commensurate to these organizations’ purchasing power; redistribution of these funds to sustain life and contribute to the common good
Unfair distribution of access to education globally and according to socioeconomic status ³²	Financially free programs for learners worldwide who self-identify as unable to pay with money
Widespread job dissatisfaction worldwide ³³	Healthy, friendly, flexible, human-first working environment; meaningful, self-directed, fairly compensated work; ample opportunities to contribute to our mission pro bono for those in a position to do so
Worldwide epidemic of loneliness ³⁴	A place to make friends and connect with others through language

³⁰ [Britannica](#)^[15]

³¹ See: “The Gap Between Large and Small Companies is Growing. Why?” – [Harvard Business Review](#)^[16]

³² See: “Education Inequality: A Global Problem” - [CNBC](#)^[17]

³³ Gallup reports that nearly 1 in 6 employees are “quiet quitting” globally, and workplace stress has reached an all-time high. - “[State of the Global Workplace 2023 Report](#)”^[18]

³⁴ See “[Our Epidemic of loneliness and Isolation](#)”^[19] from US surgeon general’s office + [CNN article](#)^[20] on the WHO’s new Commission on Social Connection to combat loneliness

As far as seasonality, we expect spikes in enrollment in January (New Years resolution season) and in September (the beginning of the academic year). We plan to offer fewer cohort-based classes during the winter holiday season and in the summer, as these are times of year when people often travel and/or spend time with loved ones. As we grow our menu of options and programs, we think the summer is an ideal time of year for outdoor, large group events in public spaces, and for language immersion retreats or travel abroad experiences.

5. Competitive Analysis & Your Strategic Position

Other players in the language teaching industry include boutique private language schools, global online language-teaching companies, higher education, and application and AI-based language programs.

	Culture Without Bouders Language Collective (our school!)	ABC Languages (small, local world language school in NYC)	British Council (leading online language teaching platform)	Higher Ed Language Learning	Duolingo (mobile language-learning app)
Friends and community in the target language	Q	?	?	Q	X
Community-generated educational programming	Q	?	Q	X	X
Flexible, drop-in group classes	Q	X	Q	X	X
Social enterprise with solidarity-based economic practices	Q	X	X	X	X
	Culture Without Bouders Language Collective (our school!)	ABC Languages (small, local world language school in NYC)	British Council (leading online language teaching platform)	Higher Ed Language Learning	Duolingo (mobile language-learning app)
Friendship, community, and belonging	10	6	4	8	2
Affordability	10	6	8	1	10
Learner input in curriculum	10	8	8	3	3
Flexible scheduling	3	4	10	1	10
Variety in programming	8	6	9	7	2

CWB understands Duolingo and other AI language-learning platforms as promising new tools for language learning and a positive complement to the in-real-life, human-to-human education we offer. We applaud and emulate higher ed’s promotion of real, deep, meaningful communications and relationships with target-language users through language classes. We criticize higher ed’s largely inflexible scheduling and teacher-generated course content. We condemn soaring prices in higher education in the United States, and we position ourselves as

an alternative means to learn [languages] affordably. The British Council, one of the world’s leading online English teaching organizations, offers flexible, subscription-based courses online. An extremely well-resourced organization with many teachers all over the world, The British Council has classes at all times of day and dramatically outperforms us in the category of flexibility. At CWB we intend to offer more classes at a more varied schedule as we grow our network of students and instructors. We believe we outperform The British Council and similar platforms in affordability, learner input in curriculum, and cultivation of friendship and belonging across language lines. We expect to complement, contend, and coexist with conventional small and local language schools by offering courses and programs that are varied, flexible, affordable, and intentionally oriented toward authentic self-expression and meaningful second+ language relationships.

CWB’s greatest differentiators are our focus on friendship, our commitment to commons-oriented economic practices, and our integrated research/teaching/service approach to our work. As Ruth noted when we started CWB, conventional language education often lacks real-life interaction with target-language users. Friends and real relationships in the new language are CWB’s hallmark offering. We also set ourselves apart by establishing ourselves as a part of the global solidarity economics movement, committed to transforming our economy into a more just, fair, and effective system for meeting needs, distributing resources and sustaining life. As we grow and develop, we commit to integrating participatory/transformational research and dialogic communication with our language-learning community in every aspect of our operation — from curriculum development to evaluative methods, to marketing. (More on CWB’s dialogic and integrated teaching/research/service methodology [here](#))

An overview of our organization’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats is below:

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Philosophy; ethics; attitude; energy; OUR PEOPLE and the diversity of our skills, perspectives, resources and experiences	loosely defined operational protocols (for now!); lack of name recognition; lean budget	Partnerships with existing organizations that share our vision for the future ³⁵	Scarcity of <i>time</i> as a for much of our team; low-cost of existing self-paced online language learning for corporate entities; natural disasters, global crises

³⁵ [ALCESXXI](#), [Reconoci.Do](#), [Texas After Violence Project](#), [New York Peace Institute](#), [Community Mediation Services](#), [Oral History Master of Arts program](#) at Columbia University

We will lean into our strengths and opportunities, and work diligently to address our challenges. We will develop partnerships with organizations with which members of our collective already have positive relationships, to recruit new students and develop trial workplace/organization-wide trainings. Between now and our official business launch in January 2024, Ruth, Lindsay, and the specialist-consultants who make up our core team/equipment will work together to develop and formalize our operational protocols; make ourselves known; raise funds; and make the most of our budget.

6. Marketing Strategy

Our language collective has so far grown entirely through in-person outreach and word of mouth. A regular physical presence at the lunch hour of Hunter College's Saturday Program for English Language Learners (SPELL) has been especially helpful as a way to grow our community. (Survey data show that about 20% of respondents learned about us through SPELL.)³⁶ We will continue working with Hunter to grow our community, and we will also develop referral relationships with other schools and organizations (to begin: La Guardia Community College, The New School, Columbia University and Carleton College, where Lindsay has studied – and Mercy Center, where Ruth and Lindsay met).

CWB understands our established students as our strongest referral partner. Our recent general interest survey indicates that more than half of respondents were referred by a friend and – very encouraging – that 100% of established students who took the survey would recommend our programs. As far as our direct-to-consumer programming, we feel the only thing limiting our growth right now is our capacity. As our team and our capacity grow, we will lean into our community as a referral partner. We will host bring-a-friend events, and possibly offer discounts, perks, or one-on-one language assistance in exchange for referrals. We also understand our B2B programs as a marketing outlet for our language collective, as people who participate in our workplace trainings may later decide to enroll in our courses as individuals.

As we work to establish our B2B programs, we will approach marketing to businesses the same way we have approached marketing to individuals – by starting from within our own community, networking with businesses and organizations we know and trust. We will initially build credibility through pilot projects, sold at friendly prices or offered for free, to businesses and nonprofits with which members of our collective have existing personal/professional relationships. Once we have programming to offer for these industries, we will reach out to the appropriate staff at medical and banking companies by email with samples of our curriculum,

³⁶ CWB primary research survey^[11]

proposing our training. We believe we may have a first B2B buyer in our friend Ro – owner of [Cherry Bomb Studio](#) on the Lower East Side – who hopes to make their tattoo and piercing studio more welcoming to a diverse clientele by training their staff in essential vocabulary for friendly interaction and tattoo/piercing services in Spanish and American Sign Language.

In January, 2024 we will launch our first monetized, cohort-based language course, called Conversaciones Sonoras. This program brings together learners of English and Spanish on Zoom to talk about music and lose their fear of speaking. We will market this program using a combination of social media, email, and word of mouth. We hope we can enroll between 20-40 paying language learners. To promote this program, we will use several short videos, our new [website](#), bilingual digital flyers, a blog post for Columbia University’s Oral History Master of Arts program, and sincere requests to colleagues, friends, trusted/aligned organizations and established students to promote us and invite people to participate. We will lead several demo lessons beginning in late January, to hype the program, get people involved and excited about what we are doing, and trial our educational material.

Conversaciones Sonoras will be a test-case for many things for us, including our pricing and our marketing strategies. Largely, our marketing strategy will be to test things and see what works: who can we count on as referral partners, how can we engage people, and what kind of promotion does and doesn’t work? We will keep track of and reflect on our communications trials in shared internal Google Docs, to help us develop a marketing process and strategy that works.

7. Operations

The operations section of this plan is easily the least developed. Like our marketing plan, our operations plan also consists largely of improvisation, reflection, and adaptation. In many ways, we are building and figuring out operational systems in real-time. As we grow and test our products and ideas, we will take careful field notes, collect relevant information, and develop standard operational protocols. We will reflect often and systematically seek feedback on how we’re doing, and how we can improve our systems.

The Canciones Sonoras program is a test case for us operationally, too. We intend this program as proof-of-concept, and as a context within which to develop conversation facilitation methods and operational protocols. To create the materials for this program, our community worked together over the course of a year to produce a community-generated language-learning text. Now our Pedagogy and Curriculum team is in the process of designing a 12-week bilingual conversation practice program based on this text. Enrollment for this program is a three-step

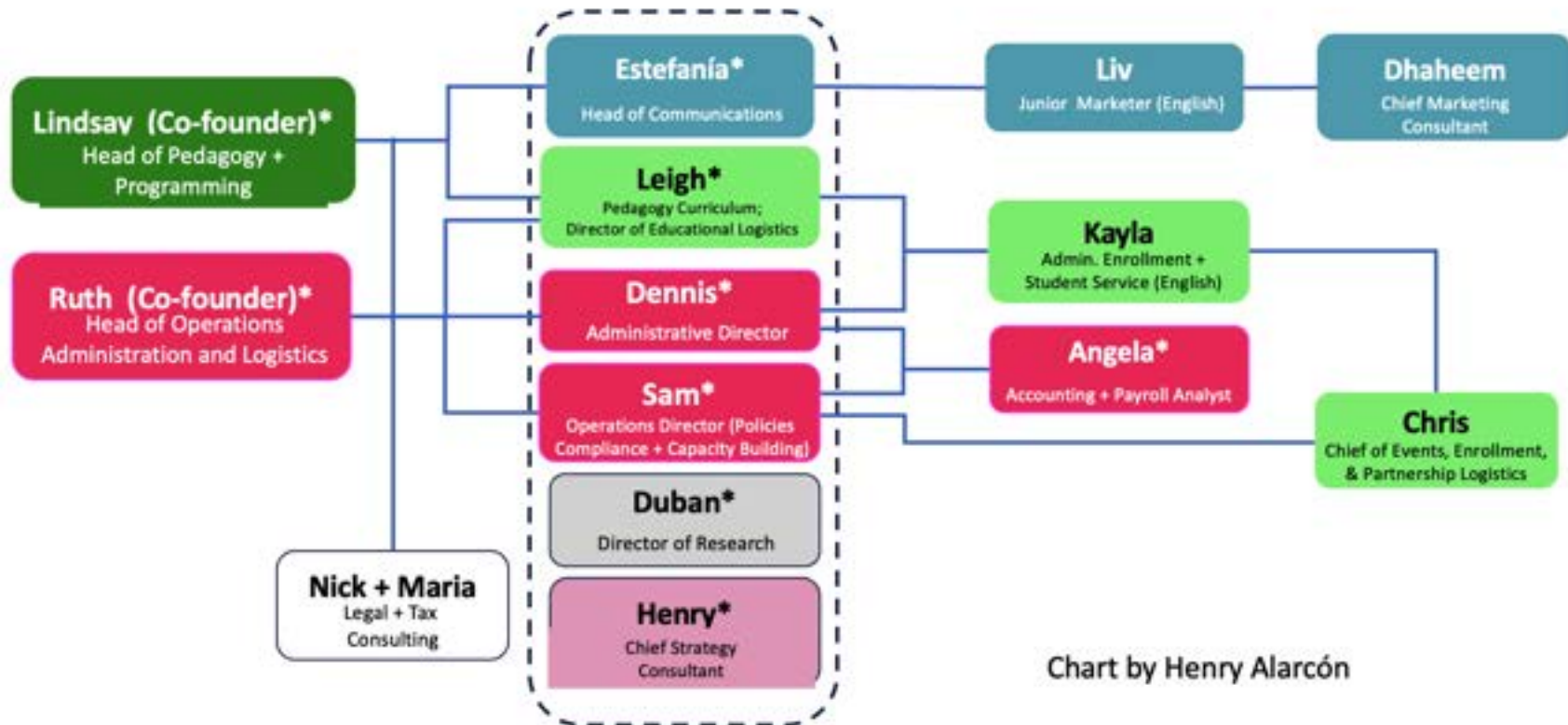
process: Participants initiate enrollment via Google form, they participate in a ~15-minute bilingual and semi-recorded entrance interview with a facilitator via Zoom, and then they pay for the course via a Squarespace subscription. Over the course of the three months that this program lasts, and the one month of marketing and promotion prior, we will collect data on our process and experience. We will also use the Conversaciones Sonoras program to begin developing an integrated research and progress-tracking mechanism that uses recorded interviews to track progress. We hope our research programs can help us to simultaneously: track learner's growth, understand the process of second+ language development in adults, monitor and improve the efficacy and enjoyability of our programs, and source feedback.

There is much that we simply don't know yet about operations. We are lucky to have Sam and Henry on our team, who can help us build a business that is efficient and compliant. Below are some things we do know about operations, mostly pertaining to tech and software needs:

- Our anticipated digital/software tools and monthly costs are included on page 9 of this plan.
- We will use Quickbooks to manage our finances and Squarespace to host our website and sell our products
- We will use Trint and Hindenburg to transcribe and clip interviews to make language-learning texts
- We will use PremierePro and Canva to produce marketing materials
- We will deliver online classes via Zoom.

8. Management and Organization

We visualize the structure of our organization as pictured below:



Our work is divided into three primary areas: pedagogy and curriculum (Lindsay, Leigh, Estefanía); communications and marketing (Estefanía, Liv, Dhaheem); and operations, administration and logistics (Ruth, Dennis, Sam and Angela). Our team also includes specialists with tax and legal knowledge (Nick and Maria), and with research and strategy skills (Duban and Henry), whose work touches all aspects of our organization. All team members whose names are marked with an asterisk* are members of our core team/equipo motor; together this group keeps CWB moving.

-Co-Founders-

Lindsay Szper - Lindsay is a linguist and a language teacher. She has a BA in Spanish and French, a national certification in English/Spanish healthcare interpreting, and a certificate to teach English to adults. She's working on a masters degree in oral history. Her professional experience is in conflict mediation, translation/interpreting, and legal work. Lindsay's native language is English. She's fluent in Spanish and French, conversational in ASL, and a beginner in several other languages.



Lindsay's primary roles on the team are to:

- develop + deliver language-learning programs;
- motivate and coordinate the Pedagogy and Curriculum team; and
- establish strategic partnerships.

Ruth Surún Rodríguez - Ruth has a degree in Business Administration from the Dominican Republic, and she has always wanted to start her own business. She worked for 21 years in a bank in the DR, ultimately rising to assistant manager of operations in the mortgage loans and vehicle certifications department. She's a mom, and she currently works as a home attendant. She cooks wonderfully, and she loves a party. Ruth speaks Spanish natively, and she is currently in the process of learning English.



Ruth's primary roles on the team are to:

- oversee and coordinate administration, operations and logistics;
- motivate and coordinate operations and logistics team; and
- establish strategic partnerships

-Equipo Motor/Core Team-

Estefanía Fernández



Estefanía is from Peru and she lives there currently. Her professional background is in journalism, translation/interpreting, communications, language teaching, and “gestión social” (business administration for social services or NGOS). She speaks Spanish natively, English fluently, and she has studied French and German.

Estefanía’s primary roles on the team are to:

- lead marketing and communications and
- develop + deliver language-learning programs

Leigh Yakubowski



Leigh is from Delmar, NY. She’s a former elementary school teacher, and now she works as a program manager for educational programs in NYC. Leigh speaks English natively and Spanish Fluently.

Leigh’s primary roles on the team are to:

- organize and monitor educational and curricular projects

Dennis Martínez



Dennis has roots in Colombia, Texas, and NYC, and he currently lives in Louisiana. Dennis is Deaf. He has a degree in business administration from La Guardia Community College. He has several years’ experience teaching signed languages, and he currently works as a field trainer for Sorenson Technologies. Dennis knows English, Spanish, American Sign Language, Colombian Sign Language, and some Russian and Russian Sign Language

Dennis’s primary roles on the team are to:

- design, manage, and carry out processes of general recordkeeping and daily business administration

Samantha Adler



Sam is a conflict resolution and operations specialist from Brooklyn. She has over eight years of operations experience. She currently works as an operations consultant and dispute resolution educator, and she runs her own small business. Sam is active in local politics and ran for state senate in 2021!

Sam's primary roles on the team are to:

- develop organizational protocols;
- oversee processes of onboarding and tax prep;
- ensure legal and tax compliance; and
- generally make things happen

Angela Alarcón Galarza



Angela is from Peru, and she currently lives in New York City. She has formal education in accounting and over eight years' experience in human resources and payroll for companies with between 80 and 4,000 employees. Angela speaks Spanish natively and English conversationally.

Angela's primary roles on the team are to:

- maintain financial records,
- oversee payment and disbursement,
- carry out processes of onboarding and tax prep (with guidance from Sam + an accounting professional)

Dubán Pájaro



Dubán is a medical doctor and master of public health and medical law from Colombia. He has over 13 years of research experience. Currently he coordinates clinical trials in New Jersey and the Bronx. Duban speaks Spanish natively, and he's learning English.

Duban's primary roles on the team are to:

- design, manage, and carry out research initiatives organization-wide

Henry Alarcón



Henry is an industrial engineer, mechanical engineer, and business consultant from Peru. He speaks Spanish natively, English fluently, and French conversationally.

Henry's primary roles on the team are:

- Market analysis
- Analysis and improvement of workflow and operations
- integration of research findings to business strategy
- Communication of plans for growth + development to all relevant people
- Execution of business initiatives and maintenance of implementation efforts

-Additional Team Members-

Daheem Habeeb - Dhaheem is a marketing professional from Mumbai. He has worked on campaigns for well-known brands like Meta, and Netflix – and also on social impact campaigns for large and small organizations. Dhaheem will consult with us to optimize our marketing. Dhaheem speaks four languages fluently: English, Hindi, Malayalam, and Marathi.

Liv Peters - Liv is an Advertising major and Film minor at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. Her focus is management and strategy, with an interest in social media and content creation. Liv will assist in content creation, communications, and marketing in English. Liv speaks English natively, and she's learning Italian.

Kayla Bradford - Kayla is from Brooklyn. She is a freshman Deaf Studies major at La Guardia Community College. She has work experience in retail, customer service, food prep, and office admin. Kayla will assist language learners in English to enroll for classes and use technology. She will also assist with administrative activities.

Chris Malone - Chris was born and raised in Brooklyn. His professional background is in sales and distribution. He is skilled with technology, navigation, figuring out how things work and coordinating moving parts. Chris will assist with enrollment, event logistics, and partnership logistics for B2B sales.





-Of Counsel-

Maria Walker - Maria is a linguist and tax lawyer from Fort Wayne, Indiana. She is fluent in Spanish, French, and Irish. She has lived in Spain, France, Ireland, Argentina, and all over the United States.

Nick Schmitt - Nick grew up in the Pacific Northwest. He is a lawyer and a mediation professional. His specialties include alternative dispute resolution and intellectual property law. Nick's native language is English, and he speaks German conversationally.

-Gratitude + Additional Advisory-

CWB is being built with advice, support, and resources from the following, individuals and organizations: PowerUp! at the Brooklyn Public Library, La Guardia Community College's Small Business Development Center, CAMBA's ten-week business plan writing seminar, Columbia University's Oral History Master of Arts program, The New School's Certificate to Teach English program, NY Designs' Basic Entrepreneurship Training and its beautiful community of teachers and learners, and South Brooklyn Industrial Design Corporation's Plan for Growth Program.

  - Thank you to all who have generously given time, thought, and knowledge to this project so far. This project and our school would be nothing without the contributions, collaboration, and participation of our community. -  

9. Appendix

-Selection of Photos from Past Events-



-Projections for Market Sector Growth-

Market Segment	Starting Market Size	Projected growth	Projected Market Size	Research Firm
Language Education (global)	52 billion in 2022	20.8% CAGR through 2032	337.2 billion in 2032	Global Market Insights ^[21]
Online Language Learning Applications + Tutoring (global)	~ 6.46 billion in 2022 ³⁷	20.3% CAGR through 2029	31.81 billion in 2028	Meticulous Research ^[22]
Online Education + E-Learning (global)	198.2 billion in 2022	17.2% CAGR	602 billion in 2032	Vantage Market Research ^[23]
Professional Development (US)	10.8 million in 2017	5.84% CAGR through 2027	~14.97 million ³⁸ in 2027	Technavio ^[24]
Corporate Training (global)	151.75 billion in 2021	8% CAGR	487.3 billion by 2030	SkyQuest ^[25]
Consumer Spending on Leisure + Entertainment (US)	772.9 billion in 2017	Projected growth to 125% of total spending over 10 years	963 billion in 2027	Intel Market Research ^[26]

³⁷ Full report is not available to the public. Figure calculated based publicly-accessible information

³⁸ Same as previous footnote

BUSINESS PLAN - SOURCES CITED

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CWB Language Collective's Song As Artifact Project

Volume 1

What is this text?

This 78-page document, called the “Song As Artifact Project” (SAA) project is a community-generated language-learning and conversation-starting text. These (mostly) bilingual educational materials will serve as the foundational text for Culture Without Borders Language Collective’s first ever monetized language learning program, called Conversaciones Sonoras. Conversaciones Sonoras is an online conversational language practice program that brings learners of English and Spanish together on Zoom to practice conversation, make new friends, and lose their fear of speaking their second+ language.


To learn more about Conversaciones Sonoras, and to sign up for the program, [click here!](#)

How was this text produced?

This text was produced collaboratively over the course of a year, with help from a team of over 30 people, and with \$600 in grant funding from Columbia University’s Oral History Master of Arts program and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Members of our collective recorded interviews about songs that matter to them. Then the production team for this project excerpted the interviews, translated the excerpts, pulled useful vocabulary from the translations, and wrote up reflection prompts to help spark conversation around these songs. A full list of collaborators is included on page 45.

Who is this text for, and how can I use it to teach or learn language?

This text is for teachers and learners of English and Spanish. It is fully available for download at no financial cost through Culture Without Borders Language Collective and Columbia University. Language teachers may choose to use this material in their classes to spark conversation or written reflection; teach translation skills; or strengthen listening skills. Language learners may use this collection of texts to learn vocabulary, and practice listening, pronunciation, and self-expression in their second+ language.

If you’re a language teacher or learner, and you find this text helpful and/or interesting, we’d love to know how you’re using it! Email us to tell us about how you’re using this text at CWBLanguageCollective@Gmail.com. We’ll be so happy to hear from you! 

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Acknowledgements

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-Project Roots, Lineage, and Funding-

As with any creative endeavor, the Song as Artifact Project has its roots in many places, including:

- **Éva Pósfay’s “FREN 353: The French Chanson” course** — which teaches French history, language and culture through music
- **Nepia Mahuika’s [Rethinking Oral History and Tradition](#)** — which argues for an expanded and undivided notion of oral history and tradition, and understands music as both a product and vehicle of culture and history
- **Palmar Álvarez-Blanco’s paid work with student translators** on her hopeful and life-affirming project, [The Constellation of the Commons](#)
- **Zuriñe Lekuona’s skillful song-based Spanish teaching** during my several years as her student in high school
- **Cara Hall’s [insightful article](#) on the perils of personalization technology**, and the power of human-to-human song, music and movie recommendations
- **Amy Starecheski’s Oral History Fieldwork and Documentation Course** — specifically the unit: “Beyond the Seated One-on-One Interview” and selected readings
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SAA - Volume 1, Track 0: Introduction

-Mercedes Sosa with Lindsay Szper-



[CLICK HERE](#) - to listen to this text, read aloud

Lindsay: If I had to put a date on it, I'd tell you this project started on October 30th, 2022, with a deep, Youtube-based dive into the life and music of Mercedes Sosa. Sosa was an Argentine born singer and cultural figure, widely known as the “Voice of Latin America.” She’s an icon in much of the Spanish-speaking world, but she was totally new to me. I came to know of her through a book I was reading last fall, and I found her voice, her perspective, and her story absolutely captivating.

I learned from a series of Youtube documentaries that Sosa was born in a small town in Northern Argentina, and that her rise to fame began with a local singing competition, which she won when she was 15. She came to prominence as a musician and cultural figure in the 60s and 70s in Latin America, a region and time marked by the rise of right-wing military-backed dictatorships — and also by a large-scale, transnational revival and renewal of folk music in the service of social causes, called the “Nueva Canción” movement. In 1979, three years after Jorge Videla’s right-wing military junta took power in Argentina, Sosa was arrested onstage during a performance of [“Cuando Tenga La Tierra.”](#) a song in support of agrarian reform. She was released and lived for several years in exile, then she returned to her homeland in the early eighties, to see the fall of the Videla government.

Sosa sang songs that mattered. She gave voice to humanistic and politically engaged lyrics that spoke fearlessly and with clarity of the injustices of her time – and of humankind’s capacity and responsibility to address them.

“I’ve been a singer all my life,” Sosa reflects in [a 1996 interview](#) with biographer and archivist Pacho O’Donnell:

You become a singer because you have a good voice. The difficult thing, though, is knowing what you’re really after when you sing. [...] I came to understand that singing isn’t just about opening your mouth, or stretching out beautiful notes, born of a beautiful lineage. [...] Song is something much deeper than that. [...] It’s about adding to that lineage— taking in beautiful literature, beautiful images, beautiful sculptures. [...] A singer isn’t just a singer. A singer’s life is a cultural front.

I think Sosa is totally right: A singer's life is a cultural front. And songs are cultural—and linguistic—artifacts. The Song as Artifact project uses music, and recorded conversations about music, as entry points to English and Spanish language and cultures.

In addition to and perhaps more than teaching language, history, and culture through song, this project intends to open up — using music and interview as apertures — unbounded, multilingual, multicultural, and multigenerational dialogue on all manner of important things.

Sosa says about singers that the hard part of the job is deciding what songs are worth singing — what to promote, what to use their voice for. I don't think this responsibility that Sosa is describing, of figuring out how to use our voice, is specific to singers at all.

Every single human being has a unique story to tell and voice with which to tell it. And insofar as we share what we know; express ourselves creatively; externalize our stories; dance in our own particular way down our own particular path to our own particular variation on the human theme — each person, by way of the dialogic nature of selfhood and human being, is an agent of culture, education, and change.

I have been asking myself a fair amount lately: What is the purpose of school? It is my position that one of the primary functions of school is helping people find and develop their voice. I think school should help us figure out what we think and how to express it. School should help us cultivate awareness of ourselves, the world, and our position in it— so that we can speak humbly, accurately, resonantly, and with confidence on issues that matter.

SAA - Volume 1, Track 1: “Gracias a la vida” - Óscar Chávez *with Florencia Ruiz Mendoza and Lindsay Szper*

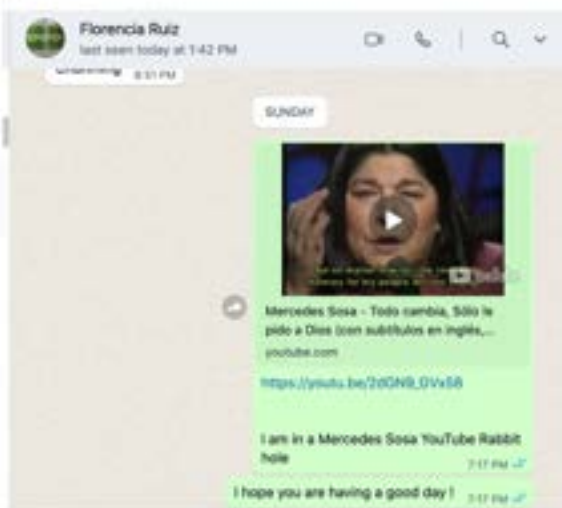


- [CLICK HERE](#) - to listen to this text, read aloud

Lindsay: My friend Florencia is a human rights advocate from Mexico. She’s twenty or so years older than I am. We’re both masters students in an oral history program, and Florencia loves Youtube as much as I do.

“I am in a Mercedes Sosa Youtube Rabbit Hole!” I WhatsApp messaged her eagerly on October 30th, 2022, knowing almost certainly that her response would be positive.

Me:



Florencia:




She sent back a link to another song that Sosa famously covered, “Gracias a la Vida,” performed by a different artist, Óscar Chávez.

“Listen to this one by Óscar Chávez,” she told me, “This song has been with me since I was a child.”



Later that week, as part of an open-ended in-class assignment for Amy Starecheski’s Oral History Fieldwork class, Florencia and I walked a slow lap around Columbia’s campus, and we recorded eight minutes of conversation about the song “Gracias a la Vida.”

The Song as Artifact project was born.

Who are we listening to? // ¿A quién escuchamos?

	English	Español
	About the Narrator	Sobre la Narradora
	<p>Florencia is from Mexico City. She has worked and advocated against forced disappearance in Mexico as a researcher, lecturer, and activist in both Mexico and the United States for the last two decades.</p> <p>Click here for a more extensive biography in English.</p>	<p>Florencia es de la Ciudad de México. Ha trabajado y abogado en contra de la desaparición forzada en México como investigadora, oradora y activista en México y Estados Unidos durante las últimas dos décadas.</p> <p>Haz clic aquí para ver un video (5 min) en español en que Florencia habla detalladamente sobre su trabajo y su biografía.</p>

Interview 1 - “Gracias a la Vida” with Florencia Ruiz Mendoza and Lindsay Szper (8 min)

  [Click here](#) to listen to Florencia and my eight-minute-long informal conversation about the song “Gracias a la vida,” written by [Violeta Parra](#) and interpreted by [Oscar Chávez](#) and [Mercedes Sosa](#).

-Lyrics // Letra-

Español	English
<p>Gracias a la Vida</p> <p>Gracias a la vida, que me ha dado tanto. Me dio dos luceros, que cuando los abro perfecto distingo lo negro del blanco, y en el alto cielo, su fondo estrellado, y en las multitudes, el hombre que yo amo.</p> <p>Gracias a la vida, que me ha dado tanto. Me ha dado el oído, que en todo su ancho graba noche y día grillos y canarios, martillos, turbinas, ladridos, chubascos, y la voz tan tierna de mi bien amado.</p> <p>Gracias a la vida, que me ha dado tanto Me ha dado el sonido y el abecedario. Con él, las palabras que pienso y declaro: madre, amigo, hermano, y luz alumbrando la ruta del alma del que estoy amando.</p> <p>Gracias a la vida, que me ha dado tanto. Me ha dado la marcha de mis pies cansados. Con ellos, anduve ciudades y charcos, playas y desiertos, montañas y llanos, y la casa tuya, tu calle y tu patio</p> <p>Gracias a la vida, que me ha dado tanto.</p> <p>Me dio el corazón, que agita su marco</p>	<p>Thank You to Life</p> <p>Thank you to life, which has given me so much. It gave me two beams of light, which when opened, can perfectly distinguish black from white, and in the night sky above, the starry backdrop, and from within the multitudes, the person I love.</p> <p>Thank you to life, which has given me so much: my hearing that, stretching so far, records days and nights, crickets and canaries, hammers, turbines, drills, squalls, and the sweet voice of my beloved.</p> <p>Thank you to life, which has given me so much: sounds and the alphabet, and with them the words that I think and declare: mother, friend, brother, and light illuminating the path of my soul, the source of my love.</p> <p>Thank you to life, which has given me so much: the ability to walk with my tired feet, which have carried me through cities and puddles, beaches and deserts, mountains and plains, and to your house, your street, your back yard.</p> <p>Thank you to life, which has given me so much.</p> <p>It has given me my heart, which shakes its frame</p>

cuando miro el fruto del cerebro humano,
cuando miro el bueno tan lejos del malo,
cuando miro el fondo de tus ojos claros.

Gracias a la vida, que me ha dado tanto.
Me ha dado la risa y me ha dado el llanto
Así yo distingo dicha de quebranto.
los dos materiales que forman mi canto,
y el canto de ustedes que es el mismo canto,
y el canto de todos que es mi propio canto.

Gracias a la vida.




- letras.com

when I see the fruit of the human brain,
when see I good so far from bad,
and when I look deeply into your clear eyes.

Thank you to life, which has given me so much.
It has given me laughter and sobbing.
That's how I distinguish joy from heartbreak,
the two elements that make up my song,
and your song as well, which is the same song.
and everyone's song, which is also my song.

Thank you to life.

-Interpretations // Interpretaciones-

Year Año	Artist Artista	Video Vidéo	Audio Audio	Subtítulos Subtitles
1988	Oscar Chávez 1935-2020 – Mexico - Wikipedia	 Click here to hear this version on Youtube.	ES	--
1966	Violeta Parra -Chile - 1917-1967 - Wikipedia	 Click here to hear this version on Youtube.	ES	ES
1971	Mercedes Sosa – Argentina – 1935-2009 - Wikipedia	 Click here to hear this version on Youtube.	ES	ES, EN

-Excerpts // Excerptos-

1.1 A Memory with this song // Una memoria con esta canción	
English	Español
<p>Florencia: It's a song that I love from an album that I loved that <u>belonged</u> to my parents. I remember <u>getting attached to</u> that album, Oscar Chavez's <u>20 Greatest Hits</u> album. <u>We were going on an excursion</u> outside Mexico City. They had a stereo that <u>played</u> cassettes, and they were playing the cassette on the stereo in their car. I think it was a Dodge van. Oh, long time ago...</p>	<p>Florencia: Es una canción que me encanta, de un álbum que me encantaba y que <u>les pertenecía</u> a mis padres. Me acuerdo que <u>me iba gustando más y más</u> ese álbum: <i>Oscar Chavez, Los Mejores 20 Éxitos</i>. <u>Íbamos de excursión</u> a las afueras de la Ciudad de México. Tenían un estéreo que <u>tocaba</u> casetes y tocaban el casete en el estéreo del carro. Creo que era una van de marca Dodge. Oh, tanto tiempo...</p>

Vocabulary // Vocabulario

1. **to belong to** - pertenecer a alguien
2. **to get attached to** - aferrarse a, llegar a querer mucho
3. **greatest hits** - mejores éxitos
4. **to go on an excursion** - ir de excursión
5. **to play (music, a cassette, the guitar)** - tocar (música, un casete, la guitarra)

1.2 - “What speaks to you about the song?” // ¿Qué te conmueve de esta canción?

English	Español
<p>Lindsay: What speaks to you about that song in particular? <u>Is there</u> a line, or a feeling?</p> <p>Florencia: I guess it’s the <u>humbleness</u>. I think it’s a praise to the things we <u>take for granted</u>, to things that are simple in life. As it says, looking into the eyes of the person that you love– All the beautiful things that the song says: “Thanks to life for providing me with laughter and crying.” “Thanks to life because I have two bright lights that allow me to discover the world.”</p> <p>And I sent you that song because I think it’s very much– of Latinx culture, Spanish culture. I really don’t see Billy Joel writing something like that. But Billy Joel also has other songs that Mexican romantic men would never write– about <u>women’s freedom</u>, you know?</p>	<p>Lindsay: ¿Qué <u>te llega</u>, o <u>te conmueve</u>, de esta canción? ¿<u>Hay</u> alguna línea en particular que te afecta, o un sentimiento que te da la canción?</p> <p>Florencia: Yo pienso que es <u>la humildad</u>. Pienso que honra las cosas que <u>damos por hecho</u>, las cosas que son simples en la vida. Como dice, mirando a los ojos de la persona que tú amas– Todo lo bello que dice la canción: “Gracias a la vida que me ha dado la risa y el llanto.” “Gracias a la vida tengo dos luceros brillantes que me permiten descubrir el mundo.”</p> <p>Además yo te envié aquella canción porque pienso que es mucho más– de la cultura latina. Realmente no veo a Billy Joel escribiendo música de este tipo. Pero Billy Joel tiene otras canciones que un hombre mexicano romántico nunca escribiera– acerca de <u>la liberación femenina</u>.</p>

Vocabulary // Vocabulario

1. “**That song/movie/book speaks to me.**”- Esa canción/película/libro me habla (me llega, tiene resonancia)
2. **is there, are there?; there is, there are** - ¿Hay?; Hay
3. **humbleness** - la humildad
4. **to take for granted** - dar por hecho
5. **women’s freedom** - la liberación femenina

1.3 - Violeta Parra // Violeta Parra

English	Español
<p>Florencia: Actually this song was written by a very famous Chilean female <u>singer-songwriter</u>, Violeta Parra. I need to do <u>fact checking</u> because the legend says that this was the last song she wrote, and she wrote it and played it shortly before she <u>committed suicide</u>. They say that Violeta Parra killed herself because <u>she fell deeply in love</u> with a kind of <u>one-night-stand</u> love. That's the legend, I need to do some fact checking. But it's a fact that Violeta Parra committed suicide shortly after she wrote and composed that song. My friend told me Violeta Parra fell in love with a French singer half her age, and they had a one-night thing, and Violeta got totally obsessed with him, and that was it.</p> <p>I don't know, somehow I kind of– It's cultural and super biased, super subjective– I don't want to believe that Violeta Parra killed herself because of a broken heart– But that's my very personal and irrelevant opinion.</p>	<p>Florencia: Realmente esta canción fue escrita por una famosa <u>cantautora</u> chilena, Violeta Parra. Necesito hacer una <u>verificación de hechos</u> porque la leyenda dice que esta fue su última canción que escribió y tocó un poco antes de <u>suicidarse</u>. Ellos decían que Violeta Parra se suicidó porque <u>se enamoró profundamente de un amor de una noche</u>. Eso es una leyenda, necesito verificar algunos hechos, pero es un hecho que Violeta Parra se suicidó un poco tiempo después de escribir y componer aquella canción. Mi amiga me dijo que Violeta Parra se enamoró de un cantante francés menor que ella. Ellos tuvieron un amor de una noche y Violeta quedó obsesionada totalmente de él, y eso fue todo.</p> <p>No lo sé, yo de alguna manera– esto es cultural, es super parcial y subjetivo– No quiero creer que Violeta Parra se suicidó porque le rompieron el corazón– Pero esta es mi opinión personal e irrelevante.</p>

Vocabulary // Vocabulario

1. **singer-songwriter** - cantautor(a)
2. **fact checking** - la verificación de datos
3. **to commit suicide** - suicidarse
4. **to fall deeply in love with** - enamorarse profundamente de
5. **one-night-stand** - un amor de una noche

1.4 - Voice and Interpretation // La voz y las interpretaciones

English	Español
<p>Florencia: I wanted to <u>show you</u> that song before you listened to it with Mercedes Sosa. That is <u>the best one</u>. Talking about voices– Maurice, my husband, doesn't speak a word of Spanish, but when he listened to Mercedes Sosa singing, <u>he was touched and moved</u>. He was like, "Oh my God– <u>What a beautiful voice!</u>"</p> <p>Lindsay: I'm also thinking about interpretation. This song had such a specific meaning to Violeta Parra, who wrote it about her failed romantic relationship. But how interesting is it that Oscar Chavez can interpret it – same words, same song – but in a way that has a different <u>meaning</u>. And then Mercedes Sosa can do the same thing, same words, same song – but it has a different meaning.</p>	<p>Florencia: Quería <u>mostrarte</u> primero la canción antes que la escucharas con Mercedes Sosa. Es <u>la mejor</u>. Hablando de voces– Maurice, mi esposo, no habla una palabra en español, pero cuando escuchó a Mercedes Sosa cantando <u>lo conmovió</u>. El era como, "Oh Dios– <u>¡Qué bella voz!</u>"</p> <p>Lindsay: También estoy pensando acerca de la interpretación. Esta canción tiene como un significado específico para Violeta Parra, quien la escribió acerca de su fallida relación amorosa. Pero ¿qué interesante es la interpretación de Oscar Chavez? La misma letra, la misma melodía, pero en cierta manera tiene un <u>significado</u> diferente, y entonces Mercedes Sosa puede hacer la misma cosa, misma letra, misma canción – pero tiene diferente significado.</p>

Vocabulary // Vocabulario

1. **to show** - mostrar, enseñar, demostrar
2. **the best (one)** - el/la mejor
3. **to be touched or moved (by a song, book, movie)** - que una canción, libro, película, etc. te conmueve
4. **what a beautiful voice!** - ¡Qué bella voz!
5. **meaning** - el significado


Reflection Prompts // Preguntas de reflexión:

V1 T1 - Reflection Prompts - Preguntas de reflexión	
English	Español
<p><i>-A Memory with this Song-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tell us about a song that has stuck with you since you were young and a memory of listening to that song. <p><i>-What Speaks to You About this Song?-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tell us about a song that speaks to you and share a few lines with us. ● Can you share with us a song that you feel represents your culture, or a song that to you feels universal? <p><i>-Violeta Parra-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A difficult topic– but it seems that some of the wisest and most sensible and sensitive artists take their own lives. Why do you think that is? <p><i>-Voice and Interpretation-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Can you think of a song in a language you don't know that moves you? Why do you think it moves you? ● Can you think of a song where the meaning feels significantly different to you based on who performs it? 	<p><i>-Una memoria con esta canción-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Háblanos de una canción que se ha quedado contigo desde niña/o y una memoria que tienes de escuchar esa canción. <p><i>-¿Qué te conmueve de esta canción?-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Háblanos de una canción que te conmueve, y comparte algunas líneas. ● ¿Puedes compartir una canción que sientes que represente tu cultura, o una canción que sientes que es universal? <p><i>-Violeta Parra-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Un tema duro– pero parece ser que algunos de los artistas más sabios, sensatos y sensibles se quitan la vida. ¿Por qué piensas que es así? <p><i>-La voz y la interpretación-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Puedes pensar en una canción en una lengua que tú no sabes pero que aún así te conmueve? Por qué piensas que te conmueve? ● ¿Puedes pensar en una canción que tiene un significado diferente según quién la canta?

SAA - Volume 1, Track 2: “Los caminos de la vida” - Los Diablitos (Omar Geles)




con Estrella Sánchez y Lindsay Szper

- ¿A quién escuchamos? // Who are we listening to? -

	Español	English
	Sobre la Narradora	About the Narrator
	<p>Estrella Sánchez (seudónimo) es educadora, esposa, hija y mamá. Vive en Queens y es de Ecuador originalmente. Ha trabajado con niños por muchos años, aquí en los Estados Unidos y en su país de origen también.</p> <p><i>Esta amiga colaboradora prefiere quedarse anónima. Si reconoces la voz o la historia de ella, te pedimos que por favor respetes su privacidad, y que no compartas la identidad de ella con otra gente sin su permiso. ¡Gracias!</i></p>	<p>Estrella Sánchez (pseudonym) is an educator, a wife, a daughter and a mom. She lives in Queens and is from Ecuador originally. She has worked with children for many years, both in the US and in her home country.</p> <p><i>This friend and collaborator prefers to remain anonymous. If you recognize her voice or her story, we ask that you please respect her privacy, and that you do not share her identity with others without her permission. Thank you!</i></p>

Entrevista 2 - “Los caminos de la vida” con Estrella Sánchez y Lindsay Szper (10 min)

  - [Haz clic aquí](#) para escuchar una conversación entre Estrella y Lindsay (~10 min) sobre la canción “Los caminos de la vida,” del grupo [Los Diablitos](#), liderado por [Omar Geles](#).

   - [Haz clic aquí](#) para ver un video en español que contextualiza esta canción e incluye entrevistas con la mamá del cantautor.

-Letra // Lyrics-

Español	English
<p>Los caminos de la vida <i>Interpretada y escrita por Los Diablitos (Wikipedia)</i></p> <p>Los caminos de la vida no son como yo pensaba, como los imaginaba. No son como yo creía.</p> <p>Los caminos de la vida son muy difícil de andarlos, difícil de caminarlos, y no encuentro la salida.</p> <p>Yo pensaba que la vida era distinta. Cuando estaba pequeño yo creía que las cosas eran fácil como ayer. Que mi viejecita buena se esmeraba por darme todo lo que necesitaba y hoy me doy cuenta que tan fácil no es.</p> <p>Porque mi viejita ya está cansada de trabajar pa' mi hermano y pa' mí y ahora con gusto me toca ayudarla y por mi vieja lucharé hasta el fin. Por ella lucharé hasta que me muera y por ella no me quiero morir. Tampoco que se me muera mi vieja Pero, ¿qué va, si el destino es así?</p>	<p>The Roads of Life <i>Performed and written by Los Diablitos</i></p> <p>The roads of life, they are not what I pictured, they are not what I imagined, they are not how I thought they'd be.</p> <p>The roads of life, they are very difficult to walk, difficult to travel, and I can't find the way out.</p> <p>I thought life was different. When I was little, I believed things were easy like yesterday. My old lady took care to give me everything I needed, and today I realize: that isn't so easy.</p> <p>Because my old lady, she is so exhausted from working for my brother and me, and now it's my pleasure to help her, and for her I will fight until the end. I'll fight to the death for her, and also I live for her. I don't ever want to lose her, but what is there to do, if that's destiny?</p>

Los caminos de la vida
no son como yo pensaba,
como los imaginaba,
No son como yo creía.

Los caminos de la vida
son muy difícil de andarlos,
difícil de caminarlos
Yo no encuentro la salida.

Uno sabe que la vida
de repente ha de acabarse
y uno espera que sea tarde
que llegue la despedida.
Un amigo me decía,
"Recompensaré a mis viejos
Por la crianza que me dieron"
y no le alcanzó la vida.

Por eso te pido a ti, mi Dios del cielo
para que me guíes al camino correcto
para mi viejita linda compensar.
Para que olvide ese mar de sufrimientos
y que de ella se aparte todo el tormento
que para criarnos tuvo que pasar.

Viejita linda, tienes que entenderme.
No te preocupes, todo va a cambiar.
Yo sufro mucho, madrecita, al verte
necesitada y no te puedo dar.

The roads of life,
they are not what I pictured,
they are not what I imagined,
they are not how I thought they'd be.

The roads of life,
they are very difficult to walk,
difficult to travel,
and I can't find the way out.

Life, you know,
always ends abruptly.
You can only hope
that your time comes late.
A friend used to tell me,
"I'll give back to my folks
for the upbringing that they gave me,"
but his time was too short.

So I'm asking you, my Lord in heaven,
to guide me to the right path,
so I can give back to my old lady,
so she can forget the sea of suffering
she had to endure, all the storms
she lived through to raise us.

My beautiful old lady, you have to understand me.
Don't worry, everything will change.
I really suffer, madrecita, when I see you
in need and I can't help you.

A veces lloro al sentirme impotente.
Son tantas cosas que te quiero dar.
Y voy a luchar incansablemente
porque tú no mereces sufrir más.

Los caminos de la vida
no son como yo pensaba,
como los imaginaba.
No son como yo creía.

Los caminos de la vida
son muy difícil de andarlos,
difícil de caminarlos.
Yo no encuentro la salida.

- adaptado de la letra de letras.com

Sometimes I cry, when I feel helpless.
There are so many things I want to give you,
and I'm going to fight tirelessly
because you don't deserve to suffer anymore.

The roads of life,
they are not what I pictured,
they are not what I imagined,
they are not how I thought they'd be.

The roads of life,
they are very difficult to walk,
difficult to travel,
and I can't find the way out.

-Interpretaciones // Interpretations-

Año Year	Artista Artist	Vidéo Vidéo	Audio Audio	Subtítulos Subtitles
1993, 2015	Los Diablitos – Colombia – Wikipedia	 Haz clic aquí para ver el vídeo del 1993 en Youtube. Haz clic aquí para ver el vídeo del 2015 en Youtube.	ES	ES
2021	Paula Arenas Wikipedia (English , Español)	 Haz clic aquí para ver el vídeo en Youtube.	ES	ES
2018	Vicentico (música) + funcionarios de Gendarmería de Chile (señas)	 Haz clic aquí para ver el vídeo en Youtube.	ES	ES; lengua de señas Chilena
2022	Rik Ch'ok	 Haz clic aquí para ver el vídeo en Youtube.	Q'eqchi'	–

-Excerpts // Excerptos-

2.1 - La música vallenata // Vallenato Music	
Español	English
<p>Estrella: Es un vallenato. En Ecuador existe gran impacto de la música vallenata, porque yo creo que es como una poesía hecha canción.</p> <p>Lindsay: La música vallenata, ¿qué características tiene?</p> <p>Estrella: Ellos utilizan más el acordeón, el instrumento de viento. Y sus líricas tienen mucho sentimiento. A veces se trata de <u>desamor</u>, de <u>vivencias</u>. Pero cuando ellos transmiten, cantan-- es el <u>sentimiento</u> que ellos expresan en esa música.</p> <p>Lindsay: Entonces es una música muy emocional.</p> <p>Estrella: Sí, Emocional. Sí. Podríamos llamarla así. Emocional. Romántica también. O de <u>despecho</u>--</p> <p>Lindsay: No conozco esa--</p> <p>Estrella: Esa palabra ¿despecho? Es cuando alguien le traicionó. Y esa sensación, ese feeling que siente-- como que está muy desilusionado, nosotros lo llamamos despecho.</p>	<p>Estrella: It's Vallenato. In Ecuador vallenato music has had a big impact, because I think it's like poetry turned into song.</p> <p>Lindsay: What characteristics does vallenato music have?</p> <p>Estrella: It uses a lot of accordion, a type of wind instrument. The lyrics have a lot of emotion or feeling. Sometimes they are about <u>lovelessness</u>, or <u>life experiences</u>. When they sing you feel the <u>feelings</u> in the music.</p> <p>Lindsay: So it's a very emotional music.</p> <p>Estrella: Yes, it's emotional. We could call it emotional or romantic, or de despecho, about <u>broken-heartedness</u>.</p> <p>Lindsay: I don't know that--</p> <p>Estrella: The word despecho? It's when someone betrays you. It is a sensation, a feeling, that is like disappointment. We call that despecho.</p>

Vocabulario // Vocabulary

1. **el desamor** - lack of affection, indifference, unrequited love, lovelessness
2. **las vivencias** - lived experiences, life experiences
3. **el sentimiento** - feeling
4. **la traición, traicionar a alguien** - betrayal, to betray someone
5. **el despecho** - spite, broken-heartedness

2.2 - El labor del docente // The Work of an Educator

Español	English
<p>Estrella: Trabajo de asistente de escuela de una escuela primaria, podríamos decir– en un day care. Es un preescolar– un jardín de infantes, como diríamos en español. Yo trabajo con niños de cuatro años. <u>Me encanta</u> mi trabajo porque todos los días es algo nuevo. Cuando, con el pasar del tiempo, tú encuentras a un niño que fue tu alumno y ellos corren hacia ti, es porque yo creo que hiciste algo bien con ellos. Cuando alguien te dice, los papás, "Yo estoy muy agradecido por todo lo que ha hecho por mi hijo," te hace tener más amor propio a tu trabajo. Siempre me ha gustado trabajar con niños, incluso en mi país natal, que es Ecuador. Trabajaba con niños de 4.º y 5º de básica. Eran un poquito más grandes, pero es igual. El hecho que ellos aprenden algo de ti y que te van a recordar tal vez por toda su vida– me llena de sentimiento.</p> <p>Lindsay: Sí. Los maestros hacen mucho para impactar, para cambiar las vidas de la gente.</p> <p>Estrella: Sí, pero a veces– mucha gente no lo reconoce. Hay algo que escuché y es verdad: Si tú quieres hacer dinero, no seas maestro, porque no te da la <u>riqueza</u> ni el <u>dinero suficiente</u>. Ni aquí en Estados Unidos, ni allá en los países nativos. Yo hablo por mi país, Ecuador, donde también <u>la labor del docente</u> no es tan reconocida ni <u>bien remunerada</u>.</p>	<p>Estrella: I work as an assistant in a primary school, you could call it– in a daycare. It's a preschool– un jardín de infantes, like we'd say in Spanish. I work with four-year-old kids. I <u>love</u> my job because every day is something new. When, years later, you bump into a kid who used to be your student and they come running up to you, I think it's because you did right by them. Or when someone says, the parents, "I'm very grateful for everything you've done for my kid," it makes you feel more pride in your work. I've always liked working with children, even in my home country, which is Ecuador. I used to work with kids in their fourth or fifth year of básica. They were a little bigger, but it's the same thing. The fact that they learn something from you, and that they might remember you their whole life– that fills me with feeling.</p> <p>Lindsay: Yeah. Teachers really make an impact. They do a lot to change people's lives.</p> <p>Estrella: Yes, but sometimes– a lot of people don't recognize that. This is a thing I heard, and it's true: If you want to make money, don't be a teacher, because you'll never be <u>rich</u> or have <u>enough money</u>. Not here in the United States, and not back in our home countries either. I'm speaking for my country, Ecuador, where <u>the work of educators</u> is not very well recognized, or <u>well paid</u>.</p>

Vocabulario // Vocabulary

1. **encantar (me encanta, te encanta, etc.)** - to love (a thing) (I love cupcakes, you love cupcakes, etc.)
2. **la riqueza** - wealth, richness
3. **el dinero suficiente** - enough money
4. **la labor del docente** - the work of an educator
5. **bien remunerada** - well paid

2.3 - Memoria, reciprocidad y gratitud // Memory, Reciprocity and Gratitude

Español	English
<p>Lindsay: ¿Tienes alguna memoria en particular con la canción?</p> <p>Estrella: Cada vez que en la radio <u>sonaba</u> esa canción, a mi mamá le gustaba <u>pasar el volumen</u> y la escuchaba. Yo tenía como siete años. No le agarraba el sentido. Cuando fui creciendo, me di cuenta de la lírica y es verdad. Es lo que siento por mi mamá. Aunque la vida me trajo por distinto camino y estoy lejos de ella, yo siempre trato que mi mamá esté bien. Y trato siempre de <u>retribuir</u> lo que ella hizo por nosotros. Tengo que agradecerle mucho a mi mamá. No tenía muchos recursos pero nos <u>sacó adelante</u>. Nos dio estudio a todos los cuatro. Un día el amor me trajo a este país. La dejé. Pero, no sé, es lo que me lleva a irme a mi país a visitarle lo más que pueda.</p> <p>También hay una parte en la canción donde dice que el amigo le dijo que él iba a agradecerle a los papás todo lo que habían hecho, pero la vida no lo permitió. <u>Tiene gran parte de razón</u> eso. Y que a veces– Muchas cosas, cuando uno es niño piensa que la vida es distinta, más fácil. Pero cuando vas creciendo, toma distintos caminos, distintos– podría decir destinos.</p>	<p>Lindsay: Do you have any specific memories of this song?</p> <p>Estrella: Every time this song would <u>play</u> on the radio my mom liked to <u>turn up the volume</u> and listen. I was about seven years old then. I didn't grasp the meaning. As I got older, I came to understand the lyrics, and it's true. That's what I feel for my mom. Even though life took me down a different road, and I'm far away from her, I always try to make sure my mom is okay. And I always try to do right by her, to <u>repay her</u> for all that she did for us. I have to really thank my mom. She didn't have a lot of resources, but she <u>provided</u> for us. She sent all four of us to school. One day love brought me to this country. But, I don't know, that's what motivates me to go back to my country to visit her as much as I can.</p> <p>There's also a part in the song where he says his friend was going to thank his parents for all that they'd done for him, but life didn't allow it. <u>That's really true</u>. And sometimes– With a lot of things, you think life is a certain way, that it's easier than it is. But when we grow up, life takes different paths, different destinies, you could say.</p>

Vocabulario // Vocabulary

1. **sonar en la radio** - to play on the radio
2. **pasar el volumen** - to turn up the volume
3. **retribuir** - to reciprocate, to repay, to compensate, to recompense
4. **sacar adelante** - to provide for someone
5. **tener razón** - to be right, to be true

2.4 - Un mundo mejor // A Better World

Español	English
<p>Lindsay: ¿Cómo quisieras tú que fuese el mundo? ¿Cómo hacemos <u>un mundo mejor</u>? ¿Qué <u>se tiene que cambiar</u> y cómo lo <u>cambiamos</u>?</p> <p>Estrella: Para mí siempre digo que tiene que haber <u>empatía</u>. Sí, porque cuando usted siente empatía por el mundo, por su familia, por su hermano, por su hijo, va a tratar de hacer las cosas mejores. Porque usted sabe que la empatía significa: <u>Te trato como me gustaría que me trates</u> tú a mí. Entonces yo creo que si hubiera empatía y todo el mundo tuviera ese concepto que— ponernos en el lugar de otro, yo creo que tal vez sería mejor. Eso es lo que yo creo que al mundo <u>le falta</u> el día de hoy. Porque ahora el mundo está siempre en los intereses, de <u>sus intereses propios</u> y no ve más allá, de— del <u>ayudar a los demás</u>.</p>	<p>Lindsay: What does an ideal world look like to you? How do we make the <u>world better</u>? What <u>needs to be changed</u> and how do we do our part?</p> <p>Estrella: If you ask me, I always say that there needs to be <u>empathy</u>. Yes, because when you show empathy to others, to your family, to your brother, to your child, you're trying to make things better. Because you know what empathy means: I <u>treat</u> you the way I'd like you to <u>treat</u> me. So I think that if there was empathy and everyone had this concept where we put ourselves in each other's shoes, I think that maybe everything would be better. That's what I think <u>is missing</u> in the world these days. Because now the world is all about your own <u>self-interests</u> and no one sees beyond that, to <u>helping others</u>.</p>

Vocabulario // Vocabulary

1. **cambiar, cambiarse** - to change, to be changed
2. **la empatía** - empathy
3. **faltar (me falta, te falta, etc.)** - to miss, to be missing/lacking
4. **los intereses propios** - self-interests
5. **ayudar a los demás** - to help others


Reflection Prompts // Preguntas de reflexión:


V1 T2 - Preguntas de reflexión // Reflection Prompts	
Español	English
<p><i>-La música vallenata-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ¿Hay algún estilo de música que se originó en la región donde te criaste, o en otro lugar que sea importante para ti? ● ¿Hay algún estilo de música en tu cultura que abarca los mismos temas que el vallenato (traición, romance, desamor)? ● ¿Para qué sirven las canciones tristes? <p><i>-La labor del docente-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe un[a] maestro/a favorito/a de tu niñez. ¿Por qué era tan bueno/a? ¿Qué recuerdas de él o ella? ● ¿Has trabajado de maestro/a? ● ¿Sientes que los docentes son suficientemente bien reconocidos y remunerados? Si no ¿por qué crees que es el caso y cómo lo arreglamos? <p><i>-Memorias y gratitud-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ¿Quién te ha sostenido a lo largo de tu vida? ● ¿Para quién te sientes agradecido/a? ● ¿Cómo demuestras o demostrabas tu amor y apreciación por esa persona o esas personas? <p><i>-Un mundo mejor-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● En tu opinión ¿qué es lo que no va bien en/con el mundo? ¿Cómo lo mejoramos? 	<p><i>-Vallenato Music-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is there a particular style of music that originated where you grew up or in a place that is important to you? ● Is there a specific style of music in your culture that deals with the same themes as vallenato (betrayal, romance, falling out of love)? ● What are sad songs good for? <p><i>-The Work of an Educator-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe a favorite teacher from your childhood. Why were they a good teacher? What do you remember about them? ● Have you ever worked as a teacher? ● Do you feel educators are adequately recognized and fairly paid? If you don't, why do you think that is, and how do we fix it? <p><i>-Memories and Gratitude-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who in your life has sustained you? ● Who are you grateful for? ● How do/did you show love and appreciation for that person or those people? <p><i>-A Better World-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In your opinion, what's wrong with the world? How do we make it better?

SAA - Volume 1, Track 3: “I’ll Take Care of You” - The Chicks


with Samantha Adler, Caitlin Meyers, and Lindsay Szper

Who are we listening to? // ¿A quién escuchamos?

	English	Español
	About the Narrator	Sobre la Narradora
	<p>Samantha Adler was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY. Her professional background is in nonprofit operations and conflict mediation. She loves billiards and good food. She has a small houseplant business, and she ran for state senate last year!</p>	<p>Samantha Adler nació y se crió en Brooklyn, NY. Su experiencia profesional es en operaciones para las organizaciones sin fines de lucro y en resolución de conflictos. Le encanta el billar y la buena comida. Tiene su propio negocio relacionado con el mantenimiento de las plantas del interior. ¡El año pasado se postuló para candidata al senado estatal!</p>

	English	Español
	About the Narrator	Sobre la Narradora
	<p>Caitlin Meyers grew up in Florida. She has professional experience in English teaching, conflict mediation, and diplomacy. Now she works for the State Department. Caitlin has lived (so far!) in El Salvador, Colombia, New York City, and Rio de Janeiro. She knows English, Spanish, French and Portuguese, and she’s currently learning Urdu, in preparation for a one-year tour in Karachi, Pakistan.</p>	<p>Caitlin Meyes creció en Florida. Ella tiene experiencia profesional en la enseñanza del inglés, mediación de conflictos y diplomacia. Actualmente trabaja en el Departamento de Estado. Caitlin ha vivido (¡hasta ahora!) en El Salvador, Colombia, la Ciudad de Nueva York y Río de Janeiro. Habla Inglés, Español, Francés y Portugues. Adicionalmente, ella está aprendiendo Urdu para prepararse para una gira por un año en Karachi, Pakistán.</p>

Interview 3 - “I’ll Take Care of You” with Samantha Adler, Caitlin Meyers, and Lindsay Szper (20 min)

 [Click here](#) to listen to Caitlin, Sam and my twenty-minute-long informal conversation about the song “I’ll Take Care of You,” written by J.D. Souther and performed by [The Chicks](#).

Español	English
<p>I’ll Take Care of You <i>Written by J.D. Souther</i> <i>Performed by The Chicks</i></p> <p>Times are hard and rents are high What can a workin' girl do, but struggle through another day? Then I'll take care of you.</p> <p>Nights are long and dreams are cold if they're all you wake up to. But should you rise with cryin' eyes, Then I'll take care of you.</p> <p>So let them talk about us, let them call us funny things. People sometimes do. I don't care, as long as you know I love you, and you know I do.</p> <p>I'll be there, but you might not see me. It's never easy to get through. But when the laughter dies away, then I'll take care of you.</p> <p>So let them talk about us, let them call us funny things.</p>	<p>Yo te cuidaré <i>Escrita por J.D. Souther</i> <i>Interpretada por The Chicks</i></p> <p>Los tiempos son difíciles y el costo de la vida muy alto. ¿Qué puede hacer una chica trabajadora aparte de seguir adelante? Y yo te cuidaré.</p> <p>Las noches son largas y los sueños muy fríos si son lo único que tienes. Pero si te despiertas con lágrimas en los ojos, yo te cuidaré.</p> <p>Entonces que hablen lo que quieran, que se burlen de nosotros. La gente a veces lo hace. No me importa mientras tu sepas que te quiero y sabes que lo hago.</p> <p>Allí estaré, aunque no me veas. Nunca es fácil superarlo. Pero al final, cuando la risa termine, yo te cuidaré.</p> <p>Entonces que hablen lo que quieran, que se burlen de nosotras.</p>

People sometimes do.
Oh, I don't care, as long as you know I love you
Oh, and you know I do.

I'll be there, but you might not see me
It's never easy to get through
But when the laughter dies away,
Then I'll take care of you.
Darlin', I'll take care of you

Lyrics adapted from [Genius.com](https://www.genius.com)

La gente a veces lo hace.
No me importa mientras tu sepas que te quiero,
y tú sabes que lo hago.

Allí estaré, aunque no me veas.
Nunca es fácil superarlo,
Pero al final cuando la risa termine,
yo te cuidaré.
Cariño, yo te cuidaré.

-Interpretaciones // Interpretations-

Año Year	Artista Artist	Vidéo Vidéo	Audio Audio	Subtítulos Subtitles
1998	The Chicks – - Wikipedia	 <p>Click here to hear this version on Youtube</p>	EN	EN
1982	Kenny Rogers - Wikipedia	 <p>Click here to hear this version on Youtube.</p>	EN	–
1984	J.D. Souther - Wikipedia (songwriter)	 <p>Click here to hear this version on Youtube.</p>	EN	–

-Excerpts // Excerptos-

3.1 “Working Girls” + Workplace Friends // “Muchachas que trabajan” + Amigas en el trabajo	
English	Español
<p>Caitlin: Something that sticks out to me is when the singer says, “I’m just a working girl.” I think that right now in the United States, many women between the ages of 18 to 40 strongly object to being called “girl.” That’s something that is often used to <u>demean</u> women, or as a lack of respect for women, by <u>infantilizing</u> them. But there was something very youthful about working in that space together, and I think we all matured in that space together.</p> <p>Sam: The three of us had a very <u>supportive dynamic</u>, and we would do super fun and ridiculous things, like making Thanksgiving dinner in the microwave, or just being all together in the back room if we needed to, like, cry or vent about something.</p> <p>Caitlin: I remember I had gone through a <u>breakup</u> and I was supposed to be sitting at the front desk and checking people in and answering the phone, and I was having a really hard time. And I texted Sam and I said, “Sam, I need a cry break. Can you watch the front desk for 5 minutes while I cry in the closet?” You just sent a frowny face and said, “I’m on my way.” No questions asked. That’s how I needed you to take care of me. Both taking care of the work, and also giving me a space to cry in the closet, giving me the opportunity to be myself, <u>my whole self</u> at work.</p>	<p>Caitlin: Algo que me llama la atención es cuando la cantante dice, “Sólo soy una chica trabajadora.” Yo pienso que ahora en los Estados Unidos, muchas mujeres entre dieciocho y cuarenta años de edad se oponen firmemente a ser llamadas “chicas.” Eso es algo que a menudo se usa para <u>degradar</u> a la mujer, o como una falta de respeto para la mujer, al <u>aniñarla</u>. Sin embargo, había algo muy juvenil al trabajar juntas en este espacio, y pienso que todas maduramos juntas en este espacio.</p> <p>Sam: Las tres teníamos una <u>dinámica de apoyo</u>, y hacíamos cosas súper divertidas y graciosas, como hacer la Cena de Acción de Gracias en el microondas, o solamente estar juntas en la habitación de atrás si queríamos, por ejemplo, llorar o desahogarnos por algo.</p> <p>Caitlin: Recuerdo haber pasado por una <u>ruptura</u> y cuando se suponía que debía estar sentada en la recepción registrando a las personas y contestando el teléfono, estaba teniendo un momento realmente difícil. Yo le envié un mensaje a Sam y le dije, “Sam, necesito estallar en llanto. ¿Puedes atender la recepción por 5 minutos mientras yo lloro en el armario?” Simplemente enviaste una cara con el ceño fruncido y dijiste, “Estoy en camino.” No se hicieron preguntas. Así es como yo necesitaba que me cuidaras. Tanto cuidando del trabajo, como también dándome un espacio para llorar en el armario, dándome la oportunidad de ser yo misma, <u>siendo todo mi ser</u> en el trabajo.</p>

Vocabulary // Vocabulario

1. **to demean** - degradar
2. **to infantilize** - aniñar
3. **a supportive dynamic** - una dinámica de apoyo
4. **a breakup** - una ruptura
5. **to be my whole self** - ser todo mi ser

3.2 - Taking Care and Being Cared for // Cuidar y recibir cuidados

English	Español
<p>Lindsay: What does taking care of people look like to you in your life, or being taken care of?</p> <p>Caitlin: Taking care means finishing a project: “Oh, I’m <u>taking care of</u> this and finishing this project,” but also, I’m giving space for someone to be themselves. I’m listening to someone when they need help. Something linguistically that I think is so interesting is, coming out of a work environment where we were speaking Portuguese day to day: There is no like “taking care.” Something that people would say was, “<u>Leave it with me.</u>”</p> <p>In this context I had a problem and Sam said, “Leave your problem with me.” I’ll work the front desk. Sam said, “I have a problem, I’m coming in late.” And we said, “Leave it with me. We will tell the boss that you’re getting coffee.” When we had a lot of cases and it was too much for any one person, I would say, “Leave it with me” because you were telling someone else, “Leave it with me.” <u>Often</u> taking care of someone is asking them to leave their troubles with you. And I’m so <u>thankful</u> that, you know, my very first big girl job, as you know, as we said, I found this community of girls becoming women that would let me leave my problems with them, and that <u>trusted</u> me to take care of the problems that they left with me.</p> <p>Sam: Very reciprocal.</p>	<p>Lindsay: ¿Cómo es para ti cuidar a otras personas, o que otras personas te cuiden?</p> <p>Caitlin: Cuidar significa terminar un proyecto: “Oh, yo <u>me estoy encargando</u> de esto y de terminar este proyecto.” pero también, estoy dando un lugar para que alguien sea él mismo. Estoy escuchando a alguien cuando necesita ayuda. Esto es algo lingüístico — y pienso que es sumamente interesante — que viene de un entorno laboral donde hablábamos portugués diariamente, que el verbo “cuidar” no se usa tanto en estos contextos. Algo que la gente decía era: “<u>Déjame a mí.</u>”</p> <p>En este contexto, yo tuve un problema y Sam dijo, “Déjame tu problema a mí. Trabajaré en la recepción.” Sam decía, “Tengo un problema, vendré tarde.” Y nosotras decíamos: “Déjame a mí. Le diremos al jefe que estás yendo por café.” Cuando teníamos muchos casos y era demasiado para una sola persona, yo decía: “Déjame a mí” porque le estabas diciendo a otra persona: “Déjame a mí.” <u>A menudo</u>, cuidar de alguien es pedirle que te deje sus problemas. Y estoy muy <u>agradecida</u>, tú sabes, que en mi primer trabajo como chica mayor, como tu sabes, como dijimos, encontré esta comunidad de niñas empezando a ser mujeres que me permitieron dejar mis problemas con ellas y que <u>confiaron</u> en mí para cuidar de los problemas que ellas me dejaban.</p> <p>Sam: Muy recíproco.</p>

Vocabulary // Vocabulario

I'm taking care of - me estoy encargando de

Leave it with me. - Déjame a mi.

often - a menudo

thankful - agradecido/a

to trust - confiar

3.3 - Music that Sounds Like Home, “Belting it” // Música que suena al hogar, “cantar a todo pulmón”

English	Español
<p>Lindsay: I have memories from every stage of life with this music playing <u>in the background</u>, whether it's the fifth grade square dance that we used to do in elementary school, or driving across the country with my mom during college, or being at work with you two, or just cleaning my house now. Do you have any memories around The Chicks' music that <u>come to mind</u> that you want to share?</p> <p>Caitlin: I grew up in a region in the south of the United States where this kind of music is very common. <u>It sounds very much like home to me</u>, and it <u>brings me back</u>.</p> <p>Sam: It just always <u>brings me back</u> to being in the car as a kid — me, my mom and my sister — and singing at the top of my lungs. Their songs are so sing-along-able. I could think of like five songs off the top of my head that are just so good whenever they come on. You want to <u>belt it</u> and sing along.</p> <p>Caitlin: Lindsay said that she likes songs that have a lot of harmony. I don't know what the technical term for this is, but when you're just belting.</p> <p>Sam: Sing-along-able!</p>	<p>Lindsay: Tengo memorias de cada <u>etapa de la vida</u> con esta música sonando <u>en el fondo</u> – durante el baile en línea del quinto grado que hacíamos en la escuela primaria, o manejando por el país con mi mamá durante la universidad, o trabajando con ustedes, o solamente limpiando mi casa ahora. ¿Tienen alguna memoria con la música de The Chicks que <u>se les ocurre</u> y que quieren compartir?</p> <p>Caitlin: Crecí en una región en el sur de los Estados Unidos donde este tipo de música es muy común. <u>Me suena mucho a mi hogar</u>, y siempre me <u>trae de vuelta</u>.</p> <p>Sam: Siempre me <u>trae de vuelta</u> a los viajes en auto con mí familia — yo, mi mamá y mi hermana, cantando <u>a todo pulmón</u>. Sus canciones son tan “sing-along-able,” muy apropiadas para cantarlas en conjunto. Puedo pensar en como cinco canciones que se me vienen a la mente que son tan buenas cuando suenan. Quieres <u>cantar a todo pulmón</u> y en grupo.</p> <p>Caitlin: Lindsay dijo que le gustan las canciones que tienen muchas armonías. No sé cómo es el término técnico para esto, pero cuando estás <u>cantando a toda voz</u>.</p> <p>Sam: ¡Es que sus canciones son muy sing-along-able!</p>

Vocabulary // Vocabulario

1. **in the background** - en el fondo
2. **to come to mind** - ocurrirse a alguien (se me ocurre, se te ocurre, se le ocurre)
3. **It sounds like home to me.** - Me suena a mi hogar.
4. **It brings me back.** - me trae de vuelta.
5. **to belt it** - cantar a todo pulmón, cantar a toda voz

3.4 - The Chicks + The Politics of Contemporary Country Music //
The Chicks y la política de la música country contemporánea

English

Lindsay: The Chicks, who sing the song, are a very politically engaged band. And as I understand, they're a pretty left-leaning group for the environment of country music. I know they had a very big issue around the time that the Iraq war started with their popularity in the country music scene. And they also changed their name, I think, in 2020, from The Dixie Chicks to The Chicks. Do you two know enough about that to explain what happened, either or both of those things?

Caitlin: I want to say around 2002 or 2003, at the time of the Iraq invasion, then-President Bush could not articulate exactly why we were invading Iraq, as no weapons of mass destruction were found. There was no evidence of weapons of mass destruction. There were no weapons of mass destruction. I believe at that time The Chicks' lead singer called him an idiot in a press interview– I believe. And as a result, many fans were extremely upset that the singer had voiced her opinion.

I remember seeing on TV people buying CDs, only to throw them on the ground and stomp on them. A group of people got a lot of The Chicks physical albums together in the street and drove a truck over them– back and forth, back and forth. And The Chicks stopped touring and stopped doing public interviews for a long time because I think they received a lot of threats of violence. They released a song, “Not Ready to Make Nice,” in which they explained, you know: “We are not apologetic about what we said. Our only remorse is how you're taking it.”

Español

Lindsay: The Chicks, que cantan la canción, son una banda muy comprometida políticamente. Y según tengo entendido, son un grupo muy de la izquierda para el ambiente de la música country. Sé que tenían un gran problema en la época en que comenzó la guerra de Irak con su popularidad en el ambiente de la música country. Y también cambiaron el nombre, yo pienso, en el 2020, de The Dixie Chicks a The Chicks. ¿Saben ustedes dos lo suficiente sobre eso como para explicar qué pasó con cualquiera de las dos cosas o ambas?

Caitlin: Quiero decir que alrededor del 2002 o 2003, en el momento de la invasión a Irak, el presidente Bush de ese entonces no pudo articular exactamente por qué nosotros invadíamos Irak, ya que no fueron encontradas armas de destrucción masiva. No había evidencia de armas de destrucción masiva. No hubo armas de destrucción masiva. Creo que en aquel tiempo la cantante principal de The Chicks lo llamó un idiota en una entrevista de prensa – eso creo. Y como resultado, muchos fans estuvieron extremadamente molestos porque la cantante había expresado su opinión.

Recuerdo haber visto en la televisión que la gente estaba comprando CDs, solamente para tirarlos al suelo y pisotearlos. Un grupo de personas reunió muchos álbumes de The Chicks para juntarlos en la calle y le pasaron un camión por encima una y otra vez, hacia adelante y atrás. The Chicks pararon su gira y no dieron más entrevistas por un largo periodo porque creo que recibieron muchas amenazas de violencia. Ellas lanzaron una canción: “Not Ready to Make Nice” [No estamos listas para hacer las paces] en donde ellas explicaron, tu sabes: “No nos

Sam: That's exactly what I remember. I don't know why they changed their name.

Caitlin: I think it was a decision they made in the wake of the Black Lives Matter protests and the movements in 2020. A lot of terms like “Antebellum” or “Dixie” or “Dixieland” had previously been associated with the Confederate-era Southern United States– that, for folks that are new to American history, seceded in the mid 1800s in an attempt to keep intact slavery in the United States, which was extremely important to the economy and political structure of the South of the United States, a big agrarian economy. So, a lot of times those phrases: “Dixie,” “Antebellum,” are used to romanticize this period, when in reality, these are some of the darkest points in U.S. history. Several bands — I believe Lady Antebellum, as another example — removed these words that could be evocative of slavery or evocative of racial inequality from their names.

The Chicks did it with speed and grace. I believe they said something along the lines of, you know: “This word can be hurtful for people, and we don't want to be associated with that, so now we're The Chicks,” and quickly rebranded their music. Whereas I think other musical groups spent a long time, or did things in a deliberate way in order to virtue-signal or pat themselves on the back and congratulate themselves for being so forward-looking, when all they had to do was change their name. And it felt a little self-congratulatory. I think the way that The Chicks did it was focused on the act in a really helpful way.

disculpamos por lo que dijimos. Nuestro único remordimiento es cómo ustedes lo están tomando.”

Sam: Eso es exactamente lo que recuerdo. No sé por qué ellas cambiaron su nombre.

Caitlin: Creo que fue una decisión que tomaron después de las protestas de Black Lives Matter y los movimientos en el 2020. Muchos términos como: “Antebellum” o “Dixie” o “Dixieland” [La tierra de Dixie] habían estado previamente asociados con la Era de los Estados Confederados de America en el Sur de los Estados Unidos. Para las personas que son nuevas a la historia de los Estados Unidos, Los Estados Confederados se separaron a mediados del siglo XIX en un intento de mantener intacta la esclavitud en los Estados Unidos, la cual fue extremadamente importante para la economía y la estructura política en el Sur de los Estados Unidos, una gran economía agraria. Entonces, muchas veces esas frases: “Dixie,” “Antebellum,” fueron usadas para romantizar ese periodo, cuando en realidad, estos son algunos de los puntos más oscuros de la historia de los Estados Unidos. Varias bandas, creo que Lady Antebellum, como otro ejemplo, removieron de sus nombres estas palabras que podrían evocar la esclavitud o evocar la desigualdad racial.

The Chicks lo hicieron con rapidez y gracia. Creo que ellas dijeron algo como, ya sabes: “Esta palabra puede ser hiriente para la gente y no queremos que se nos asocie con esto, entonces ahora somos “The Chicks” [las Chicas], y rápidamente cambiaron el nombre en toda su música. Mientras, pienso que otros grupos musicales demoraron mucho tiempo o hicieron cosas de manera deliberada, para señalar virtudes o darse palmaditas en la espalda y felicitarse por ser tan progresistas. Cuando lo único que debieron hacer era cambiar su nombre. Y se sintió un poco autocomplaciente. Creo que la forma en que lo hicieron The Chicks se centró en el acto de una manera realmente valiosa.

Vocabulary // Vocabulario

1. **politically engaged** - comprometido/a políticamente
2. **weapons of mass destruction** - armas de destrucción masiva
3. **to make nice** - hacer las paces
4. **Our only remorse is how you're taking it.** - Nuestro único remordimiento es cómo ustedes lo están tomando
5. **In the wake of** - detrás de
6. **Confederate-era Southern United States** - El Sur de los Estados Unidos durante la era de los Estados Federados
7. **to secede** - separarse (de un país, una nación, una unión)
8. **to virtue-signal** - señalar virtudes
9. **to pat oneself on the back** - darse palmaditas en la espalda
10. **forward-looking** - progresista, con una visión a futuro

Reflection Prompts // Preguntas de reflexión:

V1 T3 - Reflection Prompts - Preguntas de reflexión	
English	Español
<p><i>-Working Girls-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe a place you worked when you were young. What were you like? How have you grown? ● Have you ever worked somewhere where you could “be your whole self at work?” Where was it, and what made you feel that way? ● Are workplace boundaries important? Should we “be our whole selves” at work? Why or why not? <p><i>-Taking Care and Being Cared For-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What are some examples of what taking care and being cared for look like in your life? (At home? At work? In other contexts?) ● Why is care important? <p><i>-“Music That Sounds Like Home, “Belting It”-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Can you think of a song that you like where the singer “belts it”? ● Can you think of a song, musical artist, or style of music that “sounds like home” to you? What memories do you have with that playing in the background? 	<p><i>-Chicas trabajadoras-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe un lugar donde trabajaste cuando eras joven. ¿Cómo eras? ¿Cómo has crecido? ● ¿Alguna vez has trabajado en algún lugar donde sentías que podías ser original y auténtico al 100%? ¿Qué será lo que te hacía sentirte así? ● ¿Son importantes los límites (“boundaries”) en el trabajo? ¿Debemos ser 100% nosotros mismos en el trabajo? ¿Por qué o por qué no? <p><i>-Cuidar y ser cuidado/a-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ¿Cuáles son algunos ejemplos de cuidar y ser cuidado en tu vida? (en casa, en el trabajo, en otros contextos) ● ¿Por qué es importante el cuidado? <p><i>-“Música que suena como el hogar, “cantar a todo pulmón”-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ¿Puedes pensar en una canción en que la canta el/la cantante a todo pulmón? ● ¿Puedes pensar en una canción, un artista musical, o un estilo de música que suena para ti como el hogar? ¿Qué memorias te recuerda esa música?

-The Politics of Contemporary Country Music-

- Is there a type of music that feels like “country music” (music popular in rural areas) in your home culture?
- Can you think of a musical artist who you admire for their politics? In what ways is that artist political, and what do you admire?
- Broadly speaking, the country music scene in the United States has tended historically to be politically conservative/right leaning/Republican. Can you think of other genres of music that tend to align with a particular cultural/political viewpoint or ideology?
- Do you think all music and art are political? Why or why not?


-El ambiente político de la música Country contemporánea-

- ¿Existe algún tipo de música que te haga sentir como la “música country” (música popular en las zonas rurales) en tu cultura natal?
- ¿Puedes pensar en un artista musical que admires por sus opiniones y acciones políticas? ¿De qué maneras participa este artista en la vida política y qué es lo que tú admiras?
- A grandes rasgos la escena de la música country en los Estados Unidos históricamente ha tendido a ser políticamente conservadora (de derecho, o Republicana). ¿Te vienen a la mente otros géneros de música que tienden a alinearse con una cultura particular o un punto de vista político o ideológico?
- ¿Crees que toda la música y el arte son políticos? ¿Por qué o por qué no?



SAA - Volume 1, Track 4: “El cigarrillo” - Ana Gabriel

con Ramona (Rany) Reyes y Lindsay Szper

- ¿A quién escuchamos? // Who are we listening to?-

	Español	English
	Sobre la Narradora	About the Narrator
	<p>Ramona (Rany) Reyes es dominicana, de un campo de Santiago llamado Canca la Piedra. En su país de origen estudió enfermería y en los Estados Unidos ha trabajado de todo: peluquería, limpieza, cuidados, preparación de comidas y más. Cocina muy rico y entre sus hobbies están la pintura y la actuación. Tiene cuatro hijos y vive en Queens. Dice Rany que trata siempre de ser feliz, como para ella ser feliz es la misión de cada ser humano.</p>	<p>Ramona (Rany) Reyes is Dominican, from an area of the countryside called Canca la Piedra near Santiago. She studied nursing in her home country, and in the United States she has done many different kinds of work: hairdressing, cleaning, care work, and food prep among other things. She cooks wonderfully, and her hobbies include painting and acting. She has four children and lives in Queens. Rany says she always tries to be happy, as she believes being happy is the mission of every human being.</p>

Entrevista 2 - “El Cigarrillo” con Rany Reyes y Lindsay Szper (~11 min)

  - [Haz clic aquí](#) para escuchar una conversación entre Rany y Lindsay (~11 min) sobre la canción “El Cigarrillo,” interpretada por Ana Gabriel

-Letra // Lyrics-

Español	English
<p>El cigarillo <i>Interpretada por Ana Gabriel (Wikipedia)</i> <i>Letra basada en un poema de Tito Fernández (Wikipedia)</i></p> <p>Anoche estuve conversando con mi cigarrillo. Me sentí cansada, cansada, aburrida y tan vacía Que a veces hasta pienso que ni siquiera existo. Que a veces hasta pienso que ni siquiera existo.</p> <p>Lo encendí muy lentamente, le di una fumada. Y al mirar el humo, que en el espacio se volatizaba recordé tantas cosas que creí olvidadas. Se las conté todas mientras que lo fumaba.</p> <p>Le conversé de ti, y de mis añoranzas. Le conté de tus besos y de mis esperanzas. Le conté de tu olvido, de mis lágrimas tantas, de aquello que vivimos, y que hoy se ha vuelto nada.</p> <p>Le dije que es posible que a mi nadie me quiera porque he intentado vivir a mi manera, porque me he negado a pagar el tributo de bajeza y pecado Que hoy nos exige el mundo.</p> <p>Que a lo mejor estoy acabada, o que la vida me ha vencido. Que he sufrido y he llorado, que he luchado y he reído. ¿Y qué es lo que he ganado por ser así tan comprensiva? Solo vivir desesperada en un mundo tan vacío. Anoche estuve conversando con mi cigarrillo.</p>	<p>The Cigarette Interpreted by Ana Gabriel (Wikipedia) <i>Lyrics based on a poem by Tito Fernández (Wikipedia)</i></p> <p>Last night I was talking with my cigarette. I felt tired, tired, bored and so empty. Sometimes I think I don't even exist. Sometimes I think I don't even exist.</p> <p>I lit it very slowly, I took a puff. And watching the smoke disappear into the air, I remembered so many things I thought I'd forgotten. I told them all to my cigarette as I smoked it.</p> <p>I told my cigarette about you, about my nostalgia and longing. I told it about your kisses, and all my hopes. I told it about how you forgot me, about my many tears, about everything we lived through together, which is nothing now.</p> <p>I said maybe it's possible that no one loves me because I've tried to live in my own way. Because I've refused to pay the tribute, to stoop to the nastiness and sin that today's world demands.</p> <p>Maybe I'm worn out, or life has done me in. I've suffered and I've cried, I've fought and I've laughed. And what have I gained by being so understanding? Just a hopeless life, in a world that's so empty. Last night I was talking with my cigarette,</p>

Y al terminarlo, pensando me quedé entre suspiros,
que en este verso triste, que es el mundo en que vivo
solo él me va quedando como único amigo

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and when I finished it, I stood there thinking, between breaths,
that in this sad song that is the world we live in,
my cigarette is fast becoming my only friend.

-Interpretaciones // Interpretations-

Año Year	Artista Artist	Vidéo Video	Audio Audio	Subtítulos Subtitles
1975	Tito Fernández	 <p>▶ Tito Fernández - El cigarrillo (1975)</p>	ES	ES
1997	Ana Gabriel	 <p>▶ Ana Gabriel El Cigarrillo Letra</p>	ES	ES

-Excerpts // Excerptos-

4.1 - Memorias con “El Cigarrillo” // Memories with “El Cigarrillo”

Español	English
<p>Lindsay: ¿Qué significa esta canción para ti? ¿Qué memorias tienes con esta canción y qué es lo que te motiva a compartir esta canción en particular?</p> <p>Rany: Esta canción yo pienso que cuando la tiraron fue escrita para mí. En ese tiempo estaba <u>pasando una situación</u> con mi ex-esposo, el padre de mis hijos. Yo nunca había fumado y esa vez que le puse oído– Caramba, es que como sí es para mí. Tanto fue la motivación de esa canción que compré una caja de cigarrillos y entre <u>sollozo</u>, entre <u>rabia</u>, yo también fumé ese cigarrillo. Y no uno, no me fumé muchos. Gracias a Dios que eso fue una vez nada más. Porque yo sé que eso tampoco es saludable. Era <u>un desahogo</u> para mí. Y la canción era, como yo te digo, como que la escribieron para mí porque fue una etapa de mi vida muy muy fuerte, muy triste. Pero en la vida Dios no nos da carga, como dice, que uno no puede llevar. Gracias a Dios, al final nos divorciamos y ahora somos muy buenos amigos. Tenemos <u>una familia en común</u>.</p>	<p>Lindsay: What does this song mean to you? What memories does it bring up, and why did you choose to share this song in particular?</p> <p>Rany: I feel like when this song came out, it had been written for me. Back then, I was <u>going through a difficult time</u> with my ex-husband, the father of my children. I’d never even smoked, but the moment I heard this song, I thought, “Wow, it’s like it was made for me.” The song was so convincing that I bought a pack of cigarettes and in between my <u>sobbing</u>, in between my <u>rage</u>, I smoked. Not just one cigarette either – I smoked a lot of them. Thank God it was only the one time, and never again. I know it’s not healthy, but it provided me with such <u>relief</u>. And like I told you, I felt like the song had been written just for me because it was a time in my life that was very difficult and extremely sad. But they say God never gives you more than you can carry. Thank God, we finally divorced and are now good friends. We have <u>a shared family</u>.</p>

Vocabulario // Vocabulary

1. **pasar una situación difícil** - to go through something difficult, to go through a difficult time
2. **el sollozo** - sobbing
3. **la rabia** - rage
4. **un desahogo** - a relief (literally: an “un-drowning” or “un-suffocating”)
5. **una familia en común** - a shared family

4.2 - ¿Quién es Ana Gabriel? // Who is Ana Gabriel?

Español	English
<p>Lindsay: ¿Puedes hablarnos de Ana Gabriel en general? ¿Quién es ella y qué es lo que respetas o lo que admiras de ella?</p> <p>Rany: <u>Pues</u>, primero la conocí como artista. Yo fui una sola vez a su concierto. Es una persona que te penetra lo que ella canta. Por ejemplo, esa noche también cantó mi canción favorita y es como que ella <u>te transmite a ti</u> lo que ella está cantando, porque <u>ya se olvida de</u> Ana Gabriel, sino que yo estoy en ese personaje y yo le quiero hacer sentir a mi público lo que yo estoy cantando. ¿Tú ves? Entonces eso me encantó de Ana Gabriel, <u>además</u> de que tengo entendido que es un ser humano maravilloso, que cuidó mucho a sus padres y que fue una buena hija, y para mí es un <u>ídolo</u>.</p>	<p>Lindsay: Can you tell us about Ana Gabriel? Who is she, and what do you most respect or admire about her?</p> <p>Rany: <u>Well</u>, I knew her first as an artist. I went to one of her concerts once. When she sings, it's like she's singing straight into you. For example, that night she sang my favorite song, and it was like — <u>She makes you feel</u> exactly what she's singing, because <u>she forgets about</u> Ana Gabriel, it's like: I'm in that character, and want to make my audience feel what I'm singing. You see? I love that about Ana Gabriel. <u>Besides</u>, I've also heard she's an amazing human being, that she took good care of her parents and was a great daughter, and for me she's an <u>idol</u>.</p>

Vocabulario // Vocabulary

1. **pues** - well
2. **te transmite a ti** - she communicates to you, she transmits to you, she makes you feel
3. **ya se olvida de** - she forgets about
4. **ademas** - besides, additionally, also
5. **un ídolo** - an idol

4.3 - Algunos Grandes Artistas // Some Great Artists

Español	English
<p>Rany: Ana Gabriel tiene muchas canciones <u>hermosísimas</u>, no sólo esa. Y hay muchos, muchos en México. México tiene muchos artistas talentosos como Juan Gabriel, como Vicente Fernández, Alejandro, muchísimo. También, <u>si quieres que te diga algo</u>, en España tienen también muchísimos. Mira– Julio Iglesias, es <u>una leyenda</u>, Rocío Dúrcal, Rocío Jurado, muchos, muchos artista que tienen música hermosa. Eso para hablar de algunos. De mi país, Romeo Santos. Allá hay mucho– También Johnny Ventura, que <u>lamentablemente</u> ya no está con nosotros, pero <u>su memoria</u> vive.</p>	<p>Rany: Ana Gabriel has a lot of <u>beautiful</u> songs, not just this one. And there are so many other talented artists in Mexico– like Juan Gabriel, like Vicente Fernandez, Alejandro, so many. And I’ll tell you something, there are also a lot in Spain. Look– Julio Iglesias is a <u>legend</u>, Rocío Durcal, Rocío Jurado, many, many artists who have made beautiful music. That’s only some of them. Romeo Santos, from my own country. There are many there– also Johnny Ventura, who is sadly no longer with us, but his memory lives on.</p>

Vocabulario // Vocabulary

1. **hermosísima** - very beautiful
2. **si quieres que te diga algo** - I’ll tell you something
3. **una leyenda** - a legend
4. **lamentablemente** - sadly
5. **su memoria** - his/her/their memory

4.4 - Música que motiva // Music as a Motivator

Español	English
<p>Rany: Para mí la música es algo muy, muy importante. En mi caso es <u>lo máximo</u>. A veces yo estoy, tú sabes, como <u>medio triste</u> porque todos tenemos momentos buenos y malos, pero doy una canción, en mi caso como dominicana, me encanta el merengue, la bachata. Y le digo, cuando oigo una tambora, <u>olvídate</u>. Aunque yo esté medio triste, caramba– se me sueltan los pies. Aunque no soy bailarina ni bailo bien tampoco, pero me gusta. Yo pienso que <u>así mismo</u>, como a mí me pasa, le pasa a mucha gente– que la música es algo que lo motiva. Estás enfermo, oyes una música, te alegra, se te olvida el dolor. Sirve para todo la música, para enamorarnos. Buenísimo la música, <u>se la recomiendo</u> para todos los dolores.</p>	<p>Rany: For me, music is something that’s very, very important. For me, it’s <u>the greatest</u> thing. You know, at times I can be <u>a bit sad</u>, because we all have good times and bad times. But give me a song, a Dominican song – I love merengue, bachata. I’ll tell you, when I hear the beat of a tambora, <u>forget it</u>. I might be a bit sad, but wow– my feet loosen right up. I might not be a ballerina, nor do I dance well, but I like to dance. I think that, <u>just like that</u>, what happens to me happens to many people– that music is something that motivates them. You get sick, you hear music, you perk up and forget your pain. Music works for everything, for falling in love. Music is amazing. <u>I recommend it</u> for all problems.</p>

Vocabulario // Vocabulary

1. **lo máximo** - the greatest, the best
2. **medio triste** - a bit sad
3. **olvídate** - forget it
6. **así mismo** - just like that
7. **Se lo/la recomiendo.** - I recommend it.

V1 T4 - Preguntas de reflexión // Reflection Prompts

Español

-Memorias/recuerdos con El cigarrillo-

- ¿Tienes un ejemplo de una canción que cuando la escuchaste por primera vez, sentiste que fue escrita especialmente para ti?
- ¿Que te ayuda a superar los momentos/tiempos difíciles?
- ¿Crees que es posible ser amigo de un/una ex?

-¿Quién es Ana Gabriel?-

- ¿Puedes hablarnos de una concierto o presentación en vivo que has disfrutado?
- ¿Cuál piensas que es el valor de una presentación en vivo en contraposición con una grabada?
- ¿Puedes identificar a alguien que es un ídolo para ti? (Este puede ser una figura cultural, personaje famoso, o solamente alguien en tu vida.)

-Algunos grandes artistas-

- ¿Has escuchado de algunos de los artistas que Rany mencionó? ¿Qué piensas de su música?
- ¿Quién es un músico importante, conocido y bastante considerado en tu cultura?
- ¿Que piensas que hace que un artista, músico o no, sea un gran artista?

-Música como un motivador-

- ¿Te consideras un buen bailarín? ¿Te divierte bailar?
- ¿Estás de acuerdo con Rany que “La música sirve para todo?” ¿Por qué o por qué no?
- ¿Cómo utilizas la música para motivarte de diferentes formas/maneras?

-Memories with El Cigarrillo-

- Can you think of a song that, when you heard it for the first time, you felt like it was written specifically for you?
- What helps you get through hard times?
- Do you think it's possible to be friends with an ex?

-Who is Ana Gabriel?-

- Can you tell about a concert or live performance that you've enjoyed?
- What do you think is the value of live performance as opposed to recordings?
- Can you identify someone who is an idol for you? (This can be a cultural figure, famous person, or just someone in your life.)

-Some Great Artists-

- Have you heard of any of the artists Rany mentions? What do you think of their music?
- Who is an important, well-known, and well-regarded musician in your culture?
- What do you think makes an artist, musical or otherwise, a great artist?



-Music as a Motivator-

- Do you consider yourself a good dancer? Do you enjoy dancing?
- Do you agree with Rany that “music works for everything?” Why or why not?
- How do you use music to motivate you in different ways?



SAA - Volume 1, Track 5: “Será que no me amas (No culpes a la noche)” - Luis Miguel

With Lindsay Szper and Estefanía Fernández-Zevallos

Who are we listening to? // ¿A quién escuchamos?

	<p>Español</p>	<p>English</p>
	<p>Sobre la narradora</p>	<p>About the Narrator</p>
	<p>Estefanía Fernández-Zevallos creció en Trujillo, Perú, y actualmente vive allí. Ella es una profesional de la comunicación y, además, es madre. Estefanía se ha sentido atraída por las palabras y los idiomas a lo largo de toda su vida. Ella habla español nativo e inglés fluido. Ha estudiado francés, alemán e italiano en el pasado. Así mismo, tiene formación y experiencia profesional en periodismo, traducción e interpretación, y enseñanza de inglés para personas de todas las edades.</p>	<p>Estefanía Fernández-Zevallos grew up in Trujillo, Peru, and she lives there currently. She’s a communications professional and a mom. Estefanía has been drawn to words and languages her whole life. She speaks Spanish natively and English fluently, and she has studied French, German, and Italian in the past. She has training and professional experience in journalism, translation/interpreting, and teaching English to people of all ages.</p>

Entrevista 4 - “Será que no me amas (No culpes a la noche)” con Estefanía Fernández-Zevallos y Lindsay Szper (18 min)

  - [Haz clic aquí](#) para escuchar una conversación entre Estefanía y Lindsay (~18 min) sobre las canciones “Será que no me amas (no culpes a la noche),” interpretada por Luis Miguel y “Blame it on the Boogie,” interpretada por The Jackson 5

Letra // Lyrics - “Será que no me amas (No culpes a la noche)” - Luis Miguel

Español	English
<p>No sé qué está pasando. Que todo está al revés. Que tú ya no me besas tal como ayer.</p>	<p>I don't know what's happening. Everything is upside down. You don't kiss me anymore like you used to.</p>
<p>Que anoche en la playa No me dejaste amarte. Algo entre nosotros No va bien.</p>	<p>Last night at the beach You didn't let me love you. Something between us Isn't going well.</p>
<p>No culpes a la noche. No culpes a la playa. No culpes a la lluvia. Será que no me amas.</p>	<p>Don't blame the night. Don't blame the beach. Don't blame the rain. It must be that you don't love me.</p>
<p>No busques más disculpas. No siento tus caricias. Ya no eres la misma Que yo amé.</p>	<p>Don't look for more excuses. I don't feel your caresses. You're not the same person I loved before.</p>
<p>Te veo tan distante. Te siento tan distinta. Pues hay dentro de ti Otra mujer.</p>	<p>You seem so distant Things feel so different There's whole other woman Inside of you.</p>
<p>No culpes a la noche. No culpes a la playa. No culpes a la lluvia. Será que no me amas.</p>	<p>Don't blame the night. Don't blame the beach. Don't blame the rain. It must be that you don't love me.</p>

Ya no sé, ya no sé, ya no sé
qué va a pasar.

Ya no sé, ya no sé, ya no sé
Qué voy a hacer
No sé qué está pasando.
Que todo está al revés.
Pero ya no lucho

Como ves
Ayer no te importaba
Amar bajo la lluvia.
Hoy no te divierte
Ya lo sé.

- letras.com

I don't know, I don't know, I don't know anymore
What's going to happen

I don't know, I don't know, I don't know anymore
what I'm going to do.
I don't know what's happening.
Everything is upside down.
But I don't fight anymore

As you see
Yesterday you didn't mind
Loving under the rain.
Today it isn't fun for you
I know it already.

- Lyrics adapted from LyricsTranslated.com

Letra // Lyrics - "Blame It on the Boogie" - Written by Mick Jackson, Performed by The Jackson 5

English	Español
<p>"Blame It On The Boogie" <i>Interpreted by The Jacksons</i> <i>Written by Mick Jackson</i></p> <p>My baby's always dancin' and it wouldn't be a bad thing, but I don't get no lovin' and that's no lie. We spent the night in Frisco at every kinda disco. From that night I kissed our love goodbye</p> <p>Don't blame it on the sunshine. Don't blame it on the moonlight. Don't blame it on the good times. Blame it on the boogie.</p> <p>Don't blame it on the sunshine. Don't blame it on the moonlight. Don't blame it on the good times. Blame it on the boogie.</p> <p>That nasty boogie bugs me, but somehow how it has drugged me. Spellbound rhythm gets me on my feet. I've changed my life completely, I've seen the lightning leave me. And my baby just can't take her eyes off me.</p> <p>Don't blame it on the sunshine.</p>	<p>"Culpa el baile" <i>Interpretada por Los Jacksons</i> <i>Escrita por Mick Jackson</i></p> <p>Mi chica siempre está bailando. Eso no es malo pero yo no consigo su amor y eso no es mentira. Pasamos la noche en Frisco en todo tipo de disco. Aquella noche le dije adiós a nuestro amor.</p> <p>No culpes al sol. No culpes a la luna. No culpes a los buenos momentos. Culpa el baile (boogie).</p> <p>No culpes al sol. No culpes a la luna. No culpes a los buenos momentos. Culpa el baile (boogie).</p> <p>Ese boogie desagradable me molesta pero de alguna manera me droga con el ritmo que me llega hasta los pies. He cambiado mi vida por completo. He visto el relámpago que se me sale. Y mi bebé no puede dejar de mirarme.</p>

Don't blame it on the moonlight.
Don't blame it on the good times.
Blame it on the boogie.

I just can't, I just can't
I just can't control my feet.
I just can't, I just can't,
I just can't control my feet.

Don't blame it on the sunshine.
Don't blame it on the moonlight.
Don't on the good times.
Blame it on the boogie.

This magic music grooves me, that dirty rhythm fools me
The devil's gotten to me through this dance.
I'm full of funky fever, a fire burns inside me.
Boogie's got me in a super trance.

Don't blame it on the sunshine.
Don't blame it on the moonlight.
Don't blame it on the good times.
Blame it on the boogie.

- Lyrics adapted from A-Zlyrics.com

No culpes al sol.
No culpes a la luna.
No culpes a los buenos momentos.
Culpa el baile (boogie).

No puedo, no puedo,
No puedo controlar mis pies.
No puedo, no puedo,
No puedo controlar mis pies.

No culpes al sol.
No culpes a la luna.
No culpes a los buenos momentos.
Culpa el baile (boogie).

Esta magia música, sucio ritmo que me mueve.
El diablo me ha llegado a través de esta danza.
Estoy lleno de fiebre funky, Es un fuego que quema dentro.
Boogie me tiene a mí en un súper trance.

No culpes al sol.
No culpes a la luna.
No culpes a los buenos momentos.
Culpa el baile (boogie).

- Traducción adaptada de musica.com

-Interpretaciones // Interpretations-

Año Year	Artista Artist	Vidéo Vidéo	Audio Audio	Subtítulos Subtitles
1990	Luis Miguel	<p>Sera que no me amas / No culpes a la noche</p>  <p>Haz clic aquí para oír esta versión en Youtube.</p>	ES	–
1978	Mick Jackson (songwriter)	<p>Blame it on the Boogie</p>  <p>Click here to hear this version on Youtube.</p>		
1978	The Jackson 5 (including Michael Jackson)	<p>Blame it on the Boogie</p>  <p>Click here to hear this version on Youtube.</p>	EN	EN

-Excerpts // Excerptos-

5.1 - Luis Miguel + Michael Jackson	
Español	Inglés
<p>Estefanía: Mi papá escucha, o escuchaba, mucho a Luis Miguel. Y allí fue que empecé a escucharlo también por primera vez. Yo no sabía que esta canción de Luis Miguel en realidad– la versión original era de Michael Jackson. Entonces para mí fue muy <u>sorprendente</u>. Tal vez estoy <u>pecando de ignorarlo todo</u> y no es un gran <u>descubrimiento</u> pero para mí sí lo fue. Y he escuchado a un par de personas que me dijeron, “¡No sabía! ¿De verdad, Michael Jackson? No lo puedo creer.”</p> <p>Leí en un artículo que el manager de Luis Miguel quiso hacer posible un concierto en el que estuvieran Luis Miguel y Michael Jackson y no se pudo. Pero la gente los comparaba mucho. Los dos eran igual de famosos, igual de reconocidos como íconos mundiales. Son dos fenómenos que pueden resultar tan <u>semejantes</u> y esta misma canción los acerca y los distancia al mismo tiempo.</p>	<p>Estefanía: My father used to listen to Luis Miguel a lot, he still does. And that was where I started listening to him as well for the first time. I didn’t know that this song by Luis Miguel was really– the original version was by Michael Jackson. So for me, that was amazing. Maybe I’m too ignorant of things and it’s no great discovery, but for me it was. And I’ve heard a couple people who’ve told me, “I didn’t know! Really, Michael Jackson? I can’t believe it.”</p> <p>I read in an article that Luis Miguel’s manager wanted to make it possible for Luis Miguel and Michael Jackson to be in a concert together, but it wasn’t possible. But people used to compare them a lot. They both were equally famous, equally recognizable as global icons. Each of them is a phenomenon, and they can seem really similar. This song brings them together and sets them apart at the same time.</p>

Vocabulary // Vocabulario

1. **sorprendente** - Amazing
2. **pecando de** - be too (something)
3. **ignorarlo todo** - to be ignorant of everything
4. **el descubrimiento** - discovery
5. **resultar + adjective (i.e. resultar tan semejantes)** - to seem _____ (seem really similar)

5.2 - Fame, Icons, + Controversy // La Fama, los iconos y la controversia

Español	English
<p>Estefanía: Me parece que Luis Miguel sí tiene raíces mexicanas, pero no es necesariamente de México. Pero en México se le conoce como el Sol de México. Es un personaje, un ícono, muy significativo para la cultura mexicana, o latinoamericana, creo que por su voz. Su voz, y sus composiciones, porque es un gran <u>compositor</u>. Es muy importante para nuestras familias, y para nosotros también, como latinos. Es un ícono.</p> <p>Lindsay: Yo no conozco súper bien la situación de Michael Jackson. A mi me parece que había quizás algunos <u>escándalos</u> muy oscuros. Luis Miguel, a pesar de ser ícono, <u>¿siguió siendo un buen modelo a seguir?</u></p> <p>Estefanía: Creo que también lo acompañaba toda esta <u>polémica</u>– por el uso y abuso de drogas, todo lo que trae la fama, su relación con mujeres, muchos casos de violencia. Pero a pesar de ello creo que para mucha gente es– no sé si no es importante o simplemente, pues, se concentran más en su próximo musical, o como son ellos como artistas. Pienso que es bueno hablar de eso <u>hasta cierto punto</u>. Creo que es irónico que los acompañan estas historias tan polémicas y <u>siguen siendo</u> igual de famosos. O tal vez esa misma polémica los hace así de famosos, no sé.</p>	<p>Estefanía: I think Luis Miguel has Mexican roots, even if he's not necessarily from Mexico. But in Mexico he's known as "el Sol de México" – the Sun of Mexico. He's a celebrity, an icon, who is very significant in Mexican culture, or Latin American culture. I think it's because of his voice. His voice, and his songs, because he's an amazing <u>songwriter</u>. He's very important to our families, and to us as well, as Latinos. He's an icon.</p> <p>Lindsay: I don't really know Michael Jackson's situation well. I think there were some pretty dark <u>scandals</u>. Is Luis Miguel, despite being an icon, <u>still a good role model to follow?</u></p> <p>Estefanía: I think that he has also been accompanied by all of that <u>controversy</u> – by drug use and abuse, everything that comes with fame, his relationship with women, lots of cases of violence. But despite that I think for a lot of people– I don't know if it's not important or if it's just that they concentrate more on the music, or who they are as artists. I think it's good to talk about it to a certain extent. I think it's ironic that they have such controversial histories and <u>they're still</u> equally famous. Or maybe the controversy itself makes them so famous, I'm not sure.</p>

Vocabulary // Vocabulario

1. **un personaje** - celebrity, well known person, or personality
2. **siguen siendo** - they still are
3. **hasta cierto punto** - to a certain extent
4. **compositor** - songwriter
5. **polémica** - controversy

5.3 - Translation + Sense // La Traducción y el sentido

English	Español
<p>Lindsay: Para mí, como no tengo memorias con ninguna de las dos versiones, escuchando las dos canciones para mí se sienten iguales. Pero la letra, cuando la comparamos, es <u>distinta</u>.</p> <p>Estefanía: Cuando escuché la versión en inglés, sentí que estaba escuchando dos canciones completamente diferentes. Creo que la labor de la traducción hace este tipo de cosas ¿no? Llega a las personas de formas muy interesantes, muy divertidas. Creo que las dos canciones <u>se prestan al</u> baile, pero definitivamente porque es mi idioma siento más conexión con la versión en español. Entiendo lo que significa “No culpes a la noche.” Y creo que Luis Miguel y este tipo de <u>cantautores</u> me recuerdan o <u>me remiten</u> a mi familia, a momentos con la familia, porque de no ser por ellos no hubiera llegado a Luis Miguel, quizás no soy tan vieja. Cuando escuché la versión en inglés no me hacía mucho sentido a pesar de que yo ya hablaba inglés, y es porque creo que la versión en español tenía una <u>carga</u> cultural, familiar, emocional para mí. Cuando me hablas de la versión en inglés, no sé– sólo me provoca bailarla, me parece divertida, pero no estoy dentro del contexto.</p>	<p>Lindsay: For me, because I don’t have memories of either version of the song, listening to the two songs, they feel the same. But when you compare the lyrics, they’re <u>different</u>.</p> <p>Estefanía: When I heard the English version, I felt like I was listening to two completely different songs. I think the work of translation does this kind of thing, right? The translated material affects people differently, in fun and interesting ways. I think both songs <u>lend themselves</u> to dancing, but because it’s my language, I definitely feel more connection with the Spanish version. I know what “No culpes a la noche” means. And I think Luis Miguel, and this type of singer-songwriter, reminds me of my family, and sends me back to moments with family, because if it wasn’t for them I wouldn’t have known about Luis Miguel, since I’m not that old. When I heard the English version, it didn’t make much sense to me, despite the fact that I already spoke English, and it’s because I think the Spanish version has a cultural, familial, and emotional weight for me. When you talk to me about the English version, I don’t know– it only makes me want to dance, it seems fun, but I’m not immersed in that context.</p>

Vocabulary // Vocabulario

1. **distinta** - different, distinct
2. **se presta a** - it lends itself to
3. **el cantautor** - singer-songwriter
4. **me remite a** - It reminds me of, it sends me back to
5. **la carga** - weight, load

5.4 - Happy Music, Pop Music, and Folk Music //
La música alegre, la música pop, y el folclor

Lindsay: ¿Para qué sirve la música alegre? Y para ti ¿qué diferencia hay entre la música pop y la música popular en el sentido de “folk”?

Estefanía: Bueno, no soy especialista realmente, pero si me preguntas– ¿Para qué sirve la música alegre? Pues, yo diría que para poder compartirla ¿no? Si me hablas de la música folk, o la música popular, me remite a las costumbres de diferentes lugares de mi país– y no necesariamente son las mismas melodías. En lo que yo conozco de mi país, de mi cultura, la música popular me recuerda a muchas melodías, muchos tipos de canciones de diferentes partes. Sin embargo, si me hablas de la música pop, creo que es un género muy– no sé si decirlo global, unificado. Entonces allí estaría la diferencia para mí. En mi conocimiento, en lo que yo entiendo y sé, ambas transmiten alegría.

Lindsay: *What is the purpose of happy music? And for you, what are the differences between pop music and “popular music” in the sense of “folk music”?*

Estefanía: Well, I’m not really a specialist, but if you ask me– What is the purpose of happy music? I would say that it is for sharing. Isn't it? If you talk to me about “folk,” or popular music, that reminds me of the customs of different places in my country– and they aren't necessarily the same melodies. From what I know about my country, my culture, popular music reminds me of many melodies. However, if we’re talking about pop music, I think it’s a genre that's very– I don't know if I would call it global, or unified. So, that’s where the difference is for me. In my knowledge, from what I understand and know, both convey happiness.

Vocabulario // Vocabulary

1. **¿Para qué sirve...?** - What is it good for? What purpose does it serve?
2. **alegre** - happy
3. **la música pop** - pop music
4. **la música popular, la música folk** - popular music, folk music
5. **en lo que yo conozco** - from what I know, as far as I know

V1 T5 - Preguntas de reflexión // Reflection Prompts

Español

-Luis Miguel + Michael Jackson-

- ¿Qué tipo de música escucha o escuchaba tu familia?
- Estefanía llama a Luis Miguel “El Sol de México.” ¿Puedes pensar en otro artista que represente a una región?
- ¿Qué conocimiento puedes compartir, ya sea de Luis Miguel o Michael Jackson?
- ¿Qué similitudes o diferencias encuentras entre estos iconos musicales?

-Fama, iconos + controversia-

- En tu opinión, ¿qué características hacen a un artista convertirse en un icono?
- Quiénes dirías que son los “iconos mundiales” del momento presente, o de otros momentos que has vivido?
- ¿Qué controversias, si hay alguna, acompañan a los iconos con los que estás familiarizado? ¿Cómo estas personas y el público respondieron ante estas controversias?
- ¿Crees que es posible y correcto disfrutar y apreciar la música de un artista aunque haya sido enredado en un escándalo?

-Traducción + sentido -

- ¿Tienes memorias con alguna versión de esta canción?
- Para ti, ¿cuál versión de la canción te hace más sentido?
- ¿Qué factores crees que son importantes considerar cuando se traduce una canción?

English

-Luis Miguel + Michael Jackson-

- What kind of music does or did your family listen to?
- Estefanía calls Luis Miguel “El Sol de México,” The Sun of Mexico. Can you think of another artist who represents a region?
- What knowledge can you share about either Luis Miguel or Michael Jackson?
- What similarities and differences do you perceive between these two musical icons?

-Fame, Icons, + Controversy-

- In your opinion, what characteristics make an artist likely to become an icon?
- Who would you say are the “world icons” of our present moment, or of other moments you have lived through?
- What controversies, if any, accompany the icons you’re familiar with? How did these people and the public respond to those controversies?
- Do you think it’s possible and correct to still enjoy and appreciate the music of an artist who is mired in scandal?

-Translation + Sense-

- Do you have any memories with either version of this song?
- For you, does one or the other versions of this song make more sense?
- What factors do you think are important to consider when translating a song?

-Musica feliz, musica pop + musica popular-

- ¿Dirías tú que “Blame it on the Boogie” y “Será que no me amas” son canciones felices? ¿Por qué sí o porque no?
- ¿Puedes pensar en una canción alegre que te haga sentir feliz?
- ¿Cuál crees que es el propósito de la música alegre?
- ¿Cuál crees que es la diferencia entre música pop y música popular?
- ¿Prefieres música pop o música popular? ¿Cuáles crees que son las fortalezas y debilidades de cada uno de estos géneros?


-Happy Music, Pop Music, + Popular Music -

- Would you call “Blame it on the Boogie” and “Será que no me amas” happy songs? Why or why not?
- Can you think of an upbeat song that makes you feel happy?
- What do you think is the purpose of happy music?
- What do you think is the difference between pop music and folk or “popular” music?
- Do you prefer pop or popular/folk music? What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of each of these genres?

SAA - Volume 1, Track 6: “The Plant and the Seed” - Rose Thomas Bannister

with Lindsay Szper and Rose Thomas Bannister

Who are we listening to? // ¿A quién escuchamos?

	English	Español
	About the Narrator	Sobre la narradora
	<p>Rose Thomas Bannister is a musician, writer, and wine educator. She grew up in the Nebraskan Panhandle and now lives in Brooklyn. She’s currently working on a project called Modo di Bere, “the podcast about local drinks and local sayings.” Modo di Bere explores regionality and connection to place through language, wine, craft cocktails, and lively, multilingual conversation.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Mododibere.com // Rosethomasbannister.com </p>	<p>Rose Thomas Bannister es música, escritora y educadora en vinos. Ella creció en el noroeste de Nebraska y ahora vive en Brooklyn. Actualmente está trabajando en un proyecto llamado Modo di Bere, “el podcast sobre dichos y bebidas locales.” Modo di Bere explora los temas regionales y la conexión con la cultura y el lugar a través del lenguaje, el vino, los cócteles artesanales, y los diálogos vivaces y multilingües.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Mododibere.com // Rosethomasbannister.com </p>

Interview 6 - “The Plant and the Seed” with Rose Thomas Bannister and Lindsay Szper (15 min)



[Click here](#) to listen to Rose’s original song “The Plant and the Seed.”

[Click here](#) to listen to Rose and my 15-minute-long conversation about “The Plant and the Seed.”

-Letra // Lyrics-

English	Español
<p><u>The Plant and the Seed</u> <i>Written and performed by Rose Thomas Bannister</i></p> <p>I grew a pretty flower in a pot on the kitchen counter. It's a lilac, it's a lily, it's a rose. I take care of it every day and it grows and grows.</p> <p>Tree of sorrows You let me down. I opened the fruit you gave me, and I just went to town.</p> <p>Where the store windows were shining The city streets were intertwining, and the pallor I'd expected was nowhere to be found. Instead the bicycles were laughing at everyone around.</p> <p>And when my darling little child wakes me in the night I smell her sweet skin, I think of your yellow kitchen, and I sing that life is kind</p> <p>A lake of white angels did not speak to me,</p>	<p><u>La planta y la semilla</u> <i>Escrita e interpretada por Rose Thomas Bannister</i></p> <p>Yo plante una florecita En una maceta en la barra de la cocina. Es una lila, es un lirio, es una rosa. La cuida cada día y crece y crece.</p> <p>Árbol de penas Me decepcionaste. Abrí la fruta que me diste y simplemente la disfruté.</p> <p>Las ventanas de las tiendas brillaban. Las calles de la ciudad se entrelazaban. y la palidez que esperaba no se encontraba en ningún lado. En su lugar, las bicicletas reían de todos alrededor.</p> <p>Y cuándo mi querida hijita me despierta en la noche huelo su dulce piel, pienso en tu cocina amarilla y canto que la vida es amable.</p> <p>Un lago de ángeles blancos no me habló.</p>

and if they had they would have said your limitations are not embarrassing.

I could feel understanding spread through my body just like going to sleep.

And though the dark weight of the sunrise has its own fate and its own compromise, I can tell you that the plant cannot go back into the seed. That's the way it's always been and that's the way that it should be.

That's the way it's always been and that's the way that it should be.

Si lo hubieran hecho habrían dicho que tus limitaciones no son vergonzosas.

Podía sentir como entendimiento se extendía por el cuerpo al igual que ir a dormir.

Y aunque el peso oscuro del amanecer tiene su propio destino y su propio compromiso, puedo decirte que la planta no puede volver a la semilla.

Así ha sido siempre y así debe ser.

Así ha sido siempre y así debe ser.

-Excerpts // Excerptos-

6.1 - About “The Plant and the Seed” // Sobre “The Plant and the Seed (La planta y la semilla)”	
English	Español
<p>Rose: I wrote this song about 15 years ago, when I was about to become a <u>single mother</u>. I was really nervous about what was going to happen to me as a person. I didn't have good <u>models</u> for mothers as people who could continue to have their own life and personhood. And I was really, just, terrified about my economic realities and about how everything was going to look. I had thought that I was going to be traveling more for my music at that time, but I instead decided to start a <u>house concert venue</u> and just have everybody come to us. My friends moved into all the neighboring apartments because I was trying to make sure that no one would complain about the noise. This beautiful community started, and I had wonderful friends. I had one dear, dear angel who would come and pick up my laundry and wash it and fold it and bring it back to me for months when my baby was little. People helped me. I wasn't alone in any sense. The difference between my <u>expectations</u> and what ended up happening made me think about writing this song.</p>	<p>Rose: Yo escribí esta canción hace quince años, cuando estaba a punto de convertirme en <u>madre soltera</u>. Estaba realmente nerviosa sobre lo que iba a pasar conmigo como persona. No tuve buenos <u>modelos</u> de madres como personas quienes pudieron continuar teniendo su propia vida y seguir atendiendo su propia persona. Estaba realmente aterrorizada sobre mi realidad económica y cómo todo iba a <u>acontecer</u>. Había anticipado que estaría viajando más por mi música en ese tiempo, pero en vez de eso decidí fundar una <u>sala de conciertos dentro de casa</u> para que todos vinieran hacia nosotros. Mis amigos se mudaron a los apartamentos vecinos porque yo estaba tratando de asegurarme que nadie se quejara del ruido. Esta hermosa comunidad empezó, y tenía amigos maravillosos. Tenía una querida amiga, un ángel querido que venía a recoger mi ropa, lavarla y doblarla y traerla de vuelta por meses cuando mi bebé era pequeña. La gente me ayudó. No estaba sola en ningún sentido. La diferencia entre mis <u>expectativas</u> y lo que pasó al final me hizo pensar en escribir esta canción.</p>

Vocabulary // Vocabulario

1. **Single mother** - una madre soltera
2. **Models** - los modelos
3. **To happen** - acontecer
4. **House concert venue** - una sala de conciertos dentro de casa
5. **Expectations** - las expectativas

6.2 - Tree of Sorrows // El árbol de las penas

English	Español
<p>Rose: I had a friend who-- We would share stories about our kind of early cultural religious <u>upbringing</u>. And he was from a <u>Jewish</u> background. I may not be representing the <u>legend</u> correctly, but he told me something about a <u>Tree of Sorrows</u>, and a story where you go and you see this Tree of Sorrows and someone tells you each of your sorrows is hanging on the tree like a fruit. And if you want to, you can <u>trade in</u> your sorrows and pick a fruit and take someone else's sorrows. And of course, people, however they might have felt about their lives, maybe saw that this was what made them who they are and didn't necessarily want to trade their life for somebody else's.</p>	<p>Rose: Tenía un amigo que solíamos compartir historias culturales y religiosas con las que nos <u>criamos</u> cuando éramos jóvenes. Él era de origen <u>judío</u>. Puede que no esté describiendo la leyenda correctamente, pero él me contó algo sobre un <u>Árbol de las Penas</u> y una historia en la que vas a ver este Árbol de las Penas y alguien te dice que cada una de tus penas está colgando del árbol como si fuera una fruta. Y si lo deseas, puedes <u>intercambiar</u> tus penas y tomar las de otra persona. Por supuesto, las personas, sin importar cómo se sintieran acerca de sus vidas tal vez verían que sus penas fueron lo que los hizo ser quienes son, y no necesariamente habrían querido cambiar su vida por la de alguien más.</p>

Vocabulary // Vocabulario

1. **Upbringing** - la crianza
2. **Jewish** - judío/a
3. **Legend** - la leyenda
4. **Tree of Sorrows** - árbol de las penas
5. **To trade in** - cambiar algo por otra cosa

6.3 - North American Folk Music - La música folk [popular] de América del Norte

English	Español
<p>Lindsay: I think you identify as a folk singer. What are the characteristics of North American <u>folk music</u>?</p> <p>Rose: There are so many different ways to define <u>musical styles</u>. As far as North American folk music, the definition for people is almost something like— if you play an acoustic guitar, but you don't wear a cowboy hat, it's folk. But if you do wear a cowboy hat, it's country. But if you bring out the electric guitar, now you're <u>playing</u> rock and roll.</p> <p>I feel it's almost more accurate of me to call my music Americana instead of folk music, because I always wrote all my own songs. I don't have a repertoire of popular songs. My whole life I'd sit down and try to learn somebody else's song, and then I would hear something, and— "Oh, I gotta go write a song."</p> <p>I think Appalachia is a region that <u>springs to mind</u> for a lot of people when they talk about American folk. I'm from the countryside, and I think I was <u>inspired</u> by certain sounds, certain diction, even certain accents that find their way into my music. It's hard to define, but I think you can hear it.</p>	<p>Lindsay: Creo que te identificas como cantante de folk. ¿Cuáles son las características de <u>la música folk</u> Norteamérica?</p> <p>Rose: Hay tantas maneras de definir <u>los estilos de música</u>. En cuanto a la música "folk" norteamericana, la definición para mucha gente es algo casi como— si tocas una guitarra acústica pero no llevas sombrero de vaquero, es folk. Pero sí llevas un sombrero de vaquero, es "country." Pero si sacas una guitarra eléctrica, ahora estás <u>tocando</u> rock and roll.</p> <p>Siento que es más acertado llamar a mi música Americana en lugar de folk porque siempre escribía mis propias canciones. No tengo un repertorio de canciones populares. Toda mi vida me sentaba e intentaba aprender la canción de otro y entonces oía algo, y, "Oh, tengo que ir a escribir una canción."</p> <p>Creo que los Apalaches es una región que a mucha gente le <u>viene a la mente</u> cuando hablan de la música popular de norteamérica. Yo soy del campo, y pienso que estaba <u>inspirada</u> por ciertos sonidos, cierta dicción, incluso ciertos acentos que encuentran su camino en la música mía. Es difícil de definir, pero creo que puedes oírla.</p>

Vocabulary // Vocabulario

1. **folk music** - la música popular
2. **musical styles** - estilos de música
3. **to play (music, an instrument)** - tocar (música, un instrumento)
4. **spring to mind** - venir a la mente, ocurrirse
5. **to inspire, inspired** - inspirar, inspirado/a

6.4 - Folk Music and Folklore // La música popular y las tradiciones folklóricas

English	Español
<p>Lindsay: Can you expand a little bit on folk music and folklore in general?</p> <p>Rose: There's a folk tradition of music everywhere. I think people tend to identify folk music with a song that has words that you can definitely hear. You're talking about something <u>of the people</u>, generally, and something that expresses the <u>cultural memory</u> of a place. Folk tradition tends to correlate with a group of people who are considered to have a lower social class, less elitist, more of the earth, more connected to their traditions, and less of maybe an <u>urban melting pot</u>.</p> <p>There's also an <u>imparting of history</u> through these texts, <u>passed down</u> as a way of oral memory. For me folk songs are poetic texts that assist in the process of memory through the tool of melody.</p>	<p>Lindsay: Puedes ampliar más sobre la música popular y el folclor en general?</p> <p>Rose: Hay una tradición de folclor por todas partes. Creo que la gente tiende a identificar la música folk con una canción que tiene una letra que se puede oír. Es una cosa <u>del pueblo</u>, generalmente algo que expresa <u>la memoria cultural</u> de un lugar. La tradición “folk” tiende a correlacionarse con un grupo de gente que son considerados a tener una clase social más de más bajos recursos, menos elitista, más de la tierra, más conectados a sus tradiciones, y tal vez menos <u>un crisol urbano</u>.</p> <p>Hay también una <u>transmisión de la historia</u> a través de estos textos, <u>transmitidos</u> como una forma de memoria oral. Para mí, las canciones de la música popular son textos poéticos que asisten en el proceso de la memoria a través de la herramienta de la melodía.</p>

1. **of the people** - del pueblo
2. **cultural memory** - la memoria cultural
3. **urban melting pot** - un crisol urbano
4. **to impart history** - impartir la historia
5. **to pass down** - transmitir, pasar de generación en generación

V1 T6 - Reflection Prompts - Preguntas de reflexión

English	Español
<p><i>-The Plant and the Seed-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If you're comfortable, describe a time in your life when your expectations were different than what actually happened. ● What communities are you a part of? How do members of your community/ies support you, and how do you support them? ● Do you think it's true that "It takes a village to raise a child?" Why or why not? Who were or are some of the people who helped raise you or your kids, and what did/do they do? <p><i>-Tree of Sorrows-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Can you share a story or legend from your culture or your religion? ● Do you think it's true that our sorrows make us who we are? ● If you could trade your sorrows and hardships for someone else's, would you do it? Why or why not? <p><i>-North American Folk Music-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What different styles of music exist in your culture, region, or language, and how do you distinguish between the different styles? ● What styles of music do you like to listen to? How would you describe the music you like, and what do you like about it? 	<p><i>-“The Plant and the Seed (La planta y la semilla)”-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Si te sientes cómodo/a, describe un momento en tu vida cuando tus expectativas no cumplieron con lo que realmente ocurrió. ● ¿De qué comunidades formas parte? ¿Qué haces tú para apoyar a los miembros de tu(s) comunidad(es)? ¿Qué hacen ellos para ti? ● ¿Piensas que es verdad que se necesita todo un pueblo para educar a un niño? ¿Por qué sí o porque no? ¿Quiénes eran o son algunas de las personas que te criaron a ti o a tus hijos? ¿Qué hacían o hacen estas personas? <p><i>-Árbol de penas-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ¿Puedes compartir un cuento o una leyenda de tu cultura o tu religión? ● ¿Piensas que es verdad que nuestras penas y tristezas son una parte integral de quién somos? ● Si pudieras cambiar tus penas y adversidades por las de otra persona, ¿lo harías? ¿Por qué o por qué no? <p><i>-La música folk de América del Norte-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ¿Qué estilos de música existen en tu cultura, tu región o tu lengua, y cómo se distinguen entre los diferentes estilos? ● ¿Qué estilo de música te gusta escuchar? ¿Cómo describirías el tipo de música que te gusta y qué es lo que te gusta de este estilo?

-Folk Music and Folklore in General-

- What are some folk songs, folk singers, or folk practices of your culture?
- What are your thoughts on “urban melting pots,” highly developed areas where people of many cultures live together and create a new, less distinct culture? Do you prefer to live in the city or the countryside? Why?
- How does your culture pass on its history? Are there specific songs or dances that are specific to your region or cultural group?

-La música popular y el folclor en general-

- ¿Qué son algunas canciones, algunos cantantes, o algunas prácticas tradicionales/populares de tu cultura?
- ¿Qué piensas de los “crisoles urbanos,” zonas muy desarrolladas en que personas de diversas culturas viven juntas y crean una nueva cultura menos distinta? ¿Prefieres vivir en la ciudad o en el campo? ¿Por qué?
- ¿De qué formas pasa tu cultura su historia de generación en generación? ¿Hay algún tipo de baile, o algunas canciones relacionado/as con tu región o tu grupo cultural?

SAA - Volume 1, Track 7 : “Si se calla el cantor” - Mercedes Sosa

-Letra // Lyrics-

Español	English
<p><u>Si se calla el cantor</u> <i>Interpretada por by Mercedes Sosa</i> <i>Escrita por Horacio Guarany</i></p> <p>Si se calla el cantor calla la vida porque la vida, la vida misma es todo un canto. Si se calla el cantor, muere de espanto la esperanza, la luz y la alegría.</p> <p>Si se calla el cantor se quedan solos los humildes gorriones de los diarios. Los obreros del puerto se persignan. ¿Quién habrá de luchar por su salario?</p> <p>¿Qué ha de ser de la vida si el que canta No levanta su voz en las tribunas Por el que sufre,´ por el que no hay Ninguna razón que lo condene a andar sin manta?</p> <p>Si se calla el cantor muere la rosa. ¿De que sirve la rosa sin el canto? Debe el canto ser luz sobre los campos Iluminando siempre a los de abajo.</p>	<p><u>If the Singer Goes Quiet</u> <i>Performed by Mercedes Sosa</i> <i>written by Horacio Guarany</i></p> <p>If the singer goes quiet, life goes quiet because life, life itself is a song. If the singer goes quiet, hope, light and joy die of fear.</p> <p>If the singer goes quiet, they abandon humble people, sellers of newspapers, dockworkers, who make the sign of the cross. Who will fight for their wages?</p> <p>What will become of life, if those who sing don't raise their voice and take a stand For those who suffer—for those who, for no reason, are condemned to live without basic necessities?</p> <p>If the singer goes quiet, the rose dies. For what good is a rose without song? Song should be a light, spread over the fields, Always illuminating those who are kept down.</p>

Que no calle el cantor porque el silencio
cobarde apaña la maldad que oprime.
¿No saben los cantores de agachadas
no callarán jamás de frente al crimen?

Que se levanten todas las banderas
cuando el cantor se plante con su grito
Que mil guitarras desangren en la noche,
una inmortal canción al infinito'

Si se calla el cantor... Calla la vida

- letras.com

The singer must not go quiet because cowardly
Silence fuels oppressive evil.
Don't you know that singers, even brought to their knees
will not go quiet in the face of crime?

Raise all flags
When a singer sounds their call and takes a stand.
Let a thousand guitars bleed out into the night,
an immortal song that spreads out infinitely.

If the singer goes quiet... life goes quiet.

7.1 - Music and Creative Expression // La música y la expresión creativa

English	Español
<p>Lindsay: You talked a little bit just now on the aspect of <u>cultural transmission</u> that is kind of braided into folk practices around the world. You also talked about being called to do songwriting, just compelled to write songs. What do you think it is that that draws you to these things and what value do you see in them? Why are they important?</p> <p>Rose: For me, it's like saying why is <u>human life</u> important? Because this kind of <u>musical expression</u> to me is inextricable from my being and also from the human experience. It's something that's unimaginable not to have, not to be a part of our bodies. There's a rhythm in everything. There's a rhythm in walking. There's a rhythm in <u>rocking a baby to sleep</u>. There's a reason that I was naturally driven to sing and hum to my little baby. In terms of putting a social <u>value</u> or an aesthetic value or a therapeutic value on a music experience, I mean, it's endless: catharsis, memory, preservation of a local tradition, of a sense of your people, legacy. I mean, I honestly think of these kinds of creations as probably the version of the afterlife that I believe in now— a legacy, a mark. And there's something so intimate about a tune. It can <u>get stuck in your head</u>. It's something that we remember and that we feel and that's processed in our brains like nothing else.</p>	<p>Lindsay: Acabas de hablar un poco del aspecto de la <u>transmisión cultural</u> que se encuentra entrelazado hasta cierto punto con las prácticas populares en todo el mundo. Dijiste también que sientes como una compulsión desenfrenada por escribir canciones. ¿Qué es lo que crees que te atrae de estas dos cosas y qué valor ves en ellas? ¿Por qué son tan importantes?</p> <p>Rose: Para mi es como decir ¿Por qué <u>la vida humana</u> es importante? Porque este tipo de <u>expresión musical</u> para mi es inextricable a mi ser y también de la experiencia humana. Ni me es posible imaginar no tener eso, que eso no sea parte de nuestro cuerpo. Existe un ritmo al caminar. Hay un ritmo <u>al mecer</u> al bebe para que se duerma. Hay una razón por la cual me sentí impulsada a cantarle y tararearle a mi pequeño bebé. En términos de poner un valor social, o valor estético, o incluso un valor terapéutico a una experiencia musical, pues, es interminable: la catarsis, la memoria, la preservación de una tradición local, del sentir de su gente, su legado. Es decir, que honestamente pienso que este tipo de creaciones son probablemente la versión del más allá en la que creo ahora— un legado, una marca. Y hay algo tan íntimo en una melodía. Puede <u>quedarse atascada en tu cabeza</u>. Es algo que recordamos, sentimos y que se procesa en nuestra mente como ninguna otra cosa.</p>

Vocabulary

1. **cultural transmission** - la transmisión cultural
2. **human life** - la vida humana
3. **musical expression** - la expresión musical
4. **to rock a baby to sleep** - mecer a una bebé
5. **to get stuck in your head** - quedarse atascada en la cabeza

7.2 - El poder y la importancia de la música // The Power and Importance of Music

Español	English
<p>Lindsay: hay algo más que quisieras decir acerca del <u>poder</u> y la <u>importancia</u> de la música en general?</p> <p>Rany: Yo pienso que la música nos <u>sirve para muchas</u> cosas. Primero para <u>inspiración</u>. Ojalá que todos los artistas puedan cantar cosa positiva, o vivencia, o cosas así, porque realmente es una buena ayuda. También, como yo pienso, la música <u>no tiene fronteras</u>. Muchas veces tu no entiendes lo que dice esa canción, pero la melodía te gusta. Cuando tú tienes a alguien que te la interprete, que te diga "No, mire– Eso dice eso," está buena. Entonces de ahí tú te inspiras en aprender otros idiomas, incluso buscar amistades de ese país, o que hable esa lengua.</p>	<p>Lindsay: Is there anything else you'd like to add about the <u>power</u> and <u>importance</u> of music in general?</p> <p>Rany: I think music is <u>good for a lot of things</u>. First of all, for <u>inspiration</u>. Artists should sing about positive things, or life experiences, or things like that because that's a big help. Also, the way I see it music <u>doesn't have borders</u>. A lot of the time you don't understand what a song is saying, but you like the melody. When you have someone there to tell you, "No, look– this means that," that's a good thing. From there maybe you'll be inspired to learn other languages, or even to find friends in that country, or who speak that language.</p>

Vocabulario

1. **el poder** - the power
2. **la importancia** - the importance
3. **servir para muchas cosas** - to be good for a lot of things
4. **la inspiración** - inspiration
5. **to have no borders** - no tener fronteras

V1 7 - Reflection Prompts - Preguntas de reflexión

English	Español
<p data-bbox="191 272 472 311"><i>-Final Reflections-</i></p> <ul data-bbox="247 311 1018 641" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="247 311 1018 386">● What do you think are the role and responsibilities of musicians in our society?<li data-bbox="247 386 1018 461">● Why do music and creative expression matter in general? Why do they matter to you?<li data-bbox="247 461 1018 568">● How do you express yourself creatively (writing, music, painting, etc.), and what draws you to that medium?<li data-bbox="247 568 1018 641">● How can and will you continue using music to strengthen your second+ language?	<p data-bbox="1052 272 1354 311"><i>-Reflexiones finales-</i></p> <ul data-bbox="1108 311 1879 641" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="1108 311 1879 386">● ¿Qué piensas que son el rol y las responsabilidades de los músicos en nuestra sociedad?<li data-bbox="1108 386 1879 461">● ¿Por qué importan la música y la expresión creativa en general?<li data-bbox="1108 461 1879 568">● ¿Cómo te expresas creativamente (escritura, música, pintura, etc.) y qué es lo que te gusta de esta forma de expresión?<li data-bbox="1108 568 1879 641">● ¿Cómo puedes y cómo vas a seguir usando la música para fortalecer tu segundo+ idioma?

SAA - Volume 1 Track 8: Outro



- [CLICK HERE](#) - to listen to this text, read aloud

Lindsay: Today is November 14, 2023, and I am sitting in the striped armchair in my apartment on Huntington Street, recording the outro for Volume One of Culture Without Borders Language Collective's Song as Artifact Project.

Over the course of the last year, Florencia and my informal WhatsApp exchange about Mercedes Sosa has grown into a collaborative and foundational curricular text for our emerging world language school. To date over thirty people – narrators, translators, reviewers, our absolutely wonderful project manager Leigh Yakubowski, to name some – have had a hand in co-constructing this educational material.

As I scroll through the resources collected in this volume, I feel deep gratitude for everyone who has contributed. I feel a sense of pride, accomplishment, and joy for what we have managed to make together. I feel eagerness for the conversations this material will prompt beginning in January, 2024 when CWB Language Collective launches our first conversation-based English and Spanish Song as Artifact cohorts.


We live in a world and a moment in which it's perfectly possible to get all of our recommendations for cultural products via artificial intelligence and algorithmic recommendation. We live in a world and a moment in which it is common to understand education as a thing that happens exclusively in formalized settings, like conventional schools, universities, and professional trainings. We live in a world and a moment in which – as Omar Geles and Estrella Sánchez remind us – things are nowhere near as simple, easy, just or utopic as we were taught to believe as kids.

It can sometimes feel impossible to make change. It can be easy to get stuck in the mindset that as regular people we don't and can't have an impact. But I think this mentality is debilitating and inaccurate.

Gracias a la vida – thanks to the simple fact of living our everyday life in our everyday context – we accumulate knowledge about language, culture, the world, ourselves, our unique and our shared human conditions. Every single person is a beacon of culture, a product of culture, a unique and irreplicable perspective and collection of experiences – and we all have the power to educate ourselves and one other. *Informarnos es formarnos*: to inform ourselves is to educate and shape ourselves. And in shaping ourselves and each other we shape our world.

I understand the Song as Artifact project as a mechanism for sharing time, ideas, culture and experiences – for making connections and collaboratively educating ourselves and each other, in the service of a more informed global citizenry and a more just and conscious world. *Que este proyecto nos ayude a nosotros los miembros de esta comunidad – tanto como la comunidad misma – a cobrar voz, conciencia y fuerza*. May this project help us – our community as individuals and as a whole – to cultivate voice, consciousness and strength.

To everyone involved in volume one of the Song as Artifact project, thank you for giving life to this project and to our school.

Bye for now! 

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-Track 07: “Si se calla el cantor”

-Lyrics-

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AMY_[1] (director of Oral History Master of Arts program): Your methodological paper should clearly identify a conversation that your work is a part of.

LINDSAY_[2]: My work is a part of the conversation going on in my head.

AMY_[2]: Be specific.

OHMA Thesis - Methodological Reflection

LINDSAY: This methodological reflection — constructed in the style of a dialogue³⁹/yarn⁴⁰ with teachers, advisors, friends, and other admired thinkers — describes the components and process of my oral history masters thesis and unravels some thoughts on method and methodology. This essay situates the work we are doing at Culture Without Borders Language Collective (CWB) within broader theoretical and methodological frameworks for teaching, research, service, and problem-solving. This reflection concludes that CWB uses a transversal, transdisciplinary, integrative, problem-oriented, participatory, transformative and emancipatory approach to teaching/research/service — in order to live and explore the following questions:

- How can we teach and learn languages in ways that are fun, effective, enriching, empowering, worthwhile, sustainable, and rooted in friendly and mutually supportive human relationships?
- How do we craft a work life for ourselves that is fulfilling, agreeable, sustainable, flexible and human?
- How do we transform the economy to a more just and equitable system for distributing resources and sustaining life?
- What is the purpose of school?

In this essay I join my teachers and friends in likening our work to improvisational jazz: a collaborative, unpredictable, and relationship-based process, guided by the principles of pertinence and reciprocity. CWB joins a growing movement of proactive and commons-oriented individuals and communities in affirming and proving that a different economy — and different and better systems for education and human development — are possible, viable, promising, and real.

³⁹ Quantum physicist David Bohm described dialogue as “a stream of meaning flowing among and through us and between us. [...] It’s something new, which may not have been the starting point at all. It’s something creative.” [...] The picture or image that this derivation suggests is [...] a flow of meaning in the whole group, out of which will emerge some new understanding. - David Dunbar ^[3,4]

⁴⁰ “In Western Australia, Nyoonga people use the term “yarning” when they want to talk with someone. [...] When an Aboriginal person says “let’s have a yarn”, what they are saying is, let’s have a talk or conversation. [...] Similarly, in Botswana [...] a Setswana phrase “A re bue” means “to talk”; when a Motswana says, “tla re bue sanye” they mean “come and let’s talk” [...] This talk/conversation/yarn can entail the sharing and exchange of information between two or more people socially or more formally. To have a yarn is not a one way process but a dialogical process that is reciprocal and mutual. [...] Yarning is a process that cuts across the formality of identity as a researcher and demands the human to human interaction (Spradley 1979) where both are knowers and learners in the process. - Dawn Bessarab + Bridget Ng’andu ^[5]

-Featured People-

The following people are quoted in this dialogue/yarn:

- [Amy Starecheski](#) - cultural anthropologist, oral historian, director of the [Oral History Master of Arts](#) (OHMA) program at Columbia University
- [Sayre Quevedo](#) - documentary artist, multimedia journalist, thesis advisor
- [Bill McAllister](#) - interdisciplinary social scientist, writer, professor of social sciences and oral history at Columbia University
- [Dubán Pájaro](#) - public health and accountability physician, clinical research scientist, director of research at [Culture Without Borders Language Collective](#)
- [Anibal Vicente Arteaga](#), [Oscar Augusto Bedoya](#), [Dubán Pájaro](#), [Andry Yasmid Mera](#), and [Diego Restrepo](#) (**Vicente Arteaga + Colleagues**) - medical researchers, authors of “Aportes de la investigación cualitativa a la epidemiología [Contributions of Qualitative Research to the Field of Epidemiology]”
- [Diane Larsen-Freeman](#) - linguist, language teacher, second+ language development researcher, complexity theorist, professor and research scientist emerita at University of Michigan
- [Palmar Álvarez-Blanco](#) - activist, educator, academic, researcher, professor in the Spanish department at Carleton College, co-founder of [ALCESXXI](#), creator and coordinator of the [Constellation of the Commons](#)
- [Steven Torres](#) - activist, educator, academic, researcher, professor in the foreign languages and literature department at University of Nebraska Omaha, co-founder of [ALCESXXI](#)
- [David Dunbar](#) - teacher, learner, author, educational consultant, co-creator of [CITYterm](#) (experimental/experiential lab school), principal collaborator at [DKDK project](#), thesis advisor
- [Luz Sumaq Nina](#) - Indigenous woman of the Chibcha-Colombia nation (Inka), keeper/beacon of Andean ancestral knowledge and culture, activist, educator, founder of CareTheGiver, co-founder of [Tampu Project](#)
- [Deicy Correa Mosquera](#), [Isabel Guzmán Ibarra](#) and [Rigoberto Marín Uribe](#) (**Correa Mosquera + Colleagues**) - scholars of transversality, authors of “[El concepto de la transversalidad y su contribución a la educación](#) [The Concept of Transversality and Its Contribution to Education]”
- [Basarab Nicolescu](#) - theoretical physicist, scholar of transdisciplinarity, president and founder of the [International Center for Transdisciplinary Research](#)
- [Phil Hiver](#), [Ali H. Alhoorie](#), and [Diane Larsen-Freeman](#) (**Hiver + Colleagues**) - complex dynamic systems theorists, second+ language development researchers, transdisciplinary scientists, authors of “[Toward a Transdisciplinary Integration of Research Purposes and Methods for Complex Dynamic Systems Theory: Beyond the Quantitative-Qualitative Divide](#)”
- [Flora Cornish](#), [Nancy Breton](#), [Ulises Moreno-Tabarez](#), [Jenna Delgado](#), [Mohi Rua](#), [Ama de-Graft Aikins](#), and [Darrin Hodgetts](#) (**Cornish + Colleagues**) - scholars and practitioners of participatory action research, authors of “[Participatory Action Research](#)”

- [Rev. Dr. Cynthia Oriyomi Ashley](#) - faith leader, media literacy educator, change-maker, event and media producer, founder and CEO of [Total Faith Network Television](#)
- [Iván Waiki Poma](#) - Andean Pachaq Misayoq-Amauta (master guardian of Andean ancestral wisdom and culture), co-founder of [Tampu Project](#)
- [Rainer Maria Rilke](#) - 19th century Austro-German poet and philosopher
- [Caitlin Morelli](#) - writer, impact investor, co-founder of [Worthmore](#), and practitioner of restorative economics
- [Dr. Cindy Trimm](#) - spiritual leader, minister, empowerment specialist, revolutionary thinker, founder of [Cindy Trimm Ministries International](#)

-Notes on Translation, Excerpting, and Citation-

- Quotes are pulled directly from cited texts. Changes are indicated in brackets.
- Some quotes are translated from the original Spanish. Translations are mine.
- Quotes from unrecorded personal conversations are inexact, from my memory.
- This reflection uses an adapted Vancouver citation style. Citations appear in bracketed subscript. A list of cited publications/interviews/interactions is included at the end of this reflection in order of appearance.
- Hyperlinked content on pp. 2-3 of this reflection is not included in the bibliographical references.
- Quotes are stitched together from various non-sequential pages of these thinkers' quoted texts. For ease of construction and reading, exact page numbers are not cited.



- Thank you for reading my methodological reflection!

-Movement 1: The What and the Why-

AMY_[2] [thesis plan prompt]: **What do you plan to make? Who will you do oral history with and why?**⁴¹

LINDSAY_[2] [Thesis plan, Dec 2022]: My project is a socially and economically sustainable world language school. Between now and my graduation from OHMA in February 2024, I want to make plans and take actions to grow our school from an informal association of friends into a functioning and socially and economically viable language-teaching enterprise. I am hoping to continue to use my coursework, thesis, and community in the OHMA program to organize this process and guide my thinking. [...] For my OHMA thesis, I would like to interview friends and experts in my community about their areas of expertise and – based on the knowledge gleaned from these interviews, as well as knowledge from my own life and reading and from the people who make up our collective – draft foundational documents for our school as a formal economic and educational venture.

SAYRE_[6] [Advisor meeting, May 2023]: **Your thesis can't be your whole business. Think of the thesis as a piece of the pie.**

LINDSAY_[6] [Advisor meeting, May 2023]: OK, OK, you're right. Good advice.

proceeds to make the thesis the business.

LINDSAY: Turns out, it's tough to get a slice of pie without making a whole pie.

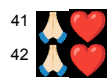
SAYRE_[7] [email, December 07, 2023⁴²]: **What is your thesis?**

LINDSAY: My thesis is foundational documents for my friends' and my language school and sustainable business, Culture Without Borders Language Collective (CWB).

SAYRE_[7]: **What is each component? What is the purpose/function of each component?**

LINDSAY: My thesis has four main components:

- [a Philosophy of Education essay](#), written in the first person singular, which articulates my personal approach to teaching and learning at this point in my life,
- [a business plan](#), written in the first person plural, which articulates the mission, vision, values, organizational structure, and plans for CWB.



⁴¹ - Thank you, Amy, for this wonderfully open prompt, and carefully designed thesis process!

⁴² - Thank you Sayre!! For reading my *wild* original outline for this paper, and for these very helpful guiding questions.

- **a community-generated language-learning and conversation-starting text, called the “[Song As Artifact Project](#).”** This collection of essays, interview excerpts, and reflection prompts will serve as the foundational text for CWB’s first monetized English and Spanish course: [Conversaciones Sonoras](#), which will begin in late January.
- **This methodological reflection/yarn/dialogue** about what we are building, how we are building it, and why.

SAYRE_[7]: What was your end goal when you began?

LINDSAY: I came into the OHMA program knowing that I wanted to use the time and resources this program offered me to build a sustainable world language school. I came into the thesis process knowing that to build a school and a business, I needed a plan, and I needed documents. Writing is how I think, understand, and remember.^{43,44} I knew I wanted to use the structure of the thesis project to organize and contain the thinking and writing necessary to start a school and a business.

SAYRE_[7]: Did your end goal change from what you initially thought it would be?

LINDSAY: My end goal didn’t change, but the specific goals changed a lot. I knew I needed to come out of this process with a business plan: a way to ethically and coherently monetize the work we are doing at CWB. Beyond that, I wasn’t sure what “foundational documents” would mean.

It turns out a big part of “foundational documents” has been co-producing a language-learning text with friends (the Song As Artifact Project). I had it in my mind that, because the interviews for the Song As Artifact project would be short (maximum ~20 minutes), the project itself would be quick and simple. I was wrong! I thought this would be a side project, not part of my thesis at all. In the end, it is the bulkiest part of my thesis by far. And it ended up getting its own project manager — brilliant, talented, full-of-life [Leigh Yakubowski](#) — who graciously volunteered her time skills and work. Leigh set dates, checked in, structured the process of completing this project, and just generally Got Things Done.

Also, I wouldn’t have guessed that the methodological paper would take this specific form. I knew I wanted to make something multivocal that brought together voices of people who had advised me, to help me put words to what CWB is doing. I had very grand plans, though. I thought I would synthesize all the interviews I did in the context of my thesis into one carefully-constructed audio piece. I thought I’d pull clips from each interview, run those clips by each narrator to get their approval, and stitch different threads together, on specific topics like school, solidarity economics, friendship, language-learning, etc. There wasn’t time for all this, or I didn’t find or allocate it.

⁴³ “For me writing is [...] an integral part of the process of understanding. [...] If I had a really good memory and I was able to retain all my thoughts I doubt I’d have written anything at all. [...] But I don’t.” - Hannah Arendt_[8]

⁴⁴ “I’ve got to go back and read what I wrote and see what I think!” - Diane Larsen Freeman_[9]

SAYRE_[7]: What did that teach you?

First, this lesson that I've chronically struggled to wrap my brain around: Every project requires time and focus, both of which are finite. I am slowly learning that time is one of the variables that weighs most heavily on outcomes and deliverables. And that having the idea for a project is absolutely not the same thing as executing that idea. I still plan to make clips, and would love to eventually make sound essays, from the interviews I have recorded, but those are long-term projects, to be developed and carried out with patience and care over time. In this sense, my thesis is only a piece of the pie.

The way my thesis process evolved has also reinforced for me that it's okay and normal for short-term goals to change, as long as they still serve long-term goals.

And I am learning that just because a given interaction (recorded or not) isn't fully digested, polished, or ready to be shared publicly, doesn't mean that interaction doesn't influence thinking and action. I conducted 14 interviews in the context of my thesis. Three of them are featured in this essay. All of them inform my movement forward.

LINDSAY_[10]: What is methodology, and why is it important or useful to articulate a methodology?

BILL_[11]: “[M]ethodology is the *way* or *ways* we go about finding an answer to our research question. [... Y]our approach to language learning is a methodology (or a method) which has particular elements and the combination of elements (traditional and novel) that make it distinct from other methodologies.

DIANE LARSEN-FREEMAN_[9]: [M]ethods are great examples of [...] coherent thoughts in action[. They] can be very, very helpful provided that they are not imported or exported in lock-step fashion. [...] I myself have created my own method by becoming aware of the different ways that people think about language and its learning and its teaching, and drawing from a number of different [...] principles that make sense to me and inform my practice.

DUBÁN_[12]: Methodology responds to your specific objectives, and your specific objectives respond to your overall objective.

LINDSAY: In the same way that it’s hard to have a slice of pie without baking a whole pie, I think it’s hard to talk about method, or methodology, without talking about objective.

AMY_[2]: Why are you doing this project?

LINDSAY_[2]:

- I am doing this project because teaching and learning languages lights me up and gives me life, and it has since I was a child.
- I am doing this project because it feels like a way to continue and honor my family’s and my educators’ teachings and legacy — what a friend_[13] calls “my human inheritance.”
- I am doing this project because I want to walk coherently through this world: I want to put my mind, my time, my self — the education and opportunities I’ve been given in this life — toward something I genuinely believe in, and something that makes our messed-up world better in some way.
- I am doing this project because I do not want to spend the rest of my life turning off my personality for X hours a day in order to function “appropriately” in a professional environment.
- I am doing this project because I want to have three kids — I have always wanted to have three kids — and I want a job that allows me to bring value to society in a way that is creative and enjoyable and also to raise and provide for my children, be present in their lives, and spend time with them. I would like to make a business that creates these working conditions for me and others.
- I am doing this project because dialogic, community-building, learner-centered, life-based education of the type I have had unfettered access to my whole life is

very valuable but prohibitively expensive and disastrously competitive in this country and in this moment. I want to share, resonate, and evolve the (to me) beautiful education I've been given, in a way that sustains me and others and also makes that kind of education more available, more accessible, and more widely spread.

- I am doing this project because I believe the study and practice of non-native languages promotes vital values of pluralism, ethnorelativity, and cross-cultural communication and understanding.
- I am doing this project because so many things are broken in the educational systems of our moment, and my friends and I have the tools, knowledge, and resources necessary to propose and enact an alternative.
- I am doing this project because our world has many problems, and a shared language is an invaluable tool for communication and problem-solving.
- I am doing this project because I believe another economy, other forms of education, a different world, is possible — and I want to contribute to building that world.

SAYRE_[7]: While I think analyzing what is or isn't methodology is an interesting and fruitful question on a broader level, I wonder if it distracts from the larger purpose of this paper and your work in general. What would you want a future OHMA student to take away?

LINDSAY: “Methodology” is one of those words that gets used very frequently and casually in higher education, as if its meaning were obvious. For me it wasn't obvious — and it took several conversations with friends and colleagues to understand what methodology is: Methodology is the “how” of the process — a study of one's own actions, resonances, and movement toward a given goal. I think in order to articulate a methodology, it's important to establish what we mean by methodology. And I think it's useful to analyze the concept of methodology because that helps me arrive at the concepts of transversality, transdisciplinarity, and integration, which are important to the way I understand my work, and the purpose of CWB.

If a future OHMA student reads this, I would like them to take away that it is possible to understand research, teaching, service, problem-solving, community-building, ethical economic activity, and crafting a meaningful and fulfilling life as a single integrated and transformative process. And that there is a whole chorus of people out there, talking and thinking about research, teaching, service, community-building, economics and life in this way.

-Movement III:

On Fragmentation, Wholeness, Transversality, Transdisciplinarity and Integration-

BILL_[11]: [Y]ours [is] not a research methodology because answering a research question is not your goal. Learning a language and encouraging community are.

LINDSAY: I disagree.⁴⁵

SAYRE_[7]: What are the questions you [hope] to understand?

LINDSAY:


- How can we teach and learn languages in ways that are fun, effective, enriching, empowering, worthwhile, sustainable, and rooted in friendly and mutually supportive human relationships?
- How do we craft a work life for ourselves that is fulfilling, agreeable, sustainable, flexible and human?
- How do we transform the economy to a more just and equitable system for distributing resources and sustaining life?
- What is the purpose of school?

PALMAR + STEVEN_[14]: As scholars committed to the values of citizenship, the first set of barriers we might seek to interrogate is the often-arbitrary distinction between teaching, research and service. [...] If we are to be consistent, our objectives and commitments should not be dramatically different when we teach, when we research and when we serve. These are areas which can and should overlap and feed into one another, so that, for instance, our research ties into the classes we teach as well as into the projects we develop with our colleagues and with our communities.

DAVID_[15]: [T]he problem that we have with life — one of the problems, there are many — is fragmentation. [...] What you're trying to achieve in a life is some kind of wholeness[. ...] The enemy of that is fragmentation.

PALMAR_[16]: I'm an academic, a social activist, and an educator. And for me these three areas of my life have always been in profound conflict — because we live within the great paradox of the [...] fragmentation of sectors. If someone is an academic, they're not an activist, or if they're an activist, they're not an educator. There tends to be this false fragmentation, or false distance, between these sectors, and that has always been somewhat uncomfortable for me. [...] Transversality is reality; reality is transversal.

CORREA MOSQUERA + COLLEAGUES_[17]: [T]ransversality refers to the intersection of something with something else: a line, a problem, an idea, a discourse. [...] It is key to the analysis of plurality, and to the integration or inclusion of all that

⁴⁵  - Thank you, Bill!! For the careful and thoughtful definition of methodology that you shared with me for my thesis – and for cultivating a friendship and learning environment so welcoming of respectful, collegial, and productive disagreement.

which classic paradigms have separated or disarticulated through the unitary thinking associated with disciplines.

LUZ_[18]: Unfortunately, much of the information we have access to today is fragmented, and it's time to bring those pieces together.

CORREA MOSQUERA + COLLEAGUES_[17]: From an epistemic perspective, a foundational aspect of transversality is transdisciplinarity[.]

BASARAB NICOLESCU_[19]: As the prefix "trans" indicates, *transdisciplinarity* concerns that which is at once *between* the disciplines, *across* the different disciplines, and *beyond* all discipline. Its goal is *the understanding of the present world*, of which one of the imperatives is the unity of knowledge.

HIVER + COLLEAGUES_[20]: What is left when transcending disciplinary boundaries is a problem-oriented approach to scientific inquiry[. ...] (Klein 2004). The idea behind this is to identify issues that need addressing or questions that demand answers, and then determine the most appropriate models and combinations of methods to shed light on possible solutions (Larsen-Freeman 2017). [...] Transdisciplinary inquiry [...] tackles complexity and challenges the fragmentation of knowledge. It does this by building “a comprehensive general view, a theoretical synthesis or an integrative framework” (Klein 2007: 39) that works at a “supra-disciplinary, more abstract level offering a general set of patterns, outcomes, and descriptions” applied to various problems (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron 2008: 15–16).

LUZ_[18]: There's this really lovely concept that I often share[, ...] about learning, unlearning, and relearning. These three factors are fundamental in human development and acquisition of knowledge. [...] Learning implies taking in new ideas, new concepts, new information, and being willing to challenge your own beliefs and your own knowledge. [...] Unlearning is equally important, as it implies questioning and abandoning ideas and concepts, things you learned before. Sometimes unlearning can be harder than learning, because it implies breaking with the familiarity and comfort that, as human beings, we're always seeking. After unlearning, relearning is the next natural step, in which new knowledge and perspectives are incorporated.

CORREA MOSQUERA + COLLEAGUES_[17]: [I]t is possible to understand transversality in terms of deconstruction and rupture with established limits, and in terms of the configuration of a new political, economic, social, cultural and epistemic order.

IVÁN_[18]: There is so much knowledge on this planet, in so many different forms. I think if we allow ourselves to enter into dialogue and correlate these different knowledges, we can accomplish great things.

*-Movement IV: Participatory, Transformative and Emancipatory
Research/Teaching/Service-*

DUBÁN_[12]: **The type of research we're doing with our school and our business [CWB Language Collective] is called participatory action research.**

VICENTE ARTEAGA + COLLEAGUES_[21]: Participatory action research is a type of qualitative research in which the community — conscious of its own problems — participates in the problem-solving process, and researchers confront problems together with the community[.]

BILL_[11]: [I]n the context of research, particular kinds of methods are expressions of epistemological positions as to what constitutes acceptable ways of learning about the world.

CORNISH + COLLEAGUES_[22]: Participatory action research (PAR) [...] prioritizes the value of experiential knowledge for tackling problems [and] envisioning and implementing alternatives.

VICENTE ARTEAGA + COLLEAGUES_[21]: [It's] a methodology that harmonizes knowledges and develops critical thinking within a community. [...] This form of research seeks to create spaces of dialogue, learning, and action that allow for the empowerment of society for the benefit of all[.]

CORNISH + COLLEAGUES_[22]: We consider PAR an emancipatory form of scholarship[, ...] driven by interest in tackling injustices and building futures supportive of human thriving[. ...] It uses research not primarily to communicate with academic experts but to inform grassroots collective action. [...] PAR projects are usually concerned with developments not only in knowledge but also in action and in participants' capacities, capabilities and performances. [...] Many users of PAR aspire to projects of liberation and/or transformation.

VICENTE ARTEAGA + COLLEAGUES_[21]: In participatory action research, adequate processes of transformation allow for problem-solving that improves quality of life and collective wellbeing — satisfying basic needs and allowing for greater understanding of social phenomena.

PALMAR + STEVEN_[14]: From an emancipatory and transformative perspective, research and education are—instead of procedures for formatting, standardizing, certifying, or inculcating knowledge—actually channels for transformation through the cultivation of awareness and the skills required for dialogical communication. [...] A transformative research and education point of view [...] is nurtured by an eco-dependent and interdisciplinary logic that does not format subjectivities and rationalities, but instead emancipates them by cultivating trusting relationships based on reciprocity and reciprocal representation.

CYNTHIA_[23]: [T]eaching [...] is always about transforming the mind of the learner[. ...] Education is never neutral. Either educators will maintain the status quo or transform our social environment. [...] I define a vision for education as a transformational process in which students are educated to be global citizens with an understanding of the diversity of [...] traditions and with strategies of pluralism that engage diversity in creative and productive ways.

PALMAR_[24]: The *raison d'être* of education is to be a link in the creation of transformative communities.

LINDSAY_[15]: **Why do people need to transform? Why is it so important to create transformative learning environments?**

DAVID_[15]: [U]ltimately what's needed over the course of a lifetime [is] the capacity to self transform. [...] Sternberg calls [this] adaptive intelligence, [...] the capacity to transform both yourself and the environment you're in. [...] If you're going to evolve over the course of a lifetime, you are going to have a capacity to self transform. If you are who you were as a 16 year old, and you're in your 40s or 50s or 60s, you've kind of got a problem. Because what's going to happen is the environment is going to radically change.

CYNTHIA_[23]: [W]e must not only educate each other but also embrace our differences in a way that allows us to respond to and reflect the changing world in which we live today. [...] I strongly believe that education should focus on contemporary social issues and problems that will prepare [people] to participate intelligently in the formulation of ideas for social change.

DAVID_[15]: [W]hat you're really looking at [...] when you talk about preparing people for life [is] the capacity to understand that they are the author of their own learning, [...] and therefore they can use that to be [...] the ecologists of their life. They're the environmental designers of their life. And that's what we all get a chance to do: We get to design our environment, to a greater or lesser extent. [...] That's ultimately what the goal of education is. You're trying to figure out how to craft a life.

IVÁN_[18]: In life, it's the mission of every human being to do what is in Spanish called *medrar*. I'm not sure how you would say it in English, but *medrar* means to prosper without destroying. It's a beautiful word in Spanish. [And it's] a fundamental idea in a toroidal system[, ...] which is closely related to the Andean understanding of the cosmos. [In] a circular economy — which, really, is the way Andean people understand the world, because we see reciprocity in everything — there are three beautiful principles: *allinta runay* (think well), *allinta munay* (be well), and *allinta pachay* (do good). All of that together is *sumaq*.

Sumaq means “beautiful and of service.” What I mean is that you can have a person who is really good-looking — an extraordinarily attractive boy, 1.7 or 1.8 meters tall, with a spectacular body, enrolled in the best university, with a really cool car or whatever it is — but everything he has is for himself. So that person is beautiful in a certain sense, or

successful, and competitive of course. But until he does something for the good of the community, for humanity, that person isn't sumaq.

The greatest principle, the highest aspiration in the Andean worldview⁴⁶, is to be sumaq – beautiful and of service. A flower is sumaq because it serves as nutrients and also as a reproductive element, and it becomes fruit. Many people understand flowers as just flowers, but they don't know that many, many flowers in nature become fruits – guardians of the seeds of the next generation. That's sumaq. And the circular economy – called *minka* – is based on that principle. There are other principles, too: *ayni*, *mita*, *chunga*. And there's another, really beautiful principle: *curpa*. Curpa means working very hard on yourself, in order to be of service to others. I mean— not to be the alfa male, or non-plus-ultra female. That's not what we're talking about.

DAVID_[15]: [It's] about you. [...] But it's you in a community. It's you in a group, [...] it's not you in an isolated way.

IVÁN_[18]: It's working on yourself in order to serve others. Because if I'm not strong, together we're not as strong. Because you are me and I am you. Everyone is with me, and I am with everyone. Unity within individuality.

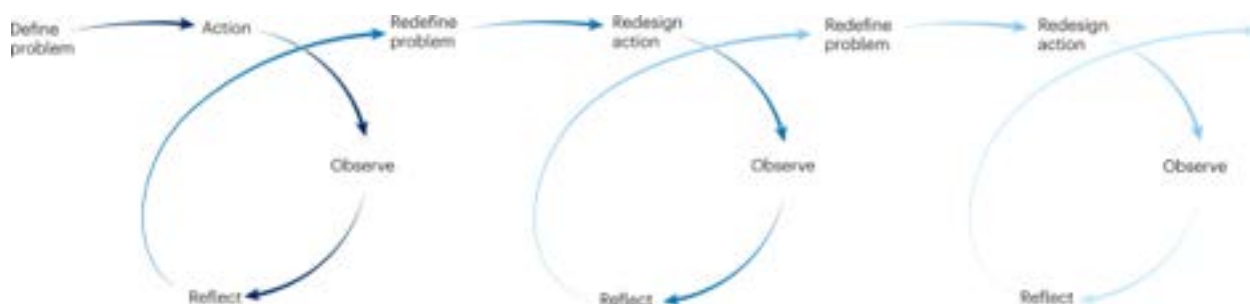
⁴⁶ "Worldview" is an approximate translation of the Spanish word "cosmovisión," which implies understanding of the universe beyond just our planet.

*-Movement V: Methodology, Metaphors, Living The Questions,
Proving the Viability of Alternatives, Widening The Aperture of Possibility-*

BILL_[11]: [Methodology is] simply how we go about finding an answer to a question.

DUBÁN_[12]: It's, step by step, how you're going to do something. Not the "why" or the "what for," it's the "how."

CORNISH + COLLEAGUES_[22]: Owing to the intricacies of working within complex human systems in real time, PAR practitioners do not follow a highly proceduralized or linear set of steps. [...] In a cyclical process, teams work together to come to an initial definition of their social problem, design a suitable action, observe and gather information on the results, and then analyse and reflect on the action and its impact, in order to learn, modify their understanding and inform the next iteration of the research–action cycle. [...] PAR is a collaborative, iterative, often open-ended and unpredictable endeavour [in which r]elationships are central.



LINDSAY: I would say our steps at CWB go something like this:

1. Grow trust, relationships and community
2. Identify relevant questions, goals and/or problems within our community
3. Develop projects that respond to these questions, goals, and/or problems
4. Carry out each project, and carefully collect data during the process
5. Reflect on the project, process, experience and data
6. Share and analyze data and reflections with relevant people
7. Move forward according to new knowledge

But also, I think maybe metaphors are more apt than steps to communicate what we're doing, or what we're going for.

DAVID_[15]: People always talk [about how w]e're social animals. I think we're metaphoric animals. I think we operate, we live, by metaphors.

LINDSAY: Palmar and David – my beautiful teachers and friends, in whose footsteps I'm very proudly following – use jazz and swing dance as metaphors for their work: for the types of learning environments they strive to design, develop and nurture.

DAVID_[15]: [F]or me, when people would say, “How do you know when a class is working?” [I’d answer:] “When It feels like a jazz band.”

PALMAR_[25]: Improvisational jazz is like a threshold unto a multiverse of possibilities, one in which the rediscovery of creative potential emancipates us from the trap of the dualistic, categorical thinking boxed in by rigid epistemological boundaries.

DAVID_[15]: [P]eople will talk about [...] when it clicks, [...] when everything moves. [...] In a jazz band] you need to have a certain set of skills in order to play the instrument. But that's not the point[. ... T]here's so much of jazz where you have to listen to what somebody is saying, and then respond to what they're saying and see if that works.

PALMAR_[25]: Free or improvised jazz [...] holds a political lesson. [...] What’s important in this type of session is not the musical progress of each individual, but rather the bravery and humility of all participants, who abandon learned patterns and pretenses and together discover the creative potential that results when a diversity of abilities and capacities come into dialogue.

DAVID_[26] (**quoting a swing-dancer friend Evita**): As Evita puts it, [...] “You start this cycle of creativity and you can't tell whose idea was whose--and it doesn't matter. At that point, you are creating something you could never do alone or with choreography; you could only achieve that result together. And then, the dance takes on a life of its own--neither one of us controls it[.]”

IVÁN_[18]: A collaboration is a good collaboration [...] when you identify with a project, it resonates with you, [...] and] you don’t just receive orders or follow the parameters of the existing system, but you’re able to make it better, criticize it, reimagine and reconfigure it. You get involved[. ...] And the other thing, the obvious thing: you benefit. Because if I don’t see that you’re benefiting, if I don’t see that you’re growing, our alliance doesn’t make any sense. [...] This is where pertinence and reciprocity come in, in order for a collaboration to work well. Reciprocity: I give and receive in equal measure. And pertinence: [...] the capacity to respect the space of another, [...] asking permission, being sure the other person is okay with the process.

PALMAR_[25]: The pact of respect that exists between musicians — each of them fundamentally equal and fundamentally different — translates to a constant exercise in negotiation of the unexpected. It’s a form of listening to and listening for the different needs and capacities of each instrument, as well as the musical composition as a whole. At the core of improvisational jazz is the mystery of life[.]

DAVID_[15]: It’s an exploration. You're on what [Walker] Percy calls the search, [and] the search is fundamentally about uncertainty.

PALMAR_[25]: Free or improvisational jazz is training in the art of improvisation — understanding improvisation as a potential exit strategy, a way out of established parameters and toward rediscovery of the creative potential of human beings.

DAVID_[15]: As a culture, as people, we fear ambiguity. [...] We don't want to embrace uncertainty, when in fact uncertainty is all about not knowing, [and i]f you're on the search, and you're curious, and you're wondering and wandering and asking questions, then you're moving towards [...] discovery[, which] is [...] the essence of hope.

OHMA THESIS, METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTION ASSIGNMENT: What is your methodology? What steps have you taken and will you take to understand your research questions?

RILKE_[27]: Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books that are now written in a very foreign tongue. Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given [to] you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer.

DAVID_[15]: Some questions will be eternally with us and will change as we live our way into different answers[. ...] I would argue that our most pressing, most demanding problems are ones that we will never solve, but we can outgrow them. [...] This was the conclusion that the Swiss psychologist Carl Jung came to when he wrote, “The greatest and most important problems of life are all in a certain sense insoluble.... They can never be solved, but only outgrown.... This ‘outgrowing’ [...] consist[s] in a new level of consciousness. Some higher or wider interest arose on the person’s horizon, and through this widening of view, the insoluble problem lost its urgency. It was not solved logically in its own terms, but faded out when confronted with a new and stronger life-tendency.”

CAITLIN_[27]: There are people out there who are questioning why the world is the way that it is. And [...] The way I think about it is, how do we open the aperture of possibility of how the world can be? [...] I think the real work is about bringing people along in this process.

PALMAR_[29,30]: It’s necessary to open up a proactive horizon of good news. [...] Eight years ago I began researching democratic community-based practices in contemporary Spain, practices [and communities] oriented [toward ...] the Commons — a system that strives toward just and equitable forms of relationship, management, and governance of power and the means of production. [...] In what kind of world can we live and do we want to live? To this question, all of the communities [that I study] respond from their practice in a plurality of proposals and from experiments in creative revolutionary formulas, in the sense that they validate other ways to understand property, the governing of the public, work, relationships, care, commercial transactions, education, etc.

LINDSAY: In Spanish “to experiment” and “to experience” share a verb, “experimentar.” Culture without Borders Language Collective understands life as research and experience as data. We use a transversal, transdisciplinary, integrative, problem-oriented, participatory, transformative and emancipatory approach to

teaching/research/service — to live, explore and maybe ultimately outgrow the questions that motivate our work.

PALMAR_[29]: [T]he achievement of a system of real alternatives [...] depends largely on popular support[. ...] The faith required for this slow process of systemic change demands proof[.]

DR. CINDY TRIMM_[31]: Each person's life is a testament to what's possible.

CYNTHIA_[32] (quoting Hebrews 11:1): Faith is the substance of things hoped for.

LINDSAY: At CWB We recognize that our world, our economy, and our conventional systems for education (language education especially) are rife with problems to be outgrown. And we're confident that we have the skills, people, and resources necessary to live out alternatives. We commit to living out alternatives to our broken status quo, in an improvisational and relationship-based process guided by the principles of pertinence and reciprocity. We understand the achievement, enactment, and existence of alternatives as proof that alternatives are possible. And we proudly add our voice and our work to a chorus of commons-oriented individuals and communities who are living proof – faith incarnate — that the world, economy, and educational systems we hope for are possible, if we build them.

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