

Picture Books and Social Justice

PAULA GROVES PRICE: OK, we're going to go ahead and get started. OK, I'd like to welcome everyone to the spring 2019 College of Education Diversity Forum. This year, this is a collaboration with the Elson S. Floyd Cultural Center, as well as the WSU Crimson Group. My name is Paula Groves Price, and I'm the associate dean for diversity and international initiatives in the College of Education. And I'm also the scholar in residence here in our beautiful Elson S. Floyd Cultural Center.

Before we get started, I do want to acknowledge that we have our colleagues that are watching currently on our feed. So I want to say hello to our colleagues on the WSU Vancouver campus, who are all gathered together in a room, as well as our colleagues on the WSU Tri-Cities campus, who are also there. They were texting me, saying, are we missing something? And I had to say, no, we're just a little late. As well as our WSU Spokane and our WSU Global Campus-- so we very much appreciate everyone who is joining us through the livestream.

Before we begin, I'd also like to acknowledge that WSU sits on the ceded lands of the Nez Perce tribe and the traditional homelands of the Palouse band of Indians. In the College of Education, and also here in the Elson S. Floyd Cultural Center, we acknowledge their presence here since time immemorial and their continuing connection to the land and ancestors. What I'd now like to do is introduce the dean of the College of Education, Dr. Michael Trevisan, for a few words of welcome.

[APPLAUSE]

MICHAEL TREVISAN: Great. Thank you, Paula. And thanks, everybody, for trucking out here in the snow and the ice. It's great to see you.

I just met Duncan just a few minutes ago. I've been involved with children's books as a parent, and now a grandparent, for many, many years. And my wife is just a retired librarian at a children's elementary school in the next school district over. And so I've heard a lot about children's books and the nuances of them. And we've always thought connecting social justice, or communicating social justice themes through children's books, is just one fabulous idea.

So I want to thank Duncan for being here. All his books are up there, so we're going to be first in line to get autographs too, after the presentation. So thank you. And I'm sure you're going to enjoy this.

[APPLAUSE]

PAULA GROVES PRICE: All right. Thank you, Dean Trevisan. So how did we get an author-- an award-winning author like Duncan Tonatiuh-- here to WSU and here in Pullman? So here, in the elementary education program on the Pullman campus, students who are enrolled in a

course titled Diversity in Schools spend their semester learning more deeply about what it means to be a culturally responsive educator. And one of their core capstone assignments, which is implemented in partnership with the Pullman school district, is selecting children's books that are written by authors of colors whose books can also be utilized to teach issues of social justice and culture with elementary-aged children.

This year, students in the fall semester taught lessons based on books of our keynote speaker at Sunnyside Elementary School. And this April, our current students who are enrolled in this course will also create lesson plans based off of his books and teach them in Franklin Elementary School. This project is a wonderful way for us to bring diversity and justice conversations to our community schools, diversify the classroom library.

So one of the deals that we have with the Pullman school district is that, whenever we have one of these lesson plans that's taught in the schools, our students gift the children's book to the classroom that they taught their lesson in. So we're also diversifying each and every classroom in the Pullman elementary schools. But it also provides our College of Education students real-life practice facilitating multicultural lessons with children before they enter student teaching.

So we are very delighted that Duncan Tonatiuah accepted our offer to be with us this evening. He spent the morning reading his books to a very excited group of children from the Montessori School of Pullman. And then he visited with our teacher-education students in the College of Education. So here, to introduce our keynote speaker, I'd like to call student Keyla Palominos-Hernandez to the podium.

Keyla is an undocumented Latinx student here at WSU majoring in English with a minor in Spanish. And upon graduation, this December, Keyla hopes to enter our master in teaching program where she'll also earn an endorsement an English-language learning. She is a wonderful student, dedicated to justice and equality. And I'm sure that she will be a fantastic teacher once she finishes our program. So Keyla, please-- give it up for Keyla.

[APPLAUSE]

KEYLA PALOMINOS: I'm a little short. [CHUCKLES] Let me put this down. So as Paula said, my name is Keyla Palominos-Hernandez, since I got married last year. It's a pleasure to introduce Duncan Tonatiuah Smith-Hernandez. I actually-- [INAUDIBLE] I'm not this tall, OK?

I'm privileged because, see, Duncan is writing a lot of books-- books that I wish I read and saw myself represented growing up, right? And I think it's so important in our communities. And I saw, I was reading in your page, there's 5.2 million students in the United States that aren't being represented.

And there's usually a lot of-- what I would call it? Can we talk about social justice? Can we talk about immigration? Can we even talk about that when they're first graders? And my answer is,

well, if they're already bullying-- if they're already saying things to their classmates-- they are ready, right?

Students use-- they're natural sponges, right? They take it in, and they take it out. So I think it's very important, as a future educator-- and a lot of you that are already educators-- that we understand that we need to include diversity and not just say it. Right? So I think it's very important that Duncan is using his platform to create such books that, as a child, I wish to have read and be represented.

In one of your books, Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote, [INAUDIBLE]. It's very deep to my heart. It talks about-- a lot of your stories, a lot of them-- and my colleagues, individuals, are here in this setting. Right? The struggle of that journey that sometimes is just put as a number, as you said, right? So I want to give thanks to Duncan, to the college of ed, to [INAUDIBLE], to a lot of you for bringing Duncan to this place and acknowledging his work to a lot of our communities.

It's very important. I can't say that enough. And as a teacher-educator, we need more of that. And we need more allies to do that for not just us, but to be there with us. So I want to welcome Duncan Tonatiuah Smith-Hernandez.

[APPLAUSE]

DUNCAN TONATIUAH: Good evening. Thank you for having me here. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak and share some of my work. And thank you for the introduction.

Yes, my name is Duncan, or Doon-can. In Spanish, you want to pronounce my name Doon-can Tonatiuah. And I write and I illustrate books. And what I'd like to do today is share a little bit of my--

CREW: Scoot this a little closer here. [INAUDIBLE] the sound system.

DUNCAN TONATIUAH: --share some of my journey to becoming an author, an Illustrator, talk to you a little bit about how I do it, why I do it, what I hope it accomplishes, some of the things I've learned. And I definitely want to give you guys a chance to ask questions, if there's any questions. And yeah, this is a great opportunity to share my work, but also just to kind of learn and see from others, and see from students, see from teachers. It's always very powerful when people connect to my work and very rewarding. So I'm very happy to be here.

So I grew up in Mexico. I was born in Mexico. I grew up in Mexico. I grew up in a small city called San Miguel de Allende in Central Mexico-- a very pretty city.

But my father is American. He's from the US, white, Anglo. He graduated in '69, I believe, and went down with his hippie buddies-- down to Mexico in a VW van. He was supposed to be there for a couple weeks. But 50 years later, he's still in Mexico.

[LAUGHTER]

And when I was in high school-- I graduated high school in my county, San Miguel. But I didn't like my high school. And so then I ended up coming to the US. I had family in the US. And I went to school in Massachusetts and later on to a college-- to design school in New York City.

And I always liked writing. I liked drawing since I was in elementary school. For a while, when we-- I was born in Mexico City, but we moved to San Miguel when I was about seven, eight years old.

And when we moved, we didn't have a TV. I didn't know many other kids in my neighborhood, in my school. So when I first moved there to San Miguel, I would borrow a lot of books from my school library.

And they had this series called, Choose Your Own Adventure. And I would borrow a lot of these Choose Your Own Adventure books. And I would read one and then take it back and borrow another one. And I wanted to read the whole series.

And because I liked reading a lot I thought to myself, well, maybe I could write something. And whenever I had assignments in school that had to do with writing, I would often get very carried away. And it's just something that always kind of stayed with me, especially later on in high school.

I went to a very art-oriented high school. And later on in college, I took a lot of different writing classes. And it's always something that I wanted to pursue. But I was also always interested in drawing.

One spring break, my cousins came to visit me. And they brought a stack of comic books-- like spider-Man and X-Men. And we would read comic books, but then we would try and make up our own comic books, make up our own superheroes. We would fold pieces of paper, or grab notebooks and create our own characters, make up our own stories. And I've liked drawing ever since.

I've always kept drawing. I kept doing it in middle school. In middle school, I was really into political cartoons. And I would cut them out of the newspaper, and then I would try and make my cartoons of my classmates and my teachers. And they didn't like them very much, because I would always draw them with big teeth, and big ears, and big noses.

And then, later on in college, I did a lot of-- in high school, I did a lot of painting and black-and-white photography. And so it was just something that I always was interested in. But what happened is-- when I was about 15 is when I came to the US. And as I started spending more time in the US, I began to miss things that were around me growing up in and San Miguel-- the food, the music, just different traditions, different holidays. And I just began to realize, for myself, how unique certain things were.

I think sometimes, when you live in a place, you take what's around you for granted. And then, being away from San Miguel, from Mexico, I just began to realize that certain holidays, like the Day of the Dead, is a very unique and special holiday-- or different celebrations, or certain things. And I just became more curious about my heritage, my culture. And so whenever I had assignments in school, I would often relate them to my culture, to my heritage.

And so my last year in college, my senior year, I had to have a senior project. And I've also been-- I became interested in those subjects, and I've also been interested in social justice. And I was taking also different classes, like a community organizing class, an immigration class, just different things. It was always a theme that interested me. And I wanted, for my senior project, something where I could relate those things-- art and social justice.

And so at the time, I volunteered at this-- sometimes I volunteered at this worker center in New York City where there were people of different backgrounds that were having problems at their job. Maybe they were not being paid fairly, or their tips were being stolen. They did not have access to sick days. Just the working conditions weren't good. And there were different people of different backgrounds.

Some people are undocumented. Some people were citizens and people with documents, legal immigrants. But they were all there because they had some of these experiences. And some of the people that I met there were Mixtec. And Mixtec is an-- Mixtec, or Mish-tek-- it an indigenous group from the south of Mexico from states like Guerrero, Oaxaca, Puelba.

And I was very intrigued by this, because the people I met-- they spoke their own dialect. They spoke their Mixtec dialect. They maintained some of their traditions from their small villages in Mexico. But now they were in this large city, in a different country. And I just thought that that experience and that journey was very interesting, and I wanted to make a project about it.

And when I decided to do that, when I decided that that was going to be my project-- and at the time, I was very interested in graphic novels. I liked different graphic novels like Persepolis, like Maus, like Palestine. Different projects I had seen that, through a graphic medium, talked about issues like the Holocaust or the Iranian Revolution-- that were able to talk about those topics, about politics, through that medium. So I wanted to do something similar, but I wanted to make the artwork different somehow.

And so one of the first things I did when I decided that that was going to be my project is go on my university's library and look up Mixtec artwork. And these were the kind of images I found. In books, I found images of Mixtec codices. These are from books that were made about 500 years ago, 600 years ago. And the Mixtecs-- there is modern day Mixtecs, but they were also a civilization like the Aztecs, like the Mayans, that built pyramids, that had their own language. And they would make these books.

And I had seen these kinds of images growing up in Mexico. I remember in my textbooks, when I was in elementary school, oftentimes on the cover they would have an image of pre-

Colombian art on it, like the Aztec sun or the Aztec calendar, the one with the sun sticking its tongue out like this. In San Miguel, there's a big craft market. And sometimes you'll see different-- they'll sell different crafts that look kind of like codex-like images.

But I'd be lying if I said that I was always interested in that. But I've been drawing like that since I was a kid. When I was a kid, I was interested in comic books. Later on, in manga and Japanese animation. And in high school, I was interested in painters like Van Gogh and [? Egon Schiele ?]. But it was until years of living in the United States, living away from Mexico, that I became more curious of this art and kind of saw it again.

And when I saw it again, I just became very fascinated by it. And I just said that I wanted to make a modern-day codex. And so I looked at these images and how they're always in profile, how the ears are drawn, the hands, the feet, how they're very stylized. And I decided, for my book, I wanted to do something like that.

So here are some images from how, actually, that turned out. And so I tried to look at the ears, how everything's very flat. One second, please.

And so here's a story. It's a story of Juan, which is inspired by some of the people that I met there at the worker center. And he came from Mexico.

Well, he started working from when he was very young, because his father passed away. He came to the US before he turned 18. And then he came to New York City at a time where the neighborhood where he lived in was very violent. And he lived in this crowded apartment with his cousins and his uncle.

And then here, in this spread, are some of the jobs that you often see the Mexican guys and the [INAUDIBLE] in New York have-- working as a grill man, or in delis, or delivering food, in supermarkets, as prep cooks. And then he started work at this restaurant, and he worked there for many years. That's where he met his wife, who used to work there making spring rolls-- taquitos.

But then there was this waitress, some years later, that started working there. And she would always tell him that she wanted to go have the happy hour with him. And he would say to her, what do you mean? I'm a married man. I can't go have the happy hour with you. And actually, this is as far as I got for my project at school.

And then the story actually continues. And it's about-- she's not hitting on him or interested in him like that. But she starts talking to him about-- that it's not fair that they're being paid so little, that they don't have access to overtime pay, that the boss steals their tips.

And eventually, he starts organizing with other of his co-workers. And they organize a protest, and they're able to recuperate money-- wages that they were owed. And then, later on, he starts helping other people at the worker center also.

And so I did this project. And a professor at my university thought it was very interesting, thought it was good. She thought the illustrations were very interesting. And so she had illustrated some children's books, and she introduced me to an editor who published children's books, and he liked my illustrations. And he said, if we receive a manuscript, a story that we think suits your style, we will be in touch because we'd like you to illustrate a book for us.

And I said, yeah, that would be great. I would love to do that. But I also write, myself, and I'm actually taking a bunch of writing classes. That'd be great. Maybe I could write something?

And he said, sure. He taught me some basic things about picture books. Even though I've always-- I had been interested in pursuing a career in the arts and visual arts and writing for several years, I'd never really considered doing children's books. I always thought of doing work for adults. But then I met this editor and this opportunity came up, this door opened.

And so he taught me some very basic things about picture books. He said, usually they're 32 pages long, or sometimes 40. And part of the reason is just it's just cost effective, because that's an easy way to bind the book, to print it. It's a cost-efficient way to make a book. And it's also a good length for the book.

He said, leave a page there for the copyright. Leave a page there for a title page. Maybe make a protagonist, maybe a young person or an animal, someone that young readers can identify with.

He just taught me some very basic things. And he said, and if you write something, here's my card. Here's my email. Send it to me, and we'll take it from there.

And so sometime later, while I was still working on this project, finishing this project for my senior project, I had an idea for a book about two cousins-- one that lives in a rural community in Mexico and one that lives in an urban center in the United States. And they would send letters back and forth to each other about their everyday expenses. And so I wrote the manuscript, and it was the first picture book, children's book, I had written.

So I thought, well, I should make a rhyme, like Dr. Seuss. And I wrote the book, and then I sent it to the editor. And sometime later, he responded.

And he said, you know, I really liked your illustrations. And I think this idea of these two cousins-- one this in a rural community in Mexico, one that lives in an urban center in the United States-- is very interesting. It's strong. We would like to make this book happen. But no rhyming, please.

[LAUGHTER]

My rhyming wasn't quite that strong. And so I revised the story several times. Eventually, it became my first book. And it became my first job when I graduated from college. And it became this book-- Dear Primo: A Letter to My Cousin.

And in the story, there's these two cousins, Carlitos and Charlie, who send letters back and forth to each other and just talk about their everyday lives. One rides his [SPEAKING SPANISH] to school, the other one rides the subway. One likes to play football, the other one likes to play basketball. One likes to eat quesadillas, the other one likes to eat pizza.

These are some of the games that Carlitos plays. These are some of the games that Charlie plays. Here's what they do when it gets hot. One goes to the [SPEAKING SPANISH], the other one goes to the supermarket.

And so, throughout the book, I try to show the differences-- the different traditions they celebrate-- but also the similarities. Because maybe one of the cousins likes to play football, and the other one likes to play basketball, but they both like sports. Or they both like cheesy food. Or they both like to spend time with their friends, with their family.

And that's one thing that I've learned by living both in Mexico and the United States and having-- and because I've spent time in both places, and I have family in both places, I feel I've really seen this. That even though there's a lot of differences between both places, there's more similarities than differences. And I think that's especially true about children, regardless of where in the world they're from or where in the world they are.

And this book was very much inspired when I was in school in New York. For a while, I lived in this neighborhood called Sunset Park. And in Sunset Park, there's a large Mexican community.

And when I first moved there, it was winter. And what impressed me the most were the kids, because the kids looked just like the kids that I had grown up with in San Miguel. There was like the same face, they were like the same kids.

But then in Sunset Park, it was the middle of the winter, so they were all wearing big jackets and speaking English. And there was the Manhattan skyline in the background. And whereas, in San Miguel where I grew up, it's pretty warm most of the year. We speak Spanish. The houses are small, but very colorful.

So to me, it was the same child in a different environment. And that was a big inspiration for this project. And so I made this book.

And after I made this book, I wrote something else, and I sent it to my editor. And I would assume that anything I wrote would become a book. But I sent a manuscript and he said, oh, I don't know about this, I'm not sure about this-- or, maybe you need to work on this some more? And so I think my first book published was pretty smooth, but then to get my second book was a lot more-- I got a lot more rejections, so it was a lot more challenging.

But eventually, I made a second book and a third book. And now I've made-- this fall, I have my ninth book with the same editor. It's coming out. So we've had a very good working relationship.

And I've really come to enjoy making children's books, because I like Brian. I like writing, I like drawing. And I get to learn about things that I wanted to learn more about. And I also get to share things that I find important, that I care about.

And so I want to show you a little bit of a couple other books. This is the Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote. And when I first started work on this book, I thought of making what they call a fractured tale-- maybe doing something like the Little Red Riding Hood, but kind of giving it a twist, making it a little different.

I had seen-- I was at this workshop once, and there was an editor from a publishing company somewhere in Europe. And he talked about how he never thought he would publish a book about the Little Red Riding Hood. But then one day, this Illustrator came up to him and showed him these illustrations of the Little Red Riding Hood that were so original, and so different, and so creative that he said, even though this book has been done so many times, I have to publish this book because this is such an interesting take on it.

So when I heard that, that to me was like, wow. I want to make a book about the Little Red Riding Hood that is so unique and so different that an editor will want to publish it. And so I thought, well, maybe I can do-- maybe, instead of wearing a hood, she can wear a [SPEAKING SPANISH], a traditional Mexican shawl. And maybe instead of a wolf, there can be a coyote. And then maybe instead of being set in a forest, it can be in the desert. So I tried changing a few things.

But then I remembered that coyote is slang for a person that smuggles people between the US-Mexico border. And so I tried to make the book so it could be read in two ways, and actually ended up moving away from the Little Red Riding Hood story and making me the main character a rabbit. So hopefully this book can be read as a fable, but then also as an allegory of the journey that migrants often go through.

So the story here is a papa rabbit. And he's leaving, he's going north, because it's not raining. There's a drought, and there's no work or food on the [SPEAKING SPANISH]. And then he's coming home after several years, after working in carrot and lettuce fields where he's been saving money. And there's going to be this big fiesta for him.

They're preparing him his favorite food-- his molé, rice and beans, warm tortillas, special [SPEAKING SPANISH]. There's going to be this big party when he returns. The papa rabbit does not show up. Now the rabbit family is really worried, wondering where he is. And they wait long into the night for him.

Then his older son, Pancho rabbit, decides that he has to go find him. And he follows the stars north and walks for many hours. He passes papa's favorite food and his [SPEAKING SPANISH]. And instead of running into his father, instead of finding his father, he runs across this coyote. And the coyote offers to help him, but he asks him for the sweet and spicy molé he has in his [SPEAKING SPANISH].

So he hands him a shortcut. So the shortcut is taking Pancho, showing him to ride on top of a train. And he rides on top of a train. You can see that the coyote ate the molé, because it's smeared there around his mouth. You can see that Pancho almost falls off and then gets across the river.

But Pancho doesn't know how to swim. And the coyote tells Pancho that he can help him, but that he's going to have to give him the rice and beans he has in his [SPEAKING SPANISH]. And then they reach this tall wall that separates the north from the south. And then they cannot go over the wall, they cannot go around the wall, because it's so long.

But the coyote tells Pancho that they can use a tunnel to go underneath the wall, but the snakes watch it. And maybe, if he gives them the tortillas he has in his [SPEAKING SPANISH], they will let them through. And then, after they come out of the tunnel, out in the dessert-- and they have to walk in the desert, but it's very hot. And so Pancho had to give the coyote the [SPEAKING SPANISH], the sweet-water drink he has in his [SPEAKING SPANISH]-- because the coyote's so thirsty and so dizzy. And he's worried that, if he doesn't drink something, they'll never get there.

And then there is this little house. And the coyote says to Pancho, I'm so hungry from all that walking. You have any more molé, little rabbit?

No, Senor Coyote, you ate it all. Any more rice and beans? No, Senor Coyote, you ate them all. Any more tortillas? No, Senor Coyote, the snakes ate them all. There is nothing left, not even a drop of [SPEAKING SPANISH].

In that case, said the coyote, I'm going to roast you in the fire and I'm going to eat you. Pancho screams, help, help. And usually, rabbits are faster than coyotes, but Pancho's so tired from the long journey that he cannot reach the door or the window. He only huddles in a little corner and watches how the coyote is getting ready to eat him. And I'm not going to tell you how the story ends so you want to buy the book.

[LAUGHTER]

There's copies there-- in the room over there. But so this story, it's a fable. And I read a lot of-- I read different fables and fairy tales to hopefully get kind of that structure and that feel. But it's also an allegory of the journey that migrants go through, like riding on top of trains-- that often go through to come to the United States-- crossing the river, walking through the desert.

And it's not my personal experience. Like I said, my dad is American. And, therefore, I am a US citizen, also. I have a US passport, and I can enter and exit the country easily.

But growing up in San Miguel, there were a lot of my friends-- a lot of kids from my neighborhood that I grew up with. Oftentimes, by the time they were teenagers, they would leave and go to Texas-- go to California, go to other places-- to find work. And then they would come back, and I would hear stories of all the different dangers they'd faced, about their different experiences. And then, when I came to the United States, I also met people-- like at the worker center and other places-- that had also had these kinds of experiences. And I wanted to-- even though it's not my personal experience, I just felt that I wanted to talk about it and to write about it.

And what I'd like to do is share a short video that some fourth graders in a school in Texas made after they read this book. It's a video they made. I wasn't involved with it. It was them and their teachers that made this video. And then I'll tell you a few things about it.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- I'm 10 years old.

- I'm in fourth grade.

- I live in the United States. I always have.

- I came here when I was a baby.

- [SPEAKING SPANISH]

- My parents grew up in the United States, but my family speaks Spanish.

- My grandpa said they grew up very poor.

- My dad said there was no work in Mexico--

--in Honduras--

--in Guatemala.

- My mom said we could go to school in the United States and have the education she didn't get to have.

- My family decided that we would go. My best friend told me how he swam across the river.

- My mom told me how cold the water was and how she held me close because I was just a baby.
- My dad said he crossed the desert. He said he has no food, no water, no shoes, no money.
- That's how my [SPEAKING SPANISH] died.
- My mom tried to come here three times before she got across. I waited for her for a year.
- I came across at night.
- We ran.
- We were quiet.
- We had nothing, just the phone number of my cousin who would come pick us up.
- Now we are here.
- Some of us were born here.
- Some of us were carried here as babies.
- Some of us just came here. [SPEAKING SPANISH]
- But we all want the same thing--
- --to learn--
- --to grow--
- --to find our way.
- I want to be a doctor.
- I want to be a vet.
- I want to be a teacher.
- I want to be an artist.
- I want to be an author.
- Will you let me?

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[END PLAYBACK]

So that was a video that these students made. I was at a book festival in Texas, and they had a tent where different authors would come and read their book-- their latest book. And a class of students would introduce them. And so these students, they introduced me.

They say, here's Mr. Tonatiuah. He's made this book, he's made that book. And now we want to share this video that we made, inspired after we read Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote.

And so it was very moving when they showed it to me. And it also made me very happy in the sense that I felt that my book had helped them just kind of realize their voices are important, that-- yeah. I just encouraged them to talk about their experiences, realize their experiences are important.

And I think that's one of the power of books, of children's books. In the United States, there's a very robust publishing industry. There's thousands of new books for young readers that come out every year. But of those thousands of books, only a very small percentage are about people of color. And even though the United States is such a-- it's such a diverse country and the kids that are in the classroom are from so many different backgrounds, there's oftentimes very few books where they see themselves reflected or represented.

In the back of the book, I include some statistics that talk about-- I think there's about 5 million children of undocumented parents in the US, 1 million undocumented minors. The statistics-- I've got to look which ones are the most up-to-date. But it's a lot of kids, and there's very few books that talk about their experiences. And I think it's very important. Like I said, I think it makes them--

When you see your culture-- the kinds of food you eat, the kind of language you speak, different traditions that you celebrate-- reflected in books, it helps you realize that your voice is important, too. That you matter, too. And I think it's also very important for other kinds of children-- for children that may have a different background, that may have a very different experience.

When you read these kinds of books, multicultural books, hopefully you'll learn about someone that's different than yourself. And that way, you get to know them a little bit. And so when you encounter them in real life, I think you're less likely to have prejudice toward people that are different than yourselves. And so that's one thing that I hope my books can accomplish and one of the reasons that I make children's books.

When I first started making books, it came out of this desire to kind of connect with my culture and learn more about it. But now I've been making books for about 10 years and have really

come to learn about this need for these kinds of books. And one thing I was saying earlier is it's - for me, it's very exciting making a book.

Can be kind of solitary at times, because you work-- I usually work at home, or in my studio, or maybe I'll go to the library. But it's not like in a university or a school, where you have a lot of classmates, and peers, and other people around you. I interact with my editor and whatnot, but we mostly just email-- maybe a phone call every once in awhile. But then to see the world-- when the book is done and come out into the world and see how people react to it, that's very exciting.

And what's even more exciting to me is to see people using the book in the classroom and kind of making it their own and developing different curricula, and developing different projects, around the book. So it was very fulfilling when those students showed me that project, on many levels. Does anybody have any questions so far?

So what would I like to do-- I know some of you are-- maybe many of you are studying to be teachers. So I'd like to share with you a few resources of how this book and other books can be used in the classroom. And I know you're doing an assignment related to this, so I hope this is not counterproductive.

So Pancho Rabbit had one Honorable Mention from the Americas Award. And the Americas Award-- one thing that they do that's really great is they make a lot of educator's guides. And so they made this very thorough guide for Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote, just talking about different ways of how you could create kind of like a unit with the book and how to relate it to different themes.

So there's an overview there of the book, relating it to Common Core standards. But then there's different plans and activities. And so for example, there's things trying to relate it to fables and to an allegory. Another option is relating it to Mesoamerica-- to the different cultures of Mesoamerica and to the art, also-- and to folktales from Columbian times. There's also things you can do related to the artwork, to the codices.

And then there's immigration and talking about immigration. The same teacher that made the video-- she's a wonderful teacher, and she created this unit. And she read Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote with her students. And then she read other books-- picture books and YA books-- that are about immigration. And then she tried to make you think about, who are the rabbits, and who are the coyotes in these stories, and why, and sort of developed a whole unit around this.

And then, here, it has this wonderful list of just different complementary literature and film, other books that relate to it-- just very thorough, and just a lot of different books that talk about this subject. So you can kind of extend it. And the books-- picture books, the books that I make-- they're most often used in elementary school.

Part of the reason is that it's oftentimes for kids that are learning how to read or began reading recently, because maybe there's something-- because they have images. They have illustrations in every page. And so maybe you can't figure out something on the page. By looking at the drawings, you can kind of figure out what's going on. So that's usually the age group that is associated with picture books.

But I think picture books can be used with all sorts of different age groups. And I think a book like Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote, or some of the other books that I've made-- I think they can serve as a discussion. I think we can start a discussion with elementary school students, with high school students. I think you can work with many different groups.

One thing that I'd like to show you is a little bit of how I make my art work. I talked of how people are always in a profile, the way I draw ears, the way I draw hands. It comes from looking at these kinds of drawings.

But then one thing that you may have noticed I do differently is that there are some parts of the book that look very realistic. There's a lot of ? paintings ?] on this sleeping bag here, or the jeans, or the cobblestones. Different parts of the book look very realistic. And would you guys be interested in seeing how I do that?

AUDIENCE: Yeah.

DUNCAN TONATIUAH: OK. I think some of your saw it earlier when I was in your class. But what I do is that I draw on a piece of paper-- usually like a letter-size and notebook-size piece of paper-- with a pencil. And then, once I like my drawing, I go over it with a pen. And then I scan my drawing.

And I scan drawings, but I scan all sorts of things. And so I have here a folder with different textures that I've scanned. So for example, I have here this paper bag-- just a paper bag that they gave me at the supermarket to put my groceries in. And then I use Photoshop.

I use this old version of Photoshop that I've had for a long time. And then here I can select it, I can copy it. And I go back here to my drawing, choose different areas, and then I can paste into it.

And so it's kind of like I grab that piece of paper-- that piece of brown paper-- and cut it and then glue it on top of my image. But instead of using scissors and glue, I use the computer. And I'm kind of messy, so it works for me.

[LAUGHTER]

And then, for example, I can give them jeans. I can give them black jeans, purple jeans, red jeans. I'll give them blue jeans. And the same thing-- I copy and paste. So I can just put a pair of jeans on top of a scanner, and then I can paste into it.

And some things are hard to scan. So, for example, hair-- I could try and put my hair in the scanner and scan it somehow. But instead of doing that, I can take a photograph of someone's hair. Or I can just find a picture on the internet. And so I like using this photograph I found, and this one.

And so I select it, I copy it. And then I paste into it. And it's a little small. I stretch it out, rotate around a little bit. And then that becomes the hair.

So if we go back to the book, you can see-- for all the different parts, for all their clothes and all the backgrounds, and the floor, all the different parts of the book-- I make them using this technique. Any thoughts, questions? Yes?

AUDIENCE: Yeah. I was wondering if you could estimate-- well, probably every book is a different project. But from start to finish, about how long does it take?

DUNCAN TONATIUAH: It usually takes me between six months and a year to make a book. So some books-- I've done several non-fiction books. And for those, the first step is researching.

So for example, I did this book-- *Separate Is Never Equal*-- about the Mendez family and a civil rights case that happened 70 years before *Brown versus Board of Education*, back in desegregated schools in California, because Mexican-American children were not allowed to go to school with white children. And this was true throughout the southwest. And so I made this book. And so for example, for this, the first part of it was researching.

I was trying to learn as much about the case. I read different books. I watched a documentary. I got to interview Sylvia Mendez, who's the main character in the book. And she's still alive today, and travels a lot, and talks about this case.

Then, after that, I write the story. And like that first time, when I tried to be Dr. Seuss and it didn't quite work out, I always have to revise it several times. I usually do three, four major revisions. And then it's smaller revisions-- you know, little tweaks.

And when I write, I always take little thumbnails with-- I always have the design of the book in mind, what's going to be in each page. And I'll just make little doodles, little thumbnails. And then, once the text is not totally perfect when we finish, but it's close to being done, then I'll start doing sketches, drawings for the whole book, but just some black and white without any color and texture. And then, once the text is done, once the sketches are done, then that's when I start putting color and texture.

And the first part is a more creative part-- when I'm first writing, when I'm revising. It's also the hardest part sometimes. It's always the hardest part, and sometimes you get stuck. When I put the color in the illustrations, like I showed you, it takes me a lot of hours, a lot of days, because I pay attention to all the little details. So it just takes me a lot of time.

But I don't have to think as much. So I can have music playing, the news, or sports on TV or something, or a show. And so it takes me a lot of time, but it's not as-- I don't need to be as focused, so to speak. And so to do that for a book, it takes me at least six months, sometimes closer to a year.

And then the book needs at least another-- it's at least another six months for it to come out, because it needs to get printed. They send advanced-review copies to different places. So from the time that I first start working on a book-- that an idea that I'm working on gets approved, that I'm able to sell the book, till the time that someone's actually holding the book in their hands-- it's at least a year, sometimes closer to two.

PAULA GROVES PRICE: [INAUDIBLE] We have a question from the Tr-Cities campus. And one of the students wants to know, how can they incorporate your books into older grades?

DUNCAN TONATIUAH: I mean, I think part of it is-- they can be a discussion starter. I think a book like Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote-- you can read that, and then that can lead into talking or reading other books that deal with immigration. Or, for example, the Mendez case-- it's a quick read, you know? But then I think-- and sort of as a discussion starter, maybe as a way to encourage students to learn about other cases.

When we teach civil rights and we learn about civil rights, we often focus on some very vague historical figures that are very important. But there are also all sorts of other figures that are maybe not so well known-- like the Mendez family, for example. And so I think maybe reading a book like this with an older grade-- they can lead to learning about other cases, about other similar cases that are happening at other times or about other people that also experience discrimination. So I think they can often be used as conversation starters. I think they can definitely work with older grades.

PAULA GROVES PRICE: All right, thank you. Other questions from the Pullman campus?

DUNCAN TONATIUAH: Yes?

PAULA GROVES PRICE: Wait, I can bring you the mic so that our Global Campus folks can actually hear the question. Awesome.

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE] the United State's show [INAUDIBLE] Legend Quest.

DUNCAN TONATIUAH: The what show? Sorry.

AUDIENCE: Legend Quest. It's supposedly made in Mexico. And the last episode is about, basically, if they face the legends from different cultures. But by the end, they face [INAUDIBLE]. He's demonized, basically, in the show.

So my-- it's not really a question, but-- like, for me to see how your art can be like totally opposite of those, too. Demonizing those ideas of-- demonizing the Mexican culture and Aztec cultures, you simply shouldn't see that. And my question for you will be, is your books distributed in Mexico or all over the world? Can you explain more about that?

DUNCAN TONATIUAH: Yeah. So I'm not familiar with the show. So my books-- all the books that I have made have been published in the US and English with some Spanish in it. Now, fortunately, some of my books are available in Spanish also and are available in the US and also in Mexico.

I've worked with this publishing company, with Abrams, and they've been very supportive of my work. But they don't have much experience publishing books in Spanish, so they themselves have been very apprehensive about trying it out. But that's often a question that I'm asked about. I know there's a big need for books in Spanish in the US. And so, fortunately, there's more available now. There's a couple.

There is this book-- Separate Is Never Equal. It's available in Spanish. Dear Primo is available in Spanish. And then also this book-- the Princess and the Warrior, [SPEAKING SPANISH]. This one is also available in Spanish.

And Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote is supposed to come out in Spanish soon, sometime this year. So a few of them are available now. But they've primarily been published in English and the United States.

PAULA GROVES PRICE: OK. More questions? Do I have questions in this room?

I have another question from Tri-Cities. And the question is-- if I can read it correctly-- in one of the classes, students are learning about the writing process and keeping writer's notebooks. Do you keep to notebook yourself? And what kinds of techniques do you use in your own writing process to help you get from start to finish?

DUNCAN TONATIUAH: Well, one thing is-- I mean, I can't stress the importance of reading. I think, as a writer-- I became interested in writing and a writer because of reading. So oftentimes, when I'm working on a project, one of the first I do will kind of read to get motivated and soak in and see how other authors do it. And then hopefully that'll also come out in my work.

So I would say that that's one. If you are interested in writing, I think one of the important things is to be a reader and really pay attention, and to really read, like a writer. Pay attention to what choices different writers make in their books.

And another thing-- it's a book. I'm the author and Illustrator, but an editor and other people that published the book really have-- I really see it as a collaborative effort, you know? Even though I know I'm the author and the illustrator, I have a very good relationship with my editor.

And I trust him, you know? He's been doing it for many years, and he's published some very good books.

And when I write something, he'll give me feedback. He'll give me comments. He'll ask me questions. And I think that's very important to help me look at things differently sometimes.

Like sometimes I'll write something and he'll like the idea. But I have to restructure the story, or I'll have to change something. So I think having an editor-- or maybe having just a group of people that you revise work, someone else to look at your work-- can be very helpful. Because sometimes, when you do the work yourself, you get so attached to it or look at it with the same set of eyes. And sometimes, it's good to have a fresh view on it to help make the work better.

Yeah, and I guess it's kind of-- I don't have a writer's notebook, per se. But whenever I have an idea, I start trying to write it down. I have a list of different projects I'm interested in. I have things I have written that maybe I'll try and revisit at different times. But those are some suggestions I can give for people interested in writing.

PAULA GROVES PRICE: Thank you. Vancouver campus, just to give you-- if you do have any questions, be sure to post them to the Global Canvas chat. Any other questions here in Pullman? Don't be shy because I have a mic. OK, yes.

AUDIENCE: My question is, is there any aspect from either Mexican or American culture that-- is there any aspect of these different cultures that feels underrepresented or under-discussed that you want to sort of push into you know what I mean?

DUNCAN TONATIUAH: Yeah, that's a good question. So I think there's this-- I mentioned earlier, there's this small amount of books that talk about people of color, about Latinos, in children's books in the US and books for young readers. So I think the first step is to just have more. Hopefully, we have more out there. But I think, hopefully, as there are more books published-- and I think it's just important to show the variety.

I think, sometimes, there's themes, recurring themes that-- and I think there's just-- like Latinos, Latinx, are not this monolithic group. There's people from so many different countries, with so many different experiences-- people that are maybe a reason to write it, maybe people that have lived in the United States for generations and generations. And I think people that are mixed race-- I mean, there's just such a variety, such diversity, within the Latinx community that I do hope that, as there's more volume of these books being produced, that there's also more variety in the kinds of stories that are told.

Me, I'm interested-- and themes that I've drawn in are social justice, history, art. Those are some of the themes that I usually end up talking about in my books. But yeah. I do hope that, as there are more authors and illustrators out there, that you see a wider range in even what Latinx children's books are about.

PAULA GROVES PRICE: Any other questions? OK. Well, thank you very much then, Duncan.

[APPPLAUSE]

[INAUDIBLE] On behalf of the College of Education, we have a swag bag of goodies for you.

DUNCAN TONATIUAH: Thank you, thank you.

PAULA GROVES PRICE: And the one that we're very proud of is-- we would like to give you a #AgentsofChange t-shirt, as well.

DUNCAN TONATIUAH: Very cool. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

PAULA GROVES PRICE: What I was telling Duncan here is that this is one of the first events where, in this facility, we are really utilizing our cultural kitchen in the way that we had originally intended for it to be utilized. And so I see some of our original members of the steering committee. I see Manuel. I see Lucy here. And so I'm sure that it will make them very happy to know that our cultural kitchen is being utilized.

Our WSU Crimson Group has been working really hard on preparing the food. They actually also prepared the pico de gallo that you may have been eating throughout our presentation, as well as the chips. And they've also been preparing more food that will be available for us in just a second.

As I mentioned earlier, the WSU bookie is set up here in our eagle and serpent room. And so you will be able to purchase some of the books, as well as get them signed. What I'd like to do is to call-- is Venus here? Venus Perez?

Yeah, Venus, come on up. She's going to talk to us a little bit about the Crimson Group because they are one of our great partners that really helped make this night possible, particularly with our reception. And then Linda Vargas is going to-- there she is-- is going to tell us a little bit about the food.

VENUS PEREZ: Hello, everybody. I didn't think I was going to be so nervous, so just bear with me. I would one, first of all, like to thank everybody for being here.

I saw your book for the first time like a month ago. We were at taco Tuesday, and I saw your book. And I honestly almost cried, because they use Spanglish and workers' rights, and it was-- you also used the improper terms of saying things. And I, myself, spoke the improper terms of

English. So I just want to thank you so much for opening that path, because my future children will definitely be reading your books.

So I'm going to be speaking a little about the Crimson Group. The Crimson Group is a support and advocacy group on campus. Um-- sorry. We are student-led, which means all of our officers that are members are students.

Why is this so important? Because we don't get paid for this. So the amazing work that we're doing is because we're passionate about it. And with that passion, I just wanted to talk about the things that we do.

So talk about last semester-- last semester, we did a fundraiser at the zoo, which was a bar. And that fundraiser was so amazing, because it was with staff and students. We were able to fund about-- if I'm not mistaken-- \$3,000. And half of that was for DACA renewals and for Kooks being Kooks.

And just-- honestly, I just want to remind how important that is, because a DACA renewal is almost \$500. It's \$495. So I, myself-- I pay \$300 for rent, so it's \$200 shy. That's a lot of money that a student has to pay out of pocket. And we're able to cover that for them through that fundraiser.

Another thing that we're currently working on is taking our students and our members to [INAUDIBLE] legislative base so they can be able to fight for their rights, and being out there, and being able to talk to senators, and making moves. Because, like you mentioned, you started young, seeing things that-- you know, with the art-- you didn't see it everywhere. And just having a common ground and seeing people that are fighting for the same thing as you are is so important. Sorry, I just lost my train of thought.

So I'm just going to talk about what we do. So I, myself-- I'm the fundraiser chair. Honestly, I will try to raffle anything. We've sold tacos before, out of our apartments. We made decent money out of that.

And it's just crazy, because we went all the way to Tri-Cities to get the meat, because Pullman does not have meat. We went to Tri-Cities to get tortillas, because they don't have the proper tortillas in Pullman. It's just ridiculous the things we will do to fundraise money. It's-- yeah.

So another thing that we do for our students is-- being undocumented, coming from a different background-- an agricultural background, as well-- I know that I was approached. And I was told, hey, if you need to get out of the dorms, we can help you do that. So that's actually something that we do for our students. If you can't afford to live in the dorms, we can help you get out of there.

We will help you find an apartment. We will help you find a roommate for next year. I'm really pushing for us to be able to cover the fee for you to get that apartment, because money should not be a reason why you can't pursue your education.

And the Crimson Group-- one of their pillars is pursuing their education, advocating for their community, and having that support here. Because a lot of the undocumented community and immigrant community-- there are first generations coming into this campus. So having that support system there for them, and having those resources there for them, is one of the things that we focus on.

We constantly talk about the resources on campus. So the \$500 emergency fund that a lot of people don't know about-- we remind our students that that's there for them. We do workshops on how to apply for FAFSA and financial aid and the importance of that.

Keyla always comes in and does workshops on those questions that you're always iffy about, because we're-- once again, as first generation students-- trying to apply for loans and figure all that money situation out. It's so hard, because our parents aren't there to help us with that. Because we are coming here with fresh eyes.

We constantly remind our students of other resources-- like the food bank, the food pantry, the Women's Resource Center, events that are happening on campus, for them to learn resume building. If there is any situation whatsoever, if our students are struggling with their classes-- like, how to get those resources to them. Because, even though there's multiple tutoring centers on campus, those resources are being put out there for them to know.

And most importantly, we're opening up a platform for the students to feel comfortable so they know they're not the only ones that have been struggling. Applying to get loans is so important. How do you get your books as a freshman?

I, myself, didn't know how to get books, which sounds very silly, but they don't teach you that in the live. And you think that you're just going to go to the bookstore, and they'll have the list for all the classes. No, that's not how it works.

So college is actually very scary. And focusing on that first-generation students, and Spanish-speaking students, and undocumented students, and DACA recipients-- that's the community that is lacking resources. And that is also a scared community. And the Crimson Group is here for them in any way possible.

I know I'm missing so many other things, but my mind is honestly going blank right now. But the Crimson Group-- if anybody is interested in with working with them, we are here. We will fundraise for you. If you need a DACA renewal, if you know any individual that needs resources, please send them our way, because we are here to make them feel like a home. Thank you.

[APPPLAUSE]

PAULA GROVES PRICE: Thank you, Venus. So as you can tell, Crimson Group is very, very busy. And they do a lot of work. And so it was especially special for us, in the College of Education, to have the Crimson Group want to work with us to prepare this amazing food that we have.

What we're going to do is we're going to actually have everybody eat. And then, while we are eating and enjoying the food, Linda is going to explain to us a little bit about what we have. But we have a-- just to give you a little bit of a preview, so you know what's up there-- we have fresh, handmade tortillas.

We also have some [SPEAKING SPANISH]-- and it's a vegetarian [SPEAKING SPANISH]-- soup. We also have an amazing flan. I had to be quality control, right? So I had to taste everything.

[LAUGHTER]

And we have some amazing flan, as well, for dessert. We also have some [SPEAKING SPANISH] Yes. And I'm not sure what the flavors are, but-- do you know what the flavors are?

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE]

PAULA GROVES PRICE: All right, there you go. Save some horchata for me. And so with that, I want everyone to enjoy. I just want to acknowledge a few people who did a lot of the food preparation-- so Martin, Shayla, Linda, Celeste, Carol, Jocelyn, Anna, Gina, Alejandra, Yadira, Jeremiah, Carolina, and our organizer in chief, Keyla. Thank you so much for all of your labor--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

PAULA GROVES PRICE: --and for all of your--

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE]

PAULA GROVES PRICE: [LAUGHS] --and for everything that you've done for us. Thank you. Thank you so much. [INAUDIBLE]

[MUSIC PLAYING]