

“We Have a Strong Way of Thinking . . . and It Shows through Our Words”: Exploring Mujerista Literacies with Chicana/Latina Youth in a Community Ethnic Studies Course

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This study uses Chicana/Latina feminist perspectives to look at the literacies of four Chicana/Latina youth in a community-based ethnic studies program located in an (im)migrant housing community. Mujerista literacies is a theoretical concept that highlights how Chicana/Latina youth engage their literacies in feminist praxis. Drawing on the methodological framework of trenzas, this study centers the knowledges of Latinx communities and the theorizing that takes place through qualitative methods like pláticas and testimonios. Findings highlight how Chicana/Latina youth understand and conceptualize mujerista literacies, as well as how these literacies surface in moments of disruption, shifts in consciousness, and reflection within a community ethnic studies classroom.

Girls and young women of color (WoC) have used their voices, knowledge, and literacies to articulate the changes that need to be made to liberate oppressed communities from systemic violence. Young mujeres¹ like Emma González, Naomi Wadler, and Edna Chavez, for example, took center stage at the March for Our Lives in 2018, where they shared their experiences of gun violence and demanded action on gun control from local and national leaders in front of thousands in Washington, DC. The Radical Monarchs², an organization for girls of color (GoC), works with community educators, policy makers, and activists to learn about and engage in sociopolitical action. The brilliance, passion, critical knowledges, languages, and sociopolitical identities of GoC and young WoC, however, continue to be left out or overlooked within the confines of traditional classrooms. As such, scholars have taken a deeper look at the literacies, language, and knowledge that unfold for GoC in community or nontraditional spaces of teaching and learning (Player, 2018; Smith, 2016; Winn, 2011).

While work around the literacies of GoC is growing, there is little focus on the sociopolitical consciousness and literacies of Chicana/Latina³ youth. This study foregrounds the theoretical contributions of WoC feminists, Chicana/Latina feminists in particular, to look at the literacies of four Chicana/Latina youth. These young women were students in a community-based ethnic studies program located in an (im)migrant⁴ housing community I call Comunidad Miravalle (CM) (all names are pseudonyms). Drawing on the Chicana/Latina feminist idea of *mujerista*, a collective and liberatory vision of feminism, this article offers *mujerista*