
 ost mathe-
matics teach know that students can be a great source for understanding what they need as thinkers, group members, mathematic learners, and future citizens. Thus, listening to students is an important teacher practice. But listening takes time, something that not all teachers feel that they have. And many attempts to listen to students can fall short, especially with respect to students who have been historically marginalized in society Sometimes differences in communication style, body language, or speech patterns can cause a teacher's attempts to "reach out" appear superficial or disingenuous (i.e., as if we are hearing only what we want to hear) to Latin@ students. (By Latin@, I mean both Latina and Latino students; I write the term with the @ symbol also to indicate my solidarity with people who identify as LGBIQ.
Students who are Latin@ may hear themselves reduced to code words such as "achievement gap," situation likely to worsen with Common Core Stat Standards assessments that have been evaluated as

## difficult for all

students (Gewertz 2014)
They may look around and see that no students like them are in the advanced or honors courses, the high-performing groups, or on the math team (Flore 2007). They may have watched their parents attend chool meetings or conferences where teachers or administrators dismissed or misunderstood the mes sages that their families were saying.
Within mathematics in particular, Latin@ students must manage negative stereotypes or deficit views that teachers and other students may hold of them (Gonzáles, Blanton, and Williams 2002; McGee and Martin 2011). In class, they may have a question but silence themselves, fearing others will see them as dumb and representative of their
additional emotional and cognitive work that is needed to negotiate their place in the classroom can be exhausting to students but invisible to teachers. Creating an inclusive classroom community requires knowing where and how to listen to particular kinds of students. The suggestions in this and high school mathematics teacher of Latin@ students in East San Jose, California, as well as lessons I have learned during the past twenty-two years while researching effective mathematics teachers of Latin@ students in the United States and one year studying mathematics instruction in grades 7-9 in Mexico while on a Fulbright scholarship. In this article, I argue that every interaction should begin with HOLA: Hunt for Opportunities-Learn-Act.

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LISTEN?

Listening means hearing students-being open to their ideas and their experiences in the classroom. Two important points are worth emphasizing:

1. Students need to know that we are listening to them-not to last year's students, not to thei classmates who may look or talk like them, not to students from other sections of the same course.
2. Part of listening to students is also hearing what they do not say. We must read between the lines and recognize that our students' lived experiences may be very different from ours and that bridging the gap may require some effort.

When we think about what we know about our students, we need to consider the source. Is our information from students, colleagues, media, or families? If so, which students, colleagues, media, and families? Not every source is reliable for our approach to teaching. We sometimes have images of our students and act on those. An example is reflected in this attitude: "My students go home and have to watch over their younger siblings because their parents work two jobs, so I don' assign homework." Although many working class parents work long hours and young students are sometimes required to take on greater responsibil ties in the home, those situations may not be the same for your particular students. Or they may be the same, but if we listen closely, students may als communicate that they can still accomplish their homework, especially if completing a more rigorous curriculum will help them go to college.
It is important to continue to ask ourselves this uestion: In what ways do I challenge what I thin already know about the Latin@ students whom I teach?

## LATIN@ IDENTITIES IN THE CLASSROOM

All teaching is identity work, regardless of whether we think about it in that way. We are constantly contributing to the identities that students construct for themselves, with the goal of developing the "productive dispositions" called for by the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics (CCSSI 2010, p. 6). As teachers, we are also reproducing what math matics is and whether students can relate to doing it. Student identity in relation to mathematics is different from that in relation to other subjects because mathematical ability is seen as a proxy for intelligence in society. When our students do not feel that they are mathematical, there can be lasting conseor whet for beyond how well they do in school areer. As not they continue on to a shole stu-dent-mind and body.
Listening to minds means paying attention to how students are processing mathematical con-tent-whether they are developing conceptual knowledge, whether they can make connections
ross topics and to the world around them. It also means recognizing that language obstacles, such as eading passages on assessments, can obscure the mathematical understanding that a student shows. Listening to bodies involves student identity Although students need opportunities to learn rigo us mathematical content that will prepare them for college, students should not have to assimilate to be able to participate in the mathematics classroom. This does not mean that every mathematics lesson will be relevant to the life of every student. But it does mean that we need to be consciously provid ing both windows and mirrors for our students goth windows and mirrors for our students classrooms should reflect both things that are new to them - windows-that will stretch their minds ad bodies as well as things that are affirmins-mis rs - that will help them maintain a sense of wholeness while in the classroom.
Hola is a Spanish term for hello. You can think of these three levels of listening as a way of startins a conversation. As teachers, we need to begin with opportunities to listen to students, then reflect on what we have learned, and finally act on what w have heard.

## SEIZE THE MOMEN

Some teachers have a great desire to listen to their students but are not sure where to start beyond greeting students at the door. Here are some strate gies to try.

## Exit Slips

any teachers limit exit slips to determining mathematical understanding, but they can also be used for feedback on your teaching, for the sociomotional work that students feel that they have to o in your classroom, for how groups are functioning, and so on. These can be created on paper, or hey can be electronic (one online site that caters to eachers is exitticket.org).

## Group Wor

Many teachers circulate and listen to small groups as they work. Like exit slips, group work is a good opportunity to listen not just for mathematical understanding but also for who is being cast as an expert, who is doing the intellectual work, who becomes a spokesperson, or who gets credit.
Listen also for the language that students use Many Latin@ students are bilingual to varying degrees. Some have spent some time in another country, learning mathematics in Spanish, and so are comfortable working exclusively in Spanish on problems with other students who are fluent. Other students speak Spanish at home with their families
friends but know few or no mathematical term and may choose to "code switch" (move back and orth between English and Spanish, sometimes in midsentence) when working on problems. Stil thers may speak no Spanish at all. As you move round your classroom, pay attention to which tudents use Spanish, under what conditions, and fr what purposes. These observations can help you orm effective groups that support your students in using Spanish in a way that is meaningful for them

## Surveys

The beginning of the school year or semester is a good time to get students to share their perceptions of mathematics, their preferred learning styles, heir hobbies outside school, and their expectations f you as a teacher. Ask students to finish state ments such as these:

If mathematics were a form of weather, it would be $\qquad$ because
One thing that teachers fail to understand about students like me is
The last time that I felt really good about a math problem was when .

Or have students draw a pie chart of their iden tity, labeling each section with titles and illustraions of different parts that contribute to their iden-ty-for example, soccer player, son, artist, church member, friend.
You can use information from these surveys ove he course of a semester to highlight one student each week and have others guess who it is. Know

## Go-Stop-Start Sheets

Similar to exit slips, these are a shorthand way of having students give feedback on many aspects of their classroom experience. Offer students a slip of aper with a green light, a red light, and a stop sign or simply the words go, stop, start) for them to fill in. Go means "keep doing this in class"; stop identifies an aspect of class that is not working for them; tart allows them to make a suggestion of something new to include in class.

## Journals and Learning Logs

Students can be asked to keep track of not only heir understanding of mathematical concepts but also how they learn and what they need or how hey feel when they are doing mathematics.
McIntosh and Draper (2001) discuss a version of earning logs that can be adapted for this purpose. You may choose to read these journals regularly or have students indicate when they want you to read a particular entry.

Before and after School or Lunch Hour
You must do more than be generally accessible in the classroom; you must invite individual students to spend time with you there. Be specific about when you want them to join you and follow up if they do not show.

Community and School Events
Attending students' extracurricular activities is a sign of wanting to know students as whole people not just mathematical minds. Such activities also give you a chance to meet family members and appreciate students' talents outside mathematics.

## Steering Committees

Steering committees are another way to learn from your Latin@ students. These committees consist of one to two student representatives from each class who meet with the teacher at lunch or after schoo regularly to provide feedback on how the class is functioning. Student representatives from steering committees can be given time during class to hold "class meetings" where all students can make suggestions that the class representative takes back to the teacher. In this way, students can inform the teacher about their perceptions of how the class is and also hear how peers are experiencing the classroom environment.
These strategies provide many opportunities to listen to Latin@ students. When trying somethin new, however, focus on only one or two changes at a time so that you are not overwhelmed. You might pick one new listening strategy and do it consistently with one class before expanding to another class.
Some questions to consider:

- What opportunities do I create that allow me to listen to my students?
Do I listen to students with a sense of wonde and without judgment, or am I primarily focused on listening to hear if they are on task?
- Do I use the Common Core's Standards for

Mathematical Practice-such as "model with mathematics" (SMP 4, CCSSI [2010], p. 7)-to allow my students to inform me about real-world phenomena that are important to them?

When you listen to your students, you may be surprised to learn about obstacles to their learning that you had not previously considered.

After listening to students, you will have a lot of information to digest, and you will need time to about what I havel learned? Do I feel defensive abou yy teaching or about other adults in the build about When I listen to my students, do I want to correct heir speech attitudes, or decisions? Or listen heir speech, , conjure up
During my year spent observing mathematics instruction in Mexican classrooms, I learned som interesting things. In those classrooms, the chalk board or white board is used only at certain times. Teachers organize the mathematics content to be covered in an outline format that begins with a title and roman numerals and continues each day using the same organizational structure. In class, students must listen carefully and copy into their notebooks the information that the teacher dictates. Students the information that the teacher dictates. Students the teacher explicitly instructs them to do so. At the teacher explicitly instructs them to do so. At students simply listen and make sense of the mathematics.
Some students whom I met were border crossers; they had spent some time in the United States, either to visit relatives or for longer periods of time when economic situations caused their family to move. They commented on how "confusing" an American classroom appears. For them, it was hard to know what was important and what was not because teachers never tell students when to write and because teachers and other students use the chalkboard or white board as if it were scratch paper (a place to work out problems but not to review at the end of he class to know what was covered). The students spoke with expressed frustration with the fact that teachers often erased the board without first asking whether students had copied the information down, and some teachers never expected students to keep ornal notebook. For them, many of the obstacles hey faced were not ones that we, as teachers, would to be problems, such as language barries. mead, these students struggled with trying to make Wh unfanilar classroom practices.
prise you listen to your students, you may be surprised to learn about obstacles to their learning

Conduct an intake interview with a student who has recently immigrated to the United States
hat you had not previously considered. You may also ecome aware of features of your classroom that you ake for granted but that provide critical support for your Latin@ students.

## SHOW STUDENTS THAT YOU HAVE LISTENED <br> Act

As teachers, we need to be ready to act on what we have learned so that students feel heard. Most examples of "acting" fall into the category of giving students more voice-more voice in classroom thals, their learning, or the identities that they a eveloping with us and through mathematics. Lis ning to individual students does not benefit only hem; it benefits all students in our classrooms.

## Steering Committee Action

After students have voiced their perspectives on how the class is working and what improvements they and their classmates suggest, a teacher needs to conider the feedback and decide which suggestions can be implemented fairly quickly. You may not be able to incorporate all the students' suggestions, but even implementing small ones will go a long way toward helping students feel heard and valued. For example, students may suggest that they want their working Sroups to change more often.

## Forming Student Groups

Listening for who speaks Spanish in your class may be complicated (Gutiérrez 2003). Even when tudents' first language is Spanish, they may have ansitioned out of any bilingual education suppor by the time they reach high school. Because the sanish language is not highly valued in American ociety, many students who are fluent actually choose not to use it. As a result, you might be surprised to learn that you have Spanish speakers in your class! Knowing that language is one way to express oneself and is tied to identity, you might ook for ways to encourage students to use Span sh in class. Acting on your knowledge of who speaks Spanish and with whom might involve creting working groups that place recent immigrant Latin@s with other bilingual students. It is impor ant to continue to check in with your students to see whether these groupings work well

Algorithms from Other Countries
Teachers who are dedicated to providing voice to Latin@ students in their classrooms regularly posiion their students as experts on a variety of things. necnt inmigrant students know algorithms States.

For example, after multiplying two multidigit
umbers, instead of doing the reverse operation division) to verify the correct result, students in Mexico use a quick algorithm that takes seconds to complete. Figure 1 is an example of how students in Mexican classroom show that they have checked their multiplication. A student's work may appear to how that she was not sure how to check her answe ad so just crossed it out Yet students in Mexico ca plain that they are summing the dicits of the two fors, multiplying them, and then check the sum f those digits against the sum of the digits of their those digits against the sum of the digits of their answer.

In essence, students using this algorithm are con verting each multidigit number to its modular form in base ten, a procedure based on "casting out nines," something American students usually do not encoun er unless they major in mathematics in college and take a course in number theory. A student can be encouraged to share an algorithm from his home country and become the teacher for the moment. Teachers can also ask further questions and help nalyze why the algorithm works so that students in nalyze why the algorithm works so that students in encourage other students to seek help from the tudent on future problems like these.

## The Cuaderno

Use of the cuaderno (mathematics notebook) is nother opportunity to give recent immigrant stuents voice and position them as experts. Taking notes and maintaining a cuaderno in mathematics is very structured and rigorous process for students in exico and throughout most of Latin America. The uaderno requires extensive work to maintain and highlights the strict discipline involved in learning nathematics. All students purchase a notebook with prenumbered pages, consisting entirely of grid pape (rather than lined or blank paper), so that drawings an be constructed properly and to scale. Pages are never torn out, so students exercise extra care when writing in their notebooks. Most students use colored ens for different meanings-black ink for a major opic or theorem, blue ink for examples, red ink for ostulates, and so on.
The cuaderno not only serves as a place for recording notes, dictation, homework, and tests, tudents also use it as a regular resource for studying nd for solving problems in class. For example, befor asking the teacher a question, students are expected fo first look in their notebook to see if they can find answer or a clue about how to solve a problem. Because the cuaderno essentially becomes a complete record of one's experiences in mathematics, most students retain these notebooks into their adult years, frty as a sign of pride and also as a resource for future math courses.
With your knowledge of the cuaderno, you might

(a)
$132 \times 434=57,288$
3 3/3
(b)

Ti. 1 This is an example of how students in a Mexican classroom show that they have checked their multiplication.
choose to conduct an intake interview ith a student who has recently immigrated to the United States. Ask the student to show you a notebook that represents the mathematics from his or her home country. You may be surprised to find that the content covered in classrooms in other nations is more rigorous or introduced earlier than that covered in American classrooms. The fact that the cuaderno requires attention to detail and is used in more deliberate ways in Mexican classrooms than in American ones offers opprtunity for recent immigrant Latin@s as expent taking notes and using th notebook as a reference.

## Community Projects

Community-based projects can build on the knowledge that students and their communities hold, which may be considered funds of knowledge. These projects can allow students to develop meaningful solutions to obstacles that they face in their everyday lives. Kather than relying on essen tialist notions of Latin@ culture, create projects that allow students to choose topics that are mean ingful to them.

## Social Justice Projects

Projects that involve using mathematics both as a lens to investigate inequities in society and to convince others to change can be powerful for engaging students as well as learning from them what issues are pertinent to their lives. Teachers can download guidelines and lessons from radicalmath org I have used the Jena 6 lesson (http//www nycore.org/newsite/wplesson (http://ww.yy content/uploads/revealingracistroots. pdf), which involves calculating the likelihood that an all-white jury would happen by
chance in a town where 14.4 percent of
chance in a town where 14.4 percent of the
citizens are black. In this activity, students citizens are black. In this activity, students as applying a Monte Carlo model to more as mathematics that draws on finding the binomial coefficient (" $n$ choose $k$ ")

## Spoken Word and Raps

These can be modeled with YouTube ${ }^{\text {nT }}$ videos, and students can be asked to respond through class discussion, in writing, or in developing their own spoken word or raps. Some teachers have used these as novel ways for students to explain a mathematical concept (e.g., http://www.youtube. com/watch?v=jGJrH49Z2ZA); other teachers have used them for students to express their
definition of education or their experiences in the school system (e.g., http://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=Z1pYjUY9h9U)

You can provide voice to your students in many ways, some of which involve consistently using strategies that are listed in the Hunt for Opportunities section. You will notice a feedback cycle: Giving students greater voice allows them to be partly in charge of the classroom and will also help ou continue to listen to students regularly.
Some questions to consider:

- Do I give my students a chance to be seen as experts on things that they can teach me-about my class, about the school, about doing mathematics, about their needs in learning, about their lives outside school, about other students?
- What evidence do I have that my students feel heard?

Once you practice HOLA regularly, you may

What evidence do I have that my students feel heard?
want to share with others what you are learn ing from students. Do not be surprised if you find yourself at a faculty meeting eager to share how your steering committee or exit slips are affecting your classroom. And you should share! You will be modeling to others what it really means to isten to students. Just as in everyday speech, HOLA does ood first step toward connecting with your Latin sudent step thereby hum ing the mothematics y humanizing the mathematics classroom for all.

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