



# Adolescent Immigrants: Listening to their Voices and Leveraging their Strengths

**2017 CAMBIO DE COLORES CONFERENCE  
MANDY STEWART**

If we are to change the  
world, we have to change  
our vision of the world. —  
Pierre Bourdieu



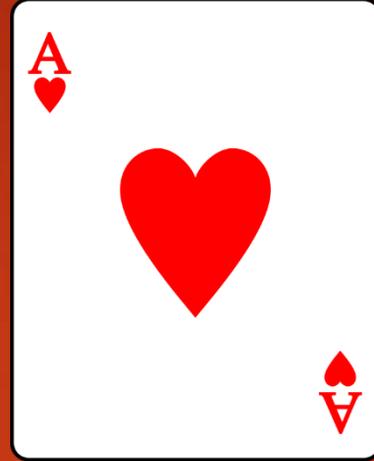
# Theory of Class domination

- ▶ Why some people succeed in society while others do not
  - ▶ Capital
  - ▶ Habitus
  - ▶ Field
  - ▶ Doxa



# Capital

- ▶ Product of Birth
- ▶ Product of Schooling
- ▶ What makes the games of society more than a game of chance
- ▶ The cards you have to play the game
- ▶ Economic, Cultural, or Social



# Habitus

- ▶ The conditioning one has to determine how she operates in the game



# Field

- ▶ The “rules” of the game
- ▶ The capital or “cards” one has to play, are only valuable in certain games



# Doxa

- ▶ The realm of the unquestioned and undiscussed
- ▶ Guides the rules of the game



# Extraordinary discourse

- ▶ Disrupting the status quo
- ▶ Bringing the unquestioned into the conversation





What makes these youth  
uniquely extraordinary?



# Lay Su Aung

A 13(15)-year-old မြန်မာလူမျိုး (Burmese) Refugee  
*Dreaming Big Dreams*

*“I want to be Speaker of the House.”*

I am from cooking pans  
 From oil and tomato  
 I am from the mud under the front porch  
 (wet, shiny) It sound like bird singing  
 I am from bush where flowers grow  
 the peach trees  
 (whose short gone limbs I remember if they are my own  
 I am from the hard work and strict rules  
 from mang and Nel  
 I am from wake up early and there are many rules to follow  
 from do your home work and respect your elders  
 I'm from christians (Assembly of God).  
 I'm from Tedim (rice and chicken soup)  
 from the teeth my grandmother lost when she bit an apple  
 the eye my mother shut to make me obey  
 under my table was a box spilling old picture  
 I am from strict parent and tedim.

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD  
 AG

My Poetry

Niang Hua  
 娘怀

RESPECT  
 YOUR ELDERS

니양다우



# Survival in Burma

“In Burma is hard to survive because you don't have money and you don't have a job. And like whenever you are like hungry, like the rice or the food are expensive than what you thought. Like just bunch of poor people cause they don't have job and the president, they doesn't give any job for them. It just like people are starving and nobody actual dead.”

# Leaving Her Country

“Whoever cry or shout [on the boat], they just throw them in the water. The kids who crying, they just kill them. So it’s very hard. And you hungry and you have to climb to the top of the mountain and go down. And at night and it’s cold and you don’t have clothes and you freezing like that. You have to give [money] to the person who drive to Malaysia so you can get off. Otherwise, they keep you for a week, unless they can kill someone wherever they want.”

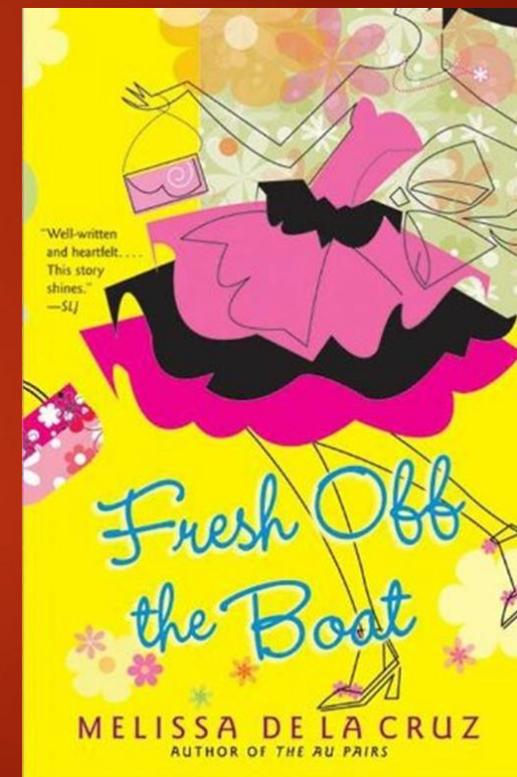
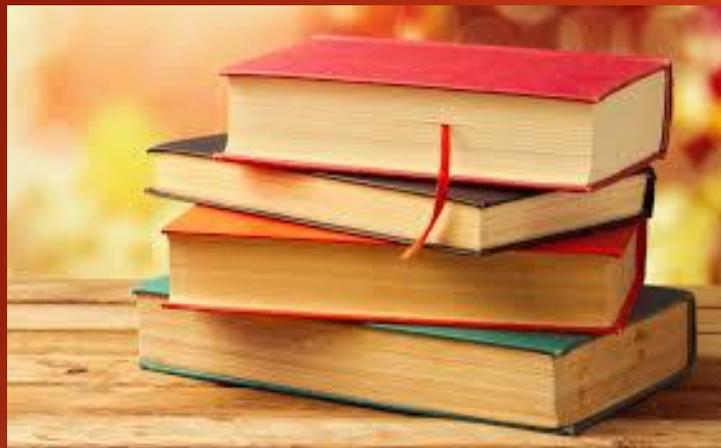
# Schooling

ငါ့နေ့ကို ပျော်စရာ သာ

# Dreams for the Future

“In my country is hard. People are starving so like, that’s why I want to become Speaker of the House. I want to go back there and help them. That’s my ambition. So I have to pray God, go to good college, and like that.”

# Current Life





God has a bigger plan for me  
than I have for myself

[lovingyouendlessly.tumblr.com](http://lovingyouendlessly.tumblr.com)

# Andrés

## *A Sixteen-Year-Old from Mexico Coming and Going*

*“Voy a tener doble carrera. Tengo la ciudadanía por dos lados.”* [I will have a double career. I have citizenship on both sides.]



# Dual Citizenship

“Estar aquí salvó mi vida [porque] en en esos años, no tenía la misma tecnología que tiene ahora.”

[Being born here saved my life because at that time, they [in Mexico] did not have the same technology that they have now.]

# Growing up in Rural Mexico



# Coming to the U.S.....Twice

“Para tener una mejor educación,  
tener una mejor vida.” [For a better  
education, to have a better life.]

# *Educación*

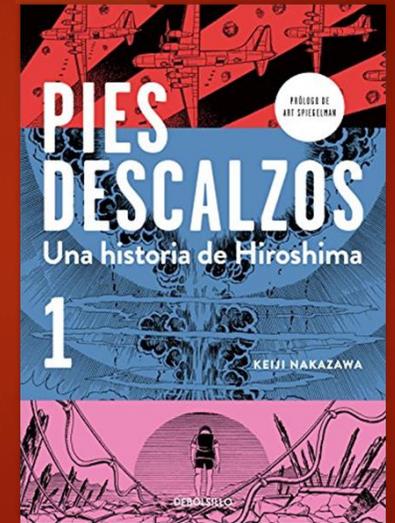
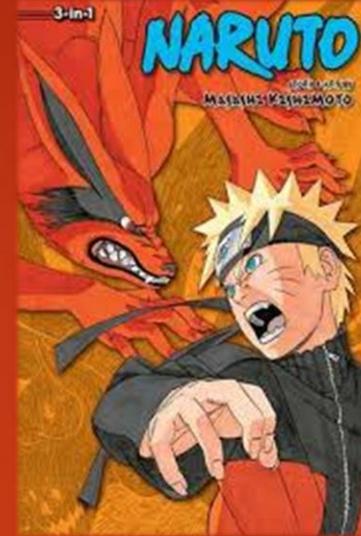
“respect for authority, group solidarity, family loyalty, good manners, and self-dignity”  
(Jensen & Sawyer, 2013, p. 1).

Teachers in Mexico

Teachers in U.S. Middle

Teachers in U.S. High School

# Current Life



## **Sara**

*An 18-year-old Colombiana Preparing to Serve Her  
New Country*

## **Alejandra**

*A 17-year-old Salvadoreña Taking the U.S. by Storm*

## **Miguel**

*A 20-Year-Old Guatemalteco Persevering through  
High School*

## **Nathan**

*A 16-year-old Congolais Learning about  
Slavery*

## **Aisha**

*A 17-year-old Muganda (Ugandan) Longing to Learn*

# Leveraging their Capital

## Strengths

- ▶ Multiple languages
- ▶ Desire to learn and dream
- ▶ Character
- ▶ Transnationalism
- ▶ Commitment to a community

## Needs

- ▶ Family separation and reunification
- ▶ L1 development
- ▶ Coping with trauma
- ▶ Caring adults

What will your extraordinary  
discourse be for immigrant youth?



Thank you  
Gracias  
Merci  
Weebale  
Melesi

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