

# **Racial Justice in Multilingual Education**



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# Flor Que no Florece

Vianey S Adame Rangel

## Abstract

Flor que no florece, a poem full of heavy-hearted feelings and emotions that words can only bare to explain. Heavy hearted feelings that I had to unfortunately endure. Flower that doesn't bloom, a representation of growth and perseverance under any circumstance.

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Mexican.

Soy Mexicana, I am a woman of color. I am a brown girl living in America.

Blinded by race, I am nothing, worth nothing, am I not as important as the rest?

I wouldn't know. I don't know better, I wasn't taught better, what was I supposed to do?

All my life I grew up knowing I wasn't important, I was never given the validation I needed, I never had the comfort I so desperately wanted.

No one saw me as a person, I was always seen as a color, as a race, but never as a girl who wanted love.

Siempre fui clasificada simplemente por ser morena. Pero nunca por lo que de verdad era.

Una niña nacida en tierra ajena, en búsqueda de valor.

El valor que fue derrotado desde el momento que llegue al estado en donde los sueños se hacen realidad.

¿Acaso mis sueños no se pueden hacer realidad porque mi piel tiene el complejo de la tierra?

¿La tierra que crece las frutas, los vegetales y la cosecha necesaria para sobrevivir?

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When it came to school, nothing was different. I was still an outcast. Still hidden.

I always felt so lost and unheard when I would talk to my classmates about my responsibilities at home and having to do everything for my younger sister. No one understood my anguish.

I grew up in a predominantly white community, all my friends had both parents at home, little to no responsibility.

Meanwhile I had to do work around the house just to help my mom and older sister out.

I often fell behind in class because of the problems I had at home.

No one understood me, no one cared to even ask why I was falling behind.

Tenía que sufrir en silencio.

I was always seen as the student that was always behind, that would never succeed, never be anything, I was profiled as everything under the moon but never as a kid who was struggling physically and mentally.

Solo quería que alguien me diera un poco de su tiempo para desahogarme.

Pero como siempre con la mente en alto.

As I grew, I saw the underrepresentation of ethnic backgrounds in the classrooms I was in, I didn't think much of it. But it truly impacted my ability to connect and understand.

Despite being told otherwise, I knew my purpose was much greater than to be taught. I wanted to be the one to teach.

I wanted to empower voices like mine, to show and prove to all the upcoming generations that we too are capable of big positions.

Yo voy a ser la flor que florece.

No voy a dejar que la discriminación por la que yo viví me afecté más de lo que ya me ha afectado.

I may not have the power to stop all discrimination and hate in the world or even in a classroom, but I do have the power to make kids feel safe and loved.

I have the power to be the person I wish I had while I was growing up.

I have the power to be someone greater.

I have the power.

But what if my power is being blocked by my race, my skin tone, my income?

RANGEL: FLOR QUE NO FLORECE

¿Porque nunca puedo ser suficiente?

We never know what's going on around us, we never know what people are going through.

We all have issues, unspoken and spoken issues. We have things that we can't say or talk about, and we all can feel trapped.

Feeling trapped goes beyond not finding a way out, just like a seed that's been planted in the dirt then topped with concrete.

It won't bloom without the sun or water. But how can find the light at the end of the tunnel with constant dark nights and storms that flood the tunnel?

You.

You have to be the light, the sun, the water. Tu tienes que florecer aunque el mundo no te lo permita.

Soy Mexicana.

My identity reflects so much on how I see the world, being Mexican has made me see the good and bad of the world. I know that for the time being I will do anything I can do to learn and better my understanding of how the world works.

I refuse to let kids live in the same environment I grew up in, I will not allow the oppression of the world around me affect my classroom, I want to let the kids I end up teaching know that no matter what the world thinks of you, you can be anything.

There will be no such thing as privilege, discrimination, and hate in my classroom setting. Yes, it will be taught but only so that we can avoid it and be better, but it will not be tolerated like how it was when I was growing up.

Future generations are who will be our foundations so it's better to acknowledge the hate in the world to be able prevent it.

I will use my past experiences, my background and how I grew up to reinforce the comfort of my children.

I will be the soil, water and sun to help each and every seed I encounter bloom.

Children deserve a world where everyone is able and capable of living freely, and we will only achieve that if we start with the fundamentals. Teaching. Why?

Because Teaching Matters.

Vamos a florecer, vamos a crecer, y juntos permaneceremos unidos.

Soy la flor.

RACIAL JUSTICE IN MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION

## A Closer Glance

Flor que no Florece, flower that doesn't bloom. Not just a poem that emerged sincerely from the bottom of my heart but the only way I was able to freely express myself in ways that no one had to comprehend. With my poem I am able to use the voice that was so deeply discouraged from the moment I stepped foot on American soil. Growing up in a predominantly white environment it was always extremely difficult to express myself and my intersectionality as it was seen as unusual and unfit to societal norms. Norms that I would never be able to resemble because I had the privilege of being born in a foreign land in which your individuality is embraced rather than in an individualistic society in which assimilation is normalized.

This poem was my way out, it was my way of expressing the feelings that I held so closely to my heart. I wrote this poem because I was tired of feeling trapped, I was exhausted of being misunderstood and hidden. I just needed to be heard. Growing up staying quiet was a norm for me, I was never given the opportunity to use my voice. Years later the only way I'm able to express myself is through literature. There is so much beauty in literature, hidden messages, double meanings. So much that you are able to say, though I am not at a point where I can verbally express myself, I know that I will always have the ability to communicate through my writing. But most importantly I wrote this poem to advocate for those who have yet to find their voice, for those who are still under oppression of a war they had nothing to do with. I wish to inspire those who resemble me, and I will be their sun, water, and soil. I wrote this to help others understand that they are not alone, and that there will always be a light at the end of the tunnel. We will bloom.

I hope the people from all ages who are struggling to find their worth and self-acceptance come across my poem. This poem reflects me and the struggles that I have been through. Since I can remember I have always struggled with finding my value simply because no me siento que soy ni de aqui ni de allá. I am an outsider, I don't belong. I grew up thinking that I wasn't meant to bloom, maybe I was just meant to stay hidden under the soil. I am constantly second guessing if all the efforts of my ancestors are worth the continued struggle to persevere in a system that wasn't made for us. The constant setbacks and silent cries for help only made me realize that I may never receive the support I need, but that no matter what I must keep pushing and so do you. We can't give up just because the country doesn't want to aid us.

I hope that whoever comes across my poem can see that not just because the system wasn't made for us doesn't mean that you can't overcome the obstacles that were set in place to only benefit those who have privilege by default. You have the ability and potential to bloom. Every single experience you have faced will only add to your

beauty and durability. No one takes time to see the roots of a flower. They only admire the color, the smell, the shape. Be the rose that grew from concrete. Be the flower that blooms, but always remember where you came from. Your roots have history, history that will help you stand tall under any kind of weather.

You will bloom.

When it comes to writing I see no limit. Being that I'm bilingual, incorporating both Spanish and English into my writing gives me the freedom to express myself and connect deeply to both of my communities. It gives me a sense of comfort knowing that I'm able to bring my intersectionality into what I love most, literature. As I wrote my poem, I included several references that had to do with the Earth and the soil and most importantly, the blooming of plants. I did several references because when I look back at my childhood, I think of my mom working long, hot hours out in the fields picking crops. All these crops came from the ground, all the crops she picked started as little seeds in the soil. If it wasn't for my mom's effort I wouldn't be where I am today. So, when I think of my mom the only words that I am able to produce are those in Spanish, having my mom's hard work and ambition in the back of my mind is what inspires me. Without her I wouldn't have bloomed. Just like soil, it is what gives plants the space they need to grow, otherwise without it they wouldn't bloom. Being able to share my story both in English and Spanish is what gives me the strength to do what I love doing, writing. My poem would have never been complete if it wasn't for both of my beautiful tongues.

Every flower is unique in its own beautiful way. They all have their own form, color, and scent. Just like how they have their own characteristics, they also have their own roots. The roots that help them stand tall. Roots that allow them to withstand unexplainable conditions. Like flowers, we too have roots, the same roots that shape us and help us have the potential to bloom. Think about your roots, where you came from, your values, your beliefs and your origin. How do you think your roots have helped you blossom? In what ways if any have your roots discouraged you from striving to your full potential? Why do you think our roots matter?

Remember, your past doesn't define you. What you have been through shouldn't discourage you. You are worthy of flourishing despite what the world around you thinks.

Be the flower that blooms.