

Loteria del Barrio Mural: A Funds of Knowledge Collaboration

Luis-Genaro Garcia, California State University, Sacramento

Abstract

This brief manuscript presents how the game of La Loteria is used as Creative resistance methodology in a professional development setting to create a Loteria themed mural that draws on the occupational knowledge of students in an elementary setting. Using a narrative approach, and through the documentation of how the mural developed, it contributes to the growing discourse and applications of Loteria methodologies in k-16 settings from professional development, classroom application, and the mural making process.

Keywords: La Loteria, Creative Resistance, Funds of Knowledge, Art Education.

As a community-based art educator that critically engages students through the art-making process, I use the popular game of La Loteria as a form of Creative Resistance to center students' funds of knowledge in k-16 classrooms.

In 2022, I reestablished a Barrio Art Program that was moribund for over twenty years at California State University Sacramento (CSUS). In the course, the students and I partnered with Washington Elementary School. Working with principal Dr. Gema Godina, we invited students and educators to analyze the game of la Loteria, which many Mexican American and Mexican families are familiar with, to welcome students' home-based knowledges into the classroom. While the cards have common images that are at times stereotypical, we engaged the students to critically analyze the centuries-old imagery. In the activity, students focus on the occupational and community knowledges of their family members to re-create cards that counter deficit-based and racist narratives of working-class communities of color. It was the student-created Loteria projects that inspired the mural, *La Loteria del Barrio*, which depicts students in a classroom playing a version of La Loteria focused on the occupational and cultural knowledge of the community (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Loteria del Barrio. Washington Elementary School, Sacramento, California.

In the mural that Barrio Art students and I created at Washington Elementary School, six larger loteria cards reflect the historical and home knowledge of students (Figure 1). The first card depicts the passing on of ancestral knowledge; originally painted by the late Juan Cervantes in 1977 at Southside Park, shows an Aztec knight passing on ancestral knowledge to the late Frank Godina Sr., professor of Chicano Studies at CSUS and a founding member of the Chicano art collective the Royal Chicano Air Force, who holds a UFW flag (Figure 2). The second image also in Figure 2, references local car culture through a 1959 Impala belonging to one of the parents. Its license plate “RCAF 59” suggests how the past continues to navigate the present environment.



Figure 2. Loteria card of Juan Cervantes mural at Southside Park and 1959 Impala Loteria Card.

A student image titled “La Estilista” shows a mothers hair stylist tools and is reflected through a set of clippers in the mural (Figure 3).



Figure 3. La Estilista. Student designed card and mural design.

Another student image (Figure 4) reflects a DJ turntable titled El Musico. This image reflected a parent's profession that connects communities through music and dance.

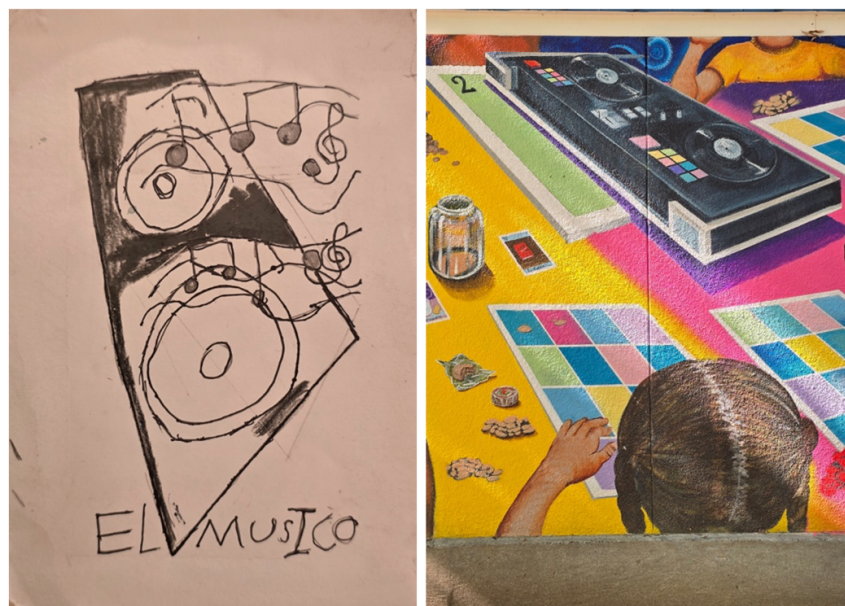


Figure 4. El Musico. Student card design and mural design.

In the next image, Figure 5 shows a mother pushing someone in a wheelchair. La Mano Amiga (the Helping Hand) shows the knowledge of a mother volunteering in a convalescent home.



Figure 5. La Mano Amiga. Student design and mural image.

Lastly, El Director (Figure 6) commemorates former principal, the late Ishmael Rasul (1924–1985). The title card below El Director shows the artists, which were offered employment by Dr. Godina. Today, those students are teaching in the local school district and continue to pursue their art professions.

This community-based engagement between CSUS students, elementary students, parents, and educators, affirms what welcoming students' home-based knowledge can look like. This project anchored a community by welcoming parents' occupational knowledge to challenge stereotypical and demeaning images of communities of color. It humanized education by acknowledging the expertise of student-parent occupational knowledge. Lastly, it brought a community together through a ceremonial blessing, it reconnected a generational resource through the Barrio Art class that has sustained the legacy of working in the Alkali Flats neighborhood with Dr. Godina, the daughter of the late Frank Godina Sr., a founding member of the RCAF.



Figure 6. El Director.

C/S. – Con Safos

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