

**Claire Darmstadter**

Hey everybody, I'm joined today by Jackie Barrera-Gonzalez, UW Madison junior majoring in Elementary Education with a certificate in Chicane/Latine Studies, or Chicla, as we call it. Thank you so much for taking a couple minutes to chat with me.

**Jackie Barrera-Gonzalez**

Of course. Thank you for having me.

**Claire Darmstadter**

Yeah. So I'm in Elementary Ed and Chicla just like you, but we're a year apart and I don't know a ton about your education or linguistic background. So could you just share a little bit about that, and why you decided upon these particular degrees or majors or programs?

**Jackie Barrera-Gonzalez**

Yeah, so actually, I went to a dual language immersion school, K through 5, or my K through fifth grade. And then I continued on in middle school in high school with a dual language immersion program. So it wasn't like the schools or dual language immersion, but it was just a program within the school. And so I was able to take academic classes that were in Spanish that were taught both in Spanish and English or just in Spanish. So yeah, I've been speaking Spanish and English my whole life of course, I identify as Mexican American. So my parents are Mexican. And they speak Spanish. So I grew up speaking Spanish. And I also grew up hearing English at school, obviously. I was really just raised with both languages.

**Claire Darmstadter**

For sure. And if I understand correctly, I believe you went back to the Nuestro Mundo when you were in high school to do some Seal of Biliteracy outreach work? Can you share anything about this experience and how it may have impacted your future career aspirations or view towards language? And I think it would hopefully be a positive experience, but if there any downsides feel free to include that as well.

**Jackie Barrera-Gonzalez**

Yeah so when I was in high school, my junior year, I believe, or maybe it was my senior year. But I went back to the mission window and worked as a — I don't remember what the title was, but it was kind of like an academic leader, for the PEOPLE Scholars after-school program they have there. And basically, I was assigned a group of first graders, it was about eight first graders. And I had the responsibility of designing and creating science and math curriculum, to teach them and engage with them and just develop relationships with the students. And that took place just like throughout a semester or two. But it was very eye-opening. And it definitely was a great experience for me. I've always said, I did want to go back and teach at Nuestro Mundo if I had the chance. That's the ultimate goal. But this experience was very helpful, just because it reassured me that this is exactly what I want to do for the rest of my life. And just, it's the career I want. And yeah, it was very reassuring,

**Claire Darmstadter**

For sure. And you know, the sad thing about UW is we don't have a dedicated dual immersion or bilingual education degree. And so we kind of have to cobble together these different departments and programs and languages. So what are you doing to kind of supplement or make sure you're still getting that important education necessary, so you can go into a dual language or in a bilingual school and be successful as a teacher?

**Jackie Barrera-Gonzalez**

Yeah, so choosing like the ESL option, with elementary education. I thought it was kind of like the closest thing I could get, you know, it's not bilingual education, but it's like around the same area. But after my first semester, last semester, I realized that I made a good choice just because although it is focused on ESL, we do cover a lot of bilingualism and issues around bilingual students and the ESL aspects of it, too. So honestly, I think it's not that it's not too far off, I still do a lot of learning around bilingual issues as well.

**Claire Darmstadter**

For sure, and it is a requisite to that bilingual degree. So it's nice to kind of have that stepping stone. Since you grew up kind of in the Madison area, and you've experienced being on campus more and then off campus when you're in high school and such. Do you notice a difference between the climate and the view towards multilingualism on the campus versus in the wider Madison community? Do you think it generally supports people who are multilingual or maybe might encourage monolingual or not speaking other languages?

**Jackie Barrera-Gonzalez**

I feel like I've just grown up like I said, I went to a dual language immersion program, went through the dual language immersion program, was always surrounded by teachers and staff and family members who supported the program. And being here in my classes, all of the students as well are very open minded and open to these sort of ideas and they're very supportive of bilingual education as well. So I wouldn't say I have personally really experienced or heard of any negative, like opinions on dual language immersion programs or bilingual education at all. But like I said, within our classes, we do cover a lot of these issues. And so a big part of that is covering the misconceptions or the sort of like the, the negative opinions of others.

**Claire Darmstadter**

For sure. And I know you also participate in a bunch of different student orgs and scholar programs and just lots of activities on campus. So can you talk a little bit about some of your involvement with these and how they may foster or support language diversity?

**Jackie Barrera-Gonzalez**

Yeah, so I'm a sister of Kappa Delta Chi Sorority Incorporated here on campus. And although we are Latina founded, we are not exclusively Latina. But a good amount of our sisters are Latinx. And so is, this really just allowed me to find a community that I could relate to, and that I identified with and I mean, that's just a part of it. Because there's also just this huge component of service and academics. And so it's a good way of just really learning how to manage and

balance my time. Just because there's a lot that goes in being a part of a sorority. In addition to just the business aspect side of it, there's also, like I said, an academic and service component. And so that's really nice. I'm also part of an organization called Diverse Leaders in Education, which is fairly new. And we're kind of just sort of trying to get started and kind of get our name out there on campus. But it's basically just a group of students who come together and just wants to create a space for students of color interested in any aspect of education, and just provide them with that safe and accepting space where they can come together and just sort of like, manage and talk about these issues we see in education.

**Claire Darmstadter**

For sure. And finally, in celebration of multilingualism, can you give us one reason in Spanish or English or both? Why do you think we should view speaking more than one language as a superpower?

**Jackie Barrera-Gonzalez**

I think just the fact that allows us to communicate with others, I mean, the biggest, or one of the things I've learned so far, like in our classes is the fact that — and this is like an interesting view or like way of thinking about it that I hadn't ever thought of. But being bilingual isn't about mastering two separate languages or as or however many languages you want to learn. It's about learning to sort of managing to -- it's learning to sort of manage and navigate both languages. So it's not just mastering English and mashing Spanish and kind of like they're not separate. Bilingualism is kind of like the idea of translanguaging, we kind of take both languages and are able to navigate both of them and sort of like creating your own language. And I feel like that's the best part. Just, I mean, being bilingual isn't like, not everybody who is bilingual speaks the same way or uses the same language, but it's sort of like making or creating your own language. And it allows you to communicate with others.

**Claire Darmstadter**

For sure. Well, thank you so much for your time and chatting with me for a little bit. I know there's not many of us on campus. And so I think people will really appreciate your perspective as a pre-service, multilingual teacher. So thank you so much, and have a great day.

**Jackie Barrera-Gonzalez**

Thank you.