VOICE OF WITNESS EDUCATION

Mi María: Surviving the Storm
Curriculum

At a Glance:

Introduction 2
Letters from our Narrators (Cartas de nuestros narradores) 4
Preface for Educators 8
Curriculum Map 10
Lesson Plan: Community Resources 12
Lesson Plan: Systems & Power 17
Lesson Plan: Representation 22
Lesson Plan: Climate Change & Colonialism (in Puerto Rico) 26
Lección: Cambio climático y colonialismo (en Puerto Rico) 32
Lesson Plan: Systems & Power (in Puerto Rico) 39
College-Level Curriculum 46
Discussion Questions 50

Introduction to *Mi María: Surviving the Storm* Curriculum

The seventeen oral histories in *Mi María: Surviving the Storm* highlight the details of what happened on September 17, 2017, when Hurricane María pummeled Puerto Rico for over thirty hours. These stories of perseverance and community also show us that as brutal as the storm was, the real catastrophe was yet to come. Lack of government support left millions without housing, electricity, clean drinking water, food, telecommunications, and medical care for months. All these years later, Puerto Rico is still recovering. The first-person narratives in *Mi María* powerfully articulate what it means to be a US citizen in a colonial context, how communities come together in the wake of disaster, and how precarity is exacerbated for those on the frontlines of the climate crisis.

In her introduction, *Mi María* co-editor Ricia Anne Chansky reminds us that, "*Resilient* is a word that has often been used to describe the people of Puerto Rico in the aftermath of Hurricane María. This label is problematic though, as it sidesteps the reality that this resiliency is born of repeated abandonment by the federal government during the almost 125 years that Puerto Rico has been part of the United States. What is named "Resilience" is in actuality what occurs when a people are taught not to expect equitable treatment from their own government, developing a necessary understanding that they must be largely self-reliant in order to survive." She goes on to say, "*Mi María* accentuates the need to resituate ownership over the public narrative from government or media to the people who experienced the disaster." The stories are a testament to communal fortitude and create space to understand the complexities of this natural and human-made disaster beyond the filters of mainstream media coverage.

The stories in *Mi María* disrupt dominant narratives about the colonial history of Puerto Rico and its impact on Puerto Ricans before, during, and after the hurricane. Moving past "the single story" creates an opportunity for teachers and students to grapple with a more nuanced and empathy-based understanding of the issues facing Puerto Rico, and the social, cultural, and historical forces that inform these first-person accounts. Ricia and co-editor Marci Denesiuk harness the power of oral history to forge space for the book's narrators to share harrowing personal accounts of the disaster, government neglect, and the various community responses to it, while at the same time placing the stories within a much larger historical framework.

The creation of this curriculum was led by Puerto Rican educator and *Mi María* narrator Zaira R. Arvelo Alicea. Zaira brings her many years of professional experience to the curriculum, as well as her direct personal experience of the hurricane (as told in the first narrative in the book). Zaira was assisted by curriculum advisors Brenda Y. Flores Santiago and Bryan Ramos Romero. Both Brenda and Bryan participated in gathering stories for the project as students at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez, and their fathers are featured narrators in the book. Zaira's goal was to create a culturally relevant and accessible set of lesson plans for Spanish and English-speaking students living in Puerto Rico who may have direct experience with the issues presented in the book, as well as students and teachers from other parts of the world who are encountering them for the first time.

In the Common Core and Puerto Rico Department of Education-aligned lesson plans that follow, we invite teachers and students to deepen their understanding of colonialism, globalization, climate crisis, and interrelated issues: representation and cultural identity, unjust economic policies, access to resources, migration, federal vs. community responses to disasters, and more. The lessons and supporting resources urge students and teachers to think critically about their relationships to colonial history and the ongoing challenges that Puerto Ricans face. With that goal in mind, the lessons support Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies related to relationship building and social awareness.

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We have designed the curriculum to be as flexible and inclusive as possible for older middle school, high school, and college students. There are two lessons (one in English and one in Spanish) created specifically to address the needs of students and teachers in Puerto Rico. The lessons can be done as a unit or individually. For Puerto Rican educators interested in dedicating a few class periods to *Mi María*, we recommend starting with the "Dependency/Connectedness" lesson to build student understanding, shared connections, and trust, then follow it with the "Colonialism and Climate Change" lesson. We have created a Preface for Educators that offers essential context, strategies, and resources for respectfully engaging in the topics addressed in the book, as well as additional tips and strategies to support English Language Learners. These resources will also help foster a more open and respectful learning environment for students. Finally, we put together a list of discussion questions to support a facilitated group discussion or a book club, and a handful of instructional themes and resources suited for college undergraduate courses.

The lessons offer multiple opportunities for oral history and other creative projects, such as poetry, photography, and mixed media. They incorporate external media from reliable sources and Puerto Rican visual artists and musicians. The lessons are also an invitation for action. We hope that teachers and students feel empowered to take these ideas and go further. Voice of Witness books and curriculum create an opening to better understand narrators and the human rights issues they face and explore the intersections of education and advocacy.

Our thanks to all the *Mi María* narrators, editors Ricia Anne Chansky and Marci Denesiuk, and the students at University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez for their bravery and generosity in gathering and sharing these crucial stories. We'd like to thank Curriculum Specialist Zaira R. Arvelo Alicea for her expertise and personal commitment. We'd also like to thank Voice of Witness intern Rebecca Chen for her suggestions and feedback. Lastly, we offer our thanks to curriculum advisors Brenda Y. Flores Santiago and Bryan Ramos Romero for their contributions and generous collaboration. We are grateful to both of them and their fathers for the beautiful words in their introductory letters, and we hope you will read them with your students.

With respect,
The Voice of Witness Education Team

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Letters from Our Narrators

Bryan Ramos Romero and his father, Rafael Ramos Díaz

> I never planned on sharing my story and I'm glad that I did. I was hesitant, you see, because many of the things I had to say were difficult, unpleasant, and sometimes outright painful to say. I thought, "People don't need to know or hear about this. It's too much." I was wrong. People *do* need to hear about this. They need to know what happened here and all the things that we, as Puerto Ricans, went through because of our local government, because of our federal government and their inadequacies. Inadequacies that cost the well-being and innocent lives of thousands if not more. We owe it to our own community for most of the good things that happened after Hurricane María.

Rafael Ramos Díaz

Four years ago, our beloved Puerto Rico suffered one of its worst natural disasters to date: Hurricane María. The subsequent struggles with electricity, gas, food, and shelter are imprinted in our minds as a somber reminder of what was and no longer is. In those hard times, we cried, we said too many goodbyes, but we also laughed, and we also smiled; we rose higher than we ever thought we could; our narrators and their stories encompass those times in full.

My individual experience with my father's narrative was impactful beyond description. It was a difficult process, like opening an old wound and finding that it still ached, but deep down, after each session, I could see the relief in his eyes, and the healing effect that speaking up about those traumas brought. In the end—and I believe I speak on behalf of many other students in the Mi María project—we as oral historians healed and connected alongside our narrators by the end of our work.

This book holds a special place in my heart. It contains the firsthand experiences and emotions of the Puerto Rican people brought upon by Hurricane María. It denounces where our government failed us and highlights where our community succeeded in their stead; it celebrates the individual person and rejects their place as another number in a distressing statistic. In short, this book says, "Here is the truth, the good and the bad, directly from the mouths of the Puerto Rican people."

To the teachers, consider the trauma and hurt that a student might carry with them to your classroom. Support them along their academic journey and allow them to heal as well as to learn from you. I hope that this book helps you reevaluate the importance of trauma-informed teaching in the classroom and encourages you to implement curricular work with the purpose of providing healing and meaningful experiences to your students. Encourage them to heal and inspire others through their work, break the cycle of trauma and create a cycle of healing and learning.

To the students, embrace the emotions contained within this book. Allow yourself to feel and empathize with the stories and their narrators and let their words inspire you to pursue similar work within your own community. The doors of oral history are open to everyone. Take yourself up for the task, speak to your neighbor, your parents, your teachers, find that story which you believe needs to be heard and through their words, inspire others to do the same. The world is at your fingertips, take the chance to learn, and to heal through the art of storytelling. You will find that the spoken word, through you, can and will shape the world as we know it.

From the sunny island of Puerto Rico,

Bryan Ramos Romero

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Cartas de nuestros narradores

Bryan Ramos Romero y su padre, Rafael Ramos Díaz

> Nunca planeé compartir mi historia, pero me alegro de haberlo hecho. Tenía dudas porque muchas de las cosas que tenía que decir eran difíciles, desagradables y, a veces, francamente dolorosas. Pensé, "La gente no necesita saber o escuchar sobre esto. Es demasiado." Me equivoqué. La gente *necesita* escuchar sobre esto. Necesitan saber lo que sucedió aquí y todas las cosas por las que nosotros, como puertorriqueños, pasamos por nuestro gobierno local, debido a nuestro gobierno federal y sus insuficiencias. Insuficiencias que costaron el bienestar y la vida de miles de inocentes, si no más. Se lo debemos a nuestra propia comunidad por la mayoría de las cosas buenas que sucedieron después del Huracán María.
>
> **Rafael Ramos Díaz**

Hace cuatro años, nuestro querido Puerto Rico sufrió uno de sus peores desastres naturales hasta la fecha: el huracán María. Las luchas posteriores con la electricidad, el gas, la comida y el refugio están impresas en nuestras mentes como un sombrío recordatorio de lo que fue y ya no es. En esos tiempos difíciles, lloramos, nos despedimos demasiado, pero también reímos y también sonreímos; nos elevamos más alto de lo que nunca pensamos que podríamos; nuestros narradores y sus historias abarcan esos tiempos en su totalidad.

Mi experiencia con la narrativa de mi padre fue impactante más allá de toda descripción. Fue un proceso arduo, como abrir una vieja herida y descubrir que todavía me dolía, pero en el fondo, después de cada sesión, pude ver el alivio en sus ojos y el efecto curativo que trajo hablar sobre esos traumas. Al final, y creo que hablo en nombre de muchos otros estudiantes en el proyecto Mi María, nosotros, como historiadores orales, sanamos y nos conectamos junto con nuestros narradores al final de (culminar) nuestro trabajo.

Este libro ocupa un lugar especial en mi corazón. Contiene las experiencias y emociones de primera mano del pueblo puertorriqueño provocadas por el huracán María. Denuncia dónde nuestro gobierno nos falló y destaca dónde nuestra comunidad tuvo éxito en su lugar; celebra a la persona individual y rechaza su lugar como otro número en una estadística angustiante. En resumen, este libro dice, "Aquí está la verdad, lo bueno y lo malo, directamente de la boca del pueblo puertorriqueño."

Para los maestros, considere el trauma y el dolor que un estudiante podría llevar consigo a su salón de clases. Apóyalos a lo largo de su viaje académico y permíteles sanar y aprender de ti. Espero que este libro lo ayude a reevaluar la importancia de la enseñanza informada sobre el trauma en el aula y lo aliente a implementar el trabajo curricular con el propósito de proporcionar experiencias curativas y significativas a sus estudiantes. Anímalos a sanar e inspirar a otros a través de su trabajo, romper el ciclo del trauma y crear un ciclo de curación y aprendizaje.

A los estudiantes, acepten las emociones contenidas en este libro. Permítete sentir y empatizar con las historias y sus narradores y deja que sus palabras te inspiren a realizar un trabajo similar dentro de tu propia comunidad. Las puertas de la historia oral están abiertas a todos. Tómate la tarea, habla con tu vecino, tus padres, tus maestros, encuentra esa historia que crees que necesita ser escuchada y, a través de sus palabras, inspira a otros a hacer lo mismo. El mundo está a tu alcance, aprovecha la oportunidad de aprender y sanar a través del arte de contar historias. Descubrirás que la palabra hablada, a través de ti, puede y dará forma al mundo tal como lo conocemos.

Desde la soleada isla de Puerto Rico,

Bryan Ramos Romero

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Letters from Our Narrators

Brenda Y. Flores Santiago and her father, Luis G. Flores López

> I never thought my story would be shared for so many to read. I am one of the many that are continuing to survive the aftermath of María. I hope my testimony is of help and that it encourages a conversation regarding la gente Puertorriqueña.

Luis G. Flores López

Reader, thank you. The stories you are about to encounter are not easy and we appreciate you taking your time to learn and read about our people and the aftermath of Hurricane María in our lives. You may wonder why part of the title of our book is *"Mi María"* which translates to "My María." The group of undergraduate students at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez and our mentor and director of the project, Dr. Ricia Anne Chansky, wanted a name that would give us and our narrators a sense of authority and individuality. When it came to talking about something that had taken so much but had affected so many in different but similar ways. These are our stories of our people by our people, with no filter.

Puerto Ricans are mostly known for our food, like a warm *plato de arroz con gandules*, our music like Bad Bunny or the infamous Daddy Yankee, and our baseball players like Javier Báez and Carlos Correa. As our music and food define us, our solidarity and empathy deserve the same recognition. Therefore, we wanted to highlight the movement of solidarity that was set into motion when María hit our shores. With our stories, we show you the warmth of our people during the hurricane and after it, making it the protagonist of our collection while our archipelago was destroyed and forever changed by Hurricane María. We let these stories of resilience take center stage in this collection of narratives.

We hope the stories in this collection give an insight into our people. That you can see the spirit and courage of *un pueblo* tired of getting only crumbs from their government. That you can live for a brief moment through the narratives of our survivors what occurred in our archipelago. We implore you to be present and take some time when reading these narratives since although they are full of courage, resistance, and strength, they are not light, nor fiction, nor an exaggeration of events.

Yet please remember the emotions that are painted through the pages of this book as they come from the hearts of our survivors. Even though the book has been published in 2021, the process of the interviews and recollection of narratives was done months after María as a response to the urge of wanting to heal ourselves and our people but not knowing how. Please remember that these stories are only a small percentage of what millions lived through. These narratives showcase that even while living in a society that has tried to bury our people and their struggles, we have risen through community efforts and solidarity. This book is what the media didn't show and what the government wanted to hide. It is an effort to show in an unfiltered way one of the most traumatic events of our lives while living in a colonized archipelago.

Sincerely,

Brenda Y. Flores Santiago

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Cartas de Nuestros Narradores

Brenda Y. Flores Santiago y su padre, Luis G. Flores López

> Nunca pensé que mi historia sería compartida para que muchos la lean. Soy uno de los muchos que continuamos sobreviviendo las secuelas del huracán María. Espero que mi testimonio sea de ayuda y que fomente una conversación sobre la gente Puertorriqueña.

Luis G. Flores López

Gracias, las historias que estas apunto de encontrar no son fáciles, y le agradecemos que saque de su tiempo para aprender y leer sobre nuestra gente y las secuelas del Huracán María en nuestras vidas. Te preguntarás porque parte del título de nuestro libro es "Mi María" que traduce a "My María." El grupo de estudiantes subgraduados de la Universidad de Puerto Rico en Mayagüez, junto a nuestra mentora y directora del proyecto, la Dra. Ricia Anne Chansky queríamos un nombre que nos diera a nosotros y a nuestros narradores un sentido de autoridad e individualidad. Porque se trataba de hablar de algo que nos había quitado tanto, que había afectado a muchas personas de maneras diferentes pero similares. Estas son nuestras historias; de nuestra gente, por nuestra gente, sin filtro.

Los Puertorriqueños somos conocidos por nuestra comida como un buen plato de arroz con gandules, o por nuestra músicos como Bad Bunny o el famoso Daddy Yankee, o nuestros peloteros como Javier Baez y Carlos Correa. Así como todo esto nos define nuestra solidaridad y empatía merecen el mismo reconocimiento. Por esto queríamos destacar el movimiento de solidaridad que se puso en marcha cuando María azotó nuestras costas. Con nuestras historias les enseñamos la calidez de nuestra gente durante y después del huracán, convirtiéndola en la protagonista de nuestra colección mientras nuestro archipiélago fue cambiado para siempre por el Huracán María. Dejando que estas historias de resiliencia ocuparan el centro del escenario en esta colección de narraciones.

Esperamos que las historias de esta colección te den una idea de nuestra gente. Que puedas ver el espíritu y la valentía de un pueblo agotado de sólo recibir migajas de su gobierno. Que puedas vivir, aunque sea por un breve momento a través de las narrativas de nuestros sobrevivientes lo que sucede en nuestro archipiélago. Te imploro que estés presente y que tomes tu tiempo leyendo estas narrativas, porque, aunque llenas de valentía, resistencia y fuerza no son livianas, ni ficción, y mucho menos una exageración de eventos. Por favor, recuerda las emociones pintadas en las páginas de este libro ya que salen del corazón de nuestros sobrevivientes.

A pesar de que el libro ha sido publicado en el 2021, el proceso de las entrevistas y la recolección de las narrativas se hizo meses después de María como respuesta a las ansias de poder cuidarnos a nosotros mismos y a nuestra gente, pero no saber cómo. Por favor, recuerda que estas historias son solo un pequeño porcentaje de lo que millones vivieron. Estas narrativas demuestran que, aunque vivimos en una sociedad que ha tratado de enterrar a nuestra gente y nuestras luchas nos hemos levantado a través del esfuerzo comunitario y la solidaridad. Este libro es lo que las comunicaciones no quisieron enseñar y lo que el gobierno quiso esconder. Es un esfuerzo por mostrar sin filtro alguno uno de los eventos más traumáticos en nuestra vida, como parte de un archipiélago colonizado.

Atentamente,

Brenda Y. Flores Santiago

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Preface for Educators

The stories in *Mi María: Surviving the Storm* focus on experiences and voices that have remained outside the scope of mainstream media coverage about life in the Puerto Rican archipelago and the natural disaster that started in September 2017.

The stories, however, transcend this timestamp and contextualize the natural disaster within an established history of colonialism. To grasp the aftermath of Hurricane María, readers must explore the financial context, infrastructural constraints, federal policies, and import/export dependencies that fueled this costly, human-made disaster and led to the loss of thousands of lives. We recommend taking time to read the introduction and appendices inside *Mi María* before beginning any of the lessons.

The educators and students involved in this project, who have survived hurricanes Irma and María, the earthquake swarm of 2019 in the Caribbean archipelago, and the COVID-19 epidemic, argue that we cannot pretend to educate individuals living in trauma by ignoring their reality. This curriculum offers a guide for incorporating students' lived experiences into language and social studies classrooms while addressing content-area expectations. To prepare for difficult topics, familiarize yourself with how to create a trauma-informed classroom where students will feel comfortable enough to opt in, or confident enough to opt out. Together, you can create classroom norms or community guidelines that give students a baseline of expectations for themselves and each other.

For more resources in English y español, we recommend After the Storm (Cuando Pasa La Tormenta), bilingual resources from Colorín Colorado, and the webinar "Promoviendo la recuperación psicológica post-desastres en Puerto Rico" by Dra. Rosaura Orengo Aguayo. We also recommend the AFT article, "Cuidado del trauma en las escuelas." This EdWeek video also highlights how schools and teachers can be key to recovery after a disaster.

Although the lessons address topics that may trigger students, particularly Puerto Rican students who survived María, they also offer a space for celebrating the power of individuals, community responses, and mutual aid at the heart of the archipelago's recovery. To learn more about Puerto Rico's Solidarity Network, check out this video by the *Red de Apoyo Mutuo*. The activities included in these lesson plans take a proactive, community-based approach to guiding global citizens as we face the common threats of trauma and natural disasters brought by the climate crisis. They prompt us to assess our individual and collective strengths and limitations in order to prepare adequately for when the next disaster strikes. They encourage students to plan and prepare, to research, and to identify their local support networks. If possible, try partnering with your school or local librarian as an extra resource for students to learn how to identify local (city, county, or state) issues and responses, as well as build connections in their local community.

While the specific hurricane provides one common thread across the stories, there are many themes that speak to universal human conditions, including communal responsibility, emergency response, climate change, and cultural wealth. Readers from Puerto Rico and around the globe will find meaningful opportunities to connect and reflect on these issues. For classrooms outside of Puerto Rico, this Learning for Justice (formerly Teaching Tolerance) guide helps establish a foundation of understanding, as do the many resources provided by Puerto Rico Syllabus.

There are three lessons aligned with the Common Core Standards for the benefit of educators in the continental United States. In addition, there are three lessons aligned with the Puerto Rico Department of Education Standards so that educators in the Caribbean archipelago can also lead lessons using *Mi María*.

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Considering the multilingual context in Puerto Rico, we have developed one lesson plan fully in Spanish for Puerto Rican students and added translations in the second. We encourage educators from all over to consider the importance of language while grappling with these activities. The glossary inside *Mi María* provides common translations and definitions that show up within narratives, and this Library of Congress research guide: Yo Soy (I Am) provides useful historical timelines and information.

All English lessons, both for the continental US and Puerto Rico, were carefully developed to integrate language prompts, questions, and activities that use nonverbal, verbal, and multimodal work to enable English Language Learners to comprehend and participate in every lesson. The VOW Oral History Resource Guide for English Language Learners includes cue cards for discussions and reading strategies that can help students approach these narratives and the classroom activities.

There are more resources available from Voice of Witness to guide your classroom building, located in toolkits like The Power of the Story or Where Our Stories Intersect, as well as lesson plans from previous books.

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Mi María Curriculum Map

Themes	Community Resources	Systems & Power	Representation
Language	English	English	English
Standards	RI.9-10.1; W.9-10.10; SL.9-10.1; L.9-10.1; RH.9-10.9.	RI.9-10.1; W.9-10.10; SL.9-10.1; L.9-10.1; RH.9-10.9.	RI.9-10.1; RI.9-10.4; W.9-10.9; W.9-10.10; SL.9-10.4.
Recommended Narrator(s)	Windy Díaz Díaz Emmanuel Rodríguez Vivienne Miranda Rodríguez	Belle Marie Torres Velázquez Carlos Figueroa Vázquez Lorel Cubano Santiago	Carlos Bonilla Rodríguez Israel and Sandra González
Student Objectives	Articulate where help was available for Hurricane María survivors. Explain a range of survivor necessities during and after the hurricane. Identify the motivations that lead the narrators to community action. Reflect on experiences with disasters and identify ways to help communities in future emergencies.	Identify and explain the external and internal systems responsible for current conditions in Puerto Rico. Articulate ways in which globalization creates opportunities and dependencies.	Identify the role of cultural wealth in shifting perceptions of oppressed communities. Understand how oral history can help challenge stereotypical representations of oppressed communities.
Ethnic Studies-Aligned Topics	• Identifying Community Needs & Solutions • Sources of Support • Individual Needs & Assets • Community Assets	• Defining Systems • Power Structures • Systems of Dependence	• Stereotypes • Cultural Wealth

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Theme	Climate Change & Colonialism (in Puerto Rico)	Cambio climático y colonialismo (en Puerto Rico)	Systems & Power (in Puerto Rico)
Language	English	Español	Bilingual
Standards	9.S.1; 9.S.3; 9.R.10; 9.R.1a; 9.W.5. CC 9.4; CC 9.12; PLA 9.7; DP.9.6; IC.9.5; CCD 9.4; CCD 9.6.	RI.9-10.1; W.9-10.10; SL.9-10.1; L.9-10.1; RH.9-10.9.	9.R.1a; 9.R.4L; 9.R.5L; 9.S.1; 9.W.4; 9.W.5. CG 9.1; CG 9.3; CG 9.4; CG 9.8; CC 9.4; DP.9.6.
Recommended Narrator(s)	Zaira Arvelo Alicea	Zaira Arvelo Alicea	Belle Marie Torres Velázquez Carlos Figueroa Vázquez Lorel Cubano Santiago
Student Objectives	Learn about the connection between climate change and severe storms and weather systems. Deepen their understanding of the connection between colonialism and disaster recovery in Puerto Rico.	Aprenderán sobre la relación entre el cambio climático y los fenómenos meteorológicos severos. Ampliarán su comprensión sobre las conexiones entre el coloniaje y el proceso de recuperación por desastres en Puerto Rico.	Identify and explain the external and internal systems responsible for current conditions in Puerto Rico. Articulate ways in which globalization creates opportunities and dependencies.
Ethnic Studies-Aligned Topics	• Climate Disaster Preparation • Climate Disaster Aftermath • Climate Change • Taking Action	• Cambio Climático • Colonialismo • Preparacíon para desastres naturales	• Globalization and Colonialism • Systems of Dependence

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Mi María Lesson Plan: Community Resources

Time Needed: 4 class periods.

Materials:

- Handouts and worksheets:
  - Describe, Infer, Synthesize (DIS): The Wait
  - Describe, Infer, Synthesize (DIS): Sources of Help
  - The Real Upstanders Table
  - Narrator Profile Sheet
- Media and text:
  - Discussion Image: The Wait
  - Discussion Image: Sources of Help
- Full narratives or suggested excerpts from *Mi María:*

Windy Díaz Díaz
"My wheelchair tipped over" (pp. 85–87)
"Teach me more of dominoes" (pp. 87–88)
"I felt invisible" (pp. 89–93)

Emmanuel Rodríguez
"The baby was coming" (pp. 42–43)
"Up the hill backwards" (pp. 43–46)
"The baby got sick" (pp. 51–54)

Vivienne Miranda Rodríguez
"No green anywhere" (pp. 124–125)
"Two hundred sandwiches" (pp. 125–128)
"Mud and debris and sewage" (pp. 128–129)
"Sick from the water" (pp. 129–131)

Objective:

- Students will be able to articulate where help was available for Hurricane María survivors.
- Students will be able to explain a range of survivor necessities during and after the hurricane.
- Students will be able to identify the motivations that lead the narrators to community action.
- Students will be able to reflect on their experiences with disasters and identify ways in which they can help their communities in future emergencies.

Related Core Curriculum Standards:
RI.9-10.1; W.9-10.10; SL.9-10.1; L.9-10.1; RH.9-10.9.

Essential Questions:

- How can resources be diverted to meet the needs of a community during a crisis?
- How does celebrating individual and community assets complicate dominant narratives about victims of disasters?
- What are the narrators' needs during and after the hurricane? How does each narrator meet their needs? Who supports them?
- What appears to be the catalyst for helping others?
- What are our weaknesses and strengths when it comes to disaster preparedness?

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Day One

Identifying Community Needs & Solutions

Overview
In this lesson, students will be able to identify various types of needs, resources, and assistance that may or may not exist for communities during a crisis. Students will begin to imagine possibilities for how resources can be diverted to meet the needs of a community.

Hook: Image Analysis (15 minutes)
Step 1: Project or display Discussion Image: The Wait and pass out copies of the Describe, Infer, Synthesize (DIS) worksheet. **Step 2:** Model creating a description of the image ("I see S.O.S. written on the ground in an intersection with seven people standing around"). Give students a few minutes to examine the image and write down every detail. Encourage them to name the exact words on the ground, the angle the photograph is taken from, the debris, and more. **Step 3:** Ask students to share their descriptions. Make a list on the board. **Step 4:** Ask students to start making inferences based on what they see, using evidence from the picture or their own background knowledge. Ask students to make inferences about the goal of the writing, the impact of the photograph, and when it was taken. For example, "I *think* this photograph is from a helicopter *because* it looks like it was taken from the air. I *think* the people are asking for help *because* I see the S.O.S. on the ground." **Step 5:** Have students respond to the prompts: What is the picture showing us about the needs of the community? What other needs do you imagine might exist for this community?
Journal (10 minutes)
Have students journal about the following prompt for at least 5 minutes, then briefly share their journal thoughts with a partner: Think about a time when you had difficulty with something, and someone helped you. How did they help you? Why did they want to help? How did their help change your experience?
Narrative Reading (25 minutes)
Read Emmanuel's ("The baby was coming") and Windy's ("I felt invisible") excerpts either as a whole class or individually. Students should answer the following questions in journals or notebooks as they read: 1. What are some difficulties each narrator faces? 2. When do these difficulties arise? (e.g., during or after the storm) 3. What are the narrator's feelings toward their situation? 4. What potential solutions would help each narrator get the resources they need?

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Day Two

Sources of Support

Overview
In this lesson, students will be able to identify the sources of assistance in disaster relief, including federal and local government, military, artists, organizers, community members, etc. Students will evaluate the extent to which community needs are being met by each group.

Hook: Image Analysis (15 minutes)
Step 1: Project or display Discussion Image: Sources of Help and pass out copies of the Describe, Infer, Synthesize (DIS) worksheet. **Step 2:** Model creating descriptions of the image. Give students a few minutes to examine the image and write down every detail, including expressions, text, and positioning. **Step 3:** Ask students to share their descriptions. Make a list on the board. **Step 4:** Ask students to make inferences based on what they see, using evidence from the image or their own background knowledge. Ask students to judge the mood or tone of the image as well. **Step 5:** Have students respond to the prompt: According to this artist, who supported the community of Puerto Rico after the hurricane? Who didn't? How would you imagine each character in the political cartoon provided (or didn't provide) support?
Pair Share (5 minutes)
In pairs, have students discuss the following prompt: What have you seen in your community as a response to natural disasters or other emergencies? Who provides help, and how? Who is unhelpful, and why? *(Examples could include power outages, shelter-in-place orders, the COVID-19 pandemic, etc.)*
Narrative Reading (15 minutes)
Step 1: Divide the class into small groups. Assign each group to read different excerpts from Emmanuel and Vivienne's narratives (as suggested above). **Step 2:** Students should answer the following questions together in their groups: 1. What are the needs that the narrator and their community identify? 2. How does the narrator and the community coordinate the help needed? Who or where does the support come from? 3. How effective is community coordination in providing help and those receiving it? Why is it more or less effective than other sources of assistance?
Expert Report (15 minutes)
Ask each group to summarize and share their answers with the class.

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Day Three

Individual Needs & Assets

Overview
In this lesson, students will complete a narrator profile sheet for a survivor of Hurricane María in order to build empathy and to avoid a single story or deficit mentality around disaster victims.

Narrative Connection (15 minutes)
Have students respond to the following questions in journal form or pair-sharing: 1. Can you describe a time when you or someone you cared about had a health emergency? 2. How did this health emergency impact your life? 3. What kind of medical help did you, your relative, or your friend receive?
Narrator Profile (35 minutes)
Step 1: Have students read Vivienne's narrative individually or in small groups. Encourage students to deeply engage with Vivienne's experiences by reading slowly and highlighting particularly vivid or emotional sections. In order to understand how she responds to the medical emergencies and community needs post Hurricane María, students should try to imagine themselves in her situation and what they might do in her place. **Step 2:** Instruct students to complete the Narrator Profile Sheet. **Step 3:** Engage the whole class in conversation on natural disasters and their effects on the health and well-being of vulnerable populations (children, the elderly, the poor). Utilize as many of the following suggested questions as you'd like during the conversation: 1. Which aspects of her upbringing shaped Vivienne into the person she is today? 2. How do Vivienne's relationships enable her to help her family and her community? 3. What were the living conditions that Vivienne witnessed as she ventured out to provide relief outside of Rincón? 4. What difficult decisions must Vivienne make for the well-being of her family? 5. How do natural and human-made conflicts affect Vivienne's well-being? 6. How might Vivienne's story complicate or push back against stereotypical representations of disaster victims?

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Day Four

Community Assets

Overview
In this lesson, students will celebrate communal and individual assets, both in terms of how the community of Puerto Rico worked together to bring about positive change after a crisis, and how their individual assets can bring about positive change in their own classroom community.

Visual Analysis (30 minutes)
Step 1: Project and pass out copies of The Real Upstanders Table. Explain that an upstander is someone who acts against injustice and works towards positive change. **Step 2:** Model how to list evidence including an example from the lesson plan narratives (Windy, Emmanuel, and Vivienne). Give students a few minutes to explore the narratives and pull out relevant examples. You can assign narratives or let students choose. **Step 3:** Ask students to share their evidence and explain in which column it should be listed. **Step 4:** Ask students to start making inferences based on the data listed in the table. **Step 5:** Have students respond to the prompt: Who were the real upstanders?
Action Item (20 minutes)
Step 1: Give each student an index card. Make sure they include their names on the card. **Step 2:** On their cards, ask students to write their responses to the following prompts: If a natural disaster were to strike your community, how could you help? Think of a resource you have available, a skill (something you know how to do), or knowledge (something you can apply or teach others). Model writing your own card with something you could give, do/use, or teach. **Step 3:** Have students drop their cards in a box. Get volunteers to draw random cards and read out loud their peers' names and their strengths. **Step 4:** Write these strengths in a list labeled "our classroom community strengths."

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Mi María Lesson Plan: Systems & Power

Time Needed: 4 class periods.

Materials:

- Handouts and worksheets:
  - Describe, Infer, Synthesize (DIS): Layers of Dependency
  - Prior Knowledge Inventory
- Media and text:
  - Discussion Image: Layers of Dependency
  - Essay: Contexts of Disaster from *Mi María*
- Full narratives or suggested excerpts from *Mi María*:

Belle Marie Torres Velázquez
"The island's only doctor" (pp. 209–212)
"I felt a beating heart" (pp. 212–215)

Carlos Figueroa Vázquez
"I learned to sleep anywhere" (pp. 233–235)
"The work should've been better" (pp. 236–238)

Lorel Cubano Santiago
"A 'taboo' community" (pp. 157–160)
"María parked on the island" (pp. 161–162)
"We watched the ships come" (pp. 162–165)
"Where people could come for a breath" (pp. 165)
"Everybody should have dignity" (pp. 166–169)

Objective:

- Students will be able to identify and explain the external and internal systems responsible for current conditions in Puerto Rico.
- Students will be able to articulate ways in which globalization creates opportunities and dependencies.

Related Core Curriculum Standards:
RI.9-10.1; W.9-10.10; SL.9-10.1; L.9-10.1; RH.9-10.9.

Essential Questions:

- Who holds power and who doesn't in a given system? When is a system most effective?
- What are some ways in which systems of power create dependence?
- When and where does dependence break down? When and where does it work?
- How are globalization and colonialism related?

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Day One
Defining Systems

Overview
In this lesson, students will define systems as they relate to meeting the needs of a community. Students will identify the pros and cons of systems that exist within the community of Culebra, and make connections to the systems that exist within their own communities.

Narrative Reading (15 minutes)
Before reading, explain that today you will be working to identify the systems that help a community function. If students need a definition, explain that a system is "a set of things working together or a set of procedures to accomplish a task." Assign Belle Marie's story (or suggested excerpts) and have students consider the following questions as they read: 1. What systems exist on the island of Culebra to help inhabitants get their basic needs met? 2. What do you think Belle Marie means when she says, "Island life is not for everyone?" What does she imply/share about "island life" and the people who live there?
Rewind (10 minutes)
Step 1: Post/write the quote "Island life is not for everyone" in a prominent space in the classroom (e.g., projected slide, white/blackboard, easel pad). **Step 2:** Engage students in a discussion about globalization, geographical isolation, and dependency using as many of the following suggested questions as you'd like: 1. What are essential goods and services you and your community need to survive? 1. What are ways in which you and your community receive essential goods? (e.g., delivery, speed, supply/availability) How do people on an island get them? 2. How do the American citizens in Culebra get the natural resources and essential services they need? (e.g., boat, airplane, Puerto Rico, the USA) How does Belle Marie describe these services? 3. What are some of the advantages of 'island life' as Belle Marie describes it? What are some of the disadvantages? 4. What is it like for the inhabitants of Culebra when their community is not getting the help they need? How do people respond?
Creative Response (25 minutes)
Step 1: Write the statement "We are all an island" in a prominent space in the classroom (e.g., projected slide, white/blackboard, easel pad). **Step 2:** Ask students to respond to the prompt in a way that feels natural to them, such as journaling, creating a digital collage, drawing, poetry, etc. **Step 3:** Based on students' choices, consider asking them to share their writing with a partner, or display

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their responses and lead a gallery walk.

Homework Extension

Students can conduct brief research on a current event in which their community, state, or country was unable to get an essential service or lost access to a resource. Consider identifying a few sample events ahead of time that students may have recently experienced or be familiar with. You could also reach out to your school librarian for a reliable list of sources students should use to perform their research.

Ask students to provide a 200-word summary on the community or country's response to this emergency. The summary should include a statement on whether the response was adequate or inadequate and why. It should also briefly explain the systems (natural or human-made) responsible for this incident.

Day Two

Power Structures

Overview

In this lesson, students will identify the groups or individuals with a given system that hold the most (and least) power. Students will evaluate whether the existing power structure is effective in meeting the needs of the community.

Expert Report (10 minutes)

Step 1: Group students together by the events they researched (or similar events) and have them share their findings briefly by summarizing whether they discovered the community, state, or country's response was adequate or inadequate.

Step 2: Instruct each group to select a representative to share a short summary of their current event, focusing on the systems responsible for the incidents.

Image Analysis (15 minutes)

Step 1: Project the Discussion Image and pass out copies of the Describe, Infer, Synthesize (DIS) worksheet. Explain that this image represents the different groups that make up the system that supplies electricity (power) to Puerto Rico.

Step 2: Model creating descriptions of the image ("I see six people in the picture. The first is a man in a suit who represents the Corps of Engineers..."). Give students a few minutes to examine the image and write down every detail, including characters' expressions, text, and positioning.

Step 3: Ask students to share their descriptions. Make a list on the board.

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Step 4: Ask students to start making inferences based on what they see, using evidence from the image or their own background knowledge. Ask students to make inferences about the mood or tone of the image as well.

Step 5: Have students respond to as many of the following prompts as you'd like:

1. What is the artist showing us about line workers?
2. What does the artist want us to understand about their work?
3. Which group(s) have the most power in this system? Which groups don't have power? How do you know?
4. Overall, is this an effective system? Why or why not?
5. What would have to change about this system to make it more effective in meeting Puerto Rico's needs?

Narrative Reading (15 minutes)

Have students read Carlos Figueroa's story (or suggested excerpts) and ask them to keep the following questions in mind:

1. What are Carlos's work conditions before and after the hurricane?
2. How are local (PREPA) and external power companies (Whitefish, disaster contractors) different from each other?

Whole Class Discussion Activity (10 minutes)

Encourage a whole class discussion on power and dependency using the following suggested questions:

1. Who has the power to make major decisions in Carlos's story? (e.g., purchase orders, workloads, employee stations)
2. According to Carlos, who or what is to blame for the blackout? What led to that moment?
3. Why do you think people blamed Carlos for the delay in restoring electricity? Do you think Carlos could have done anything differently?
4. Where do you see uneven power dynamics in your local community and country?

Kindness Act (10 minutes)

Step 1: Prompt students to consider how people responded to Carlos's work, and the impact it had on him (e.g., examples of aggression or kindness).

Step 2: As a class, make a list of essential and/or front-line workers. This should include grocery workers, food service workers, healthcare workers, caregivers, teachers, and more.

Step 3: Students should think of someone they know in their family or community who fills one of these roles. If they cannot think of anyone, encourage them to choose someone who works at their school.

Step 4: Have students write a thank you note to their selected essential worker.

Extension Activity

Encourage students to deliver their thank you note (by email, SMS text, or in person). Another alternative can be to showcase their thank you notes collaboratively (a classroom poster of upstanders or a hallway display).

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Day Three

Systems of Dependence

Overview
In this lesson, students will explore how systems of power create dependence, exploring both the benefits and drawbacks of being dependent on a larger system.

Vocabulary Square (10 minutes)
Choose 1 or 2 terms that would be most helpful to define with your class from the Systems of Dependence Vocabulary Square handout. Prompt students to use any prior knowledge of the terms to create a definition, examples and non-examples, synonyms and antonyms together. Then, ask students to create a drawing representing your chosen vocabulary term together.
Sustained Silent Reading (30 minutes)
Have students read Lorel's story (or suggested excerpts). Encourage them to keep in mind the groups, systems, and institutions from the Prior Knowledge Inventory which may result in dependency. Guide their reading with the following suggested questions: 1. What services or needs do the systems in the reading provide? 2. Who is dependent on these systems? Why? 3. How has the diaspora impacted life in La Perla before and after María? 4. How is the Jacksonville port related to supply delivery in Puerto Rico? 5. How does colonialism materialize in La Perla?
Graffiti Wall (10 minutes)
Step 1: Create two posters (on the white board or using easel pad sheets): one titled "dependency strengths" and the second one titled "dependency failures." Put them next to each other so students can see them side-by-side. **Step 2:** Instruct students to take turns writing on sticky notes some examples of strength and failure in the kinds of dependency that Lorel shares in her story, then place them on the appropriate posters. **Step 3:** Encourage students to circle things they agree with or respond directly by adding text, drawing symbols, diagrams, pictures, or more.

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Day Four

Systems of Dependence, pt. 2

Overview
In this lesson, students will continue to explore the benefits and drawbacks of dependence, adding interpersonal dependence to their schema.

Expanding the Graffiti Wall (40 minutes)
Step 1: Bring attention to the Graffiti Wall students created in the previous day. Prompt students to think about their creative responses to "We are all an island," and keep those reflections in mind while adding to the Graffiti Wall. **Step 2:** Give students different colored markers or sticky notes to add examples from Belle Marie and Carlos's story with the following prompt: Where do you see signs of strength in Belle Marie and Carlos's stories? Who depends on Belle Marie and Carlos? Who or what do Belle Marie and Carlos depend on?
Debrief (20 minutes)
Lead students through a debrief conversation after viewing the graffiti wall. Guide their discussion with the following questions: ● What are some of the benefits of depending on a system? What are some of the drawbacks? ● Do you think a community needs to be dependent on systems in order to function? ● When might it be better to depend on systems? When might it be better to depend on individuals or small groups? ● Which systems provide the most benefits to a community, and which systems hurt a community? ● How does colonialism impact communities and their ability to function?

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Mi María Lesson Plan: Representation

Time Needed: 2 class periods.

Materials:

- Handouts and worksheets:
  - Identity Reflection
  - Cultural Wealth Skills Assessment
  - Cultural Wealth Notetaker
- Media and text:
  - Tara J. Yosso's Cultural Wealth Theory original article or summary
  - *Vox* article: "How Colonialism and Racism Explain the Inept US response to Hurricane María"
  - ACLU blog: "President Trump's Response to Hurricane María in Puerto Rico Confirms Second-Class Citizenship"
  - *PBS* video: Puerto Rico Juventud y West Side Story (Spanish)
  - PBS episode trailer: Latino Americans: Pride and Prejudice
  - Article: Why it's time to move on from 'West Side Story' stereotypes about Puerto Rican life
- Objects that can be wrapped together (pens, pencils, markers, straws) and rubber bands
- Full narratives or suggested excerpts from *Mi María*:

Carlos Bonilla Rodríguez
"What I remember is the footsteps" (pp. 174–177)
"I give it a *bendición*" (pp. 178–179)
"Keep doing my work" (pp. 179–181)
"That could be fixed" (pp. 182–184)

Israel and Sandra González
"To change the world" (pp. 188–193)
"The whole thing starts with a flower" (pp. 195–197)
"Everything is a monopoly" (pp. 197–199)
"Nobody could get through to us" (pp. 201–203)

Objective:

- Students will identify the role of cultural wealth in shifting perceptions of oppressed communities.
- Students will understand how oral history can help challenge stereotypical representations of oppressed communities.

Related Core Curriculum Standards:
RI.9-10.1; RI.9-10.4; W.9-10.9; W.9-10.10; SL.9-10.4.

Essential Questions:

- What are the sources that have shaped single stories or external perceptions of identity groups?
- How does the concept of cultural wealth complicate or challenge dominant narratives?
- How do personal stories act as counternarratives to challenge stereotypes?
- What are the sources that have shaped external perceptions of Puerto Rico?
- What are examples of strength and cultural wealth that you see amongst the narrators in the book?
- How do the stories challenge stereotypes about Puerto Ricans?

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Day One

Stereotypes

Overview
In this lesson, students will identify stereotypes that exist around their own identity markers as a way to connect to stereotypical representations of Puerto Ricans in popular media. Then, students will examine counternarratives to complicate or push back against dominant stereotypes.

Identity Reflection (5 minutes)
Step 1: As a class, define the term "stereotype." **Step 2:** Have students fill out the Identity Reflection individually and privately. Remind students that they can answer all the rows or just a few, or even explain why these boxes do not work for them. The answers will not be shared with anyone and are only for their own personal reflection about stereotypes and how they affect our own identities. Students can shred the document afterward if there are privacy concerns.
External Perceptions (10 minutes)
Tell students you will be exploring stereotypes and how they materialize as part of the Puerto Rican experience. **Step 1:** Check students' knowledge by asking them: Do you know of any stereotypes associated with Puerto Rico or Puerto Ricans? What are some examples? **Step 2:** Play the video *Latino Americans	Puerto Rican Youth and West Side Story*. (dead link) **Step 3:** Expand the earlier discussion with the following suggested questions: 1. Where do stereotypes come from? 2. Who creates them? 3. Who controls them? **Step 4:** For students with little previous knowledge of Puerto Rico or for students with extensive knowledge or direct experience, you may also share or ask them to read from: ● *Vox* article: "How Colonialism and Racism Explain the Inept US response to Hurricane María" ● ACLU blog: "President Trump's Response to Hurricane María in Puerto Rico Confirms Second-Class Citizenship"
Storytelling as Counter-Narrative (20 minutes)
Step 1: Discuss with students the importance of storytelling as a form of truth-telling. We will be practicing storytelling to humanize and empower ourselves and our communities. Consider showing Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TED Talk, "The danger of a single story" for more context. **Step 2:** Read Israel and Sandra's full narrative or suggested excerpts. As students are reading, have them

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highlight key passages that stand out or feel relatable to them.

Connections (15 minutes)

After reading Israel and Sandra's story, ask students to consider the following suggested questions in a whole class discussion:

- What could you relate to in Israel and Sandra's story?
- What does this story tell us about the kind of person Sandra is? What does this story tell us about the kind of person Israel is? About their relationship?
- What does this story tell us about the experience of Puerto Ricans inside and outside of the Caribbean archipelago?
- How do stereotypes or expectations affect Israel and Sandra's life?
- How do Sandra and Israel's stories prevent a 'single story' or stereotype about Puerto Rican people?

Extension: Empowering Personal Narrative

Students can extend their understanding of the effect of stereotypes and self-belief through a narrative writing assignment using the suggested writing prompt:

Describe an example of a stereotype that you have experienced. This can be a positive or negative stereotype. How has this stereotype impacted you, including your self-beliefs? How can you liberate yourself from society's expectations? Why is it important (to you or your community) to do so?

Day Two: Cultural Wealth

Overview

In this lesson, students will develop a deep, nuanced definition of cultural wealth by identifying different forms of cultural wealth and relating these concepts to the readings, as well as their own lives and communities.

Introduction: Skills Assessment (10 minutes)

Step 1: Ask students to reflect and journal privately on the prompt: What does it mean to be smart or talented? Would you consider yourself smart/talented? What are your strengths?

Step 2: Gather a pile of objects (such as several pencils, pens, crayons, or straws) that students can reach and give each student a rubber band. Ask students to grab one object from the pile every time they agree with a statement. You do not need to use all the statements from the Cultural Wealth Skills Assessment, but it's essential to think ahead about your students and consider which questions may elicit the most "yes" responses or allow every student to be able to answer "yes" more than once. Students should wrap their objects with the rubber band when finished.

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Step 3: Have students place their "Skills Bunch" on their desks. Ask them to walk around and observe the bunches their peers have on their desks.

Step 4: Debrief the activity with students by discussing the following questions as a class:

1. What does it mean to be smart? How do you know if someone is smart?
2. Which skills from the activity would be something that "smart" people can do?
3. Which skills from the activity would be valuable? Why don't you think ___ is a valuable skill?
4. Who gets to decide what is a valuable skill? Who gets to decide who is smart?

The goal is to help students see beyond formal education as the only measures of intelligence and discover that traditional definitions of intelligence can actually be misleading tools to perpetuate oppression of groups with varied types of wealth.

Cultural Wealth Theory (10 minutes)

Step 1: Briefly review the concepts of assets and deficits. Explain that the lesson will put these ideas together through the cultural wealth theory.

Step 2: Share copies of Tara Yosso's Cultural Wealth Theory Model. Read the first paragraph aloud together.

Step 3: Discuss Yosso's definition of cultural wealth. Ensure that students understand that "wealth" is, for learning intents and purposes, synonymous with "non-financial assets."

Step 4: Have volunteers read the definition of each form of "capital."

Narrative Reading (20 minutes)

Have students read Carlos Bonilla's story (or suggested excerpts).

As they read, ask students to highlight passages and quotes that are examples of Carlos's, his family's, and his community's cultural wealth.

Cultural Wealth in the *Campo* (20 minutes)

Step 1: Have students take out their copy of Carlos's narrative and place them in six groups.

Step 2: On the board, draw lines for 6 columns/posters and label them:

1. Aspirational
2. Linguistic
3. Familial
4. Social
5. Navigational
6. Resistance

Step 3: Give each group a stack of post-its and a copy of the Cultural Wealth Notetaker. Instruct students to discuss examples of cultural wealth that they saw in Carlos's story and write each example on a separate post-it.

Step 4: When groups are finished, one spokesperson for each group should share out the examples and

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add the post-its to the appropriate category.

Extension: Tools for Empowerment

Ask students to pick a tool/resource that resonated with them throughout the lesson, like the Identity Reflection grid or the Cultural Wealth concept. Give them a new copy of the tool/resource to share. They should identify someone in their life (a friend or close relative) they can trust and want to share this experience with.

Students should walk through their own experience using the tool/resource and what they learned from class, then offer to support their partner in using the tool/resource.

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Mi María Lesson Plan: Climate Change & Colonialism (in Puerto Rico)

Time Needed: 4 class periods.

Materials:

1. Handouts and worksheets:
    - My Hurricane Checklist
    - My Emergency Network
2. Media and text:
    - *NBC News* article and video: "Puerto Rico Residents Outraged After Discovering Warehouse Full of Unused Aid from Hurricane María"
    - *Fast Company* article: "Why Puerto Rico Is Not Trump's Katrina"
    - *Vox* article: "The Jones Act, the Obscure 1920 Shipping Regulation Strangling Puerto Rico, Explained"
    - *The Washington Post* article: "Trump Hasn't Treated Puerto Rico Well. But That's a Long U.S. Tradition."
    - *Politico News* article: "How Trump Favored Texas Over Puerto Rico"
    - *Democracy Now* video: "FBI Assassinates Puerto Rican Nationalist Leader Filiberto Ojeda Ríos"
    - *BBC News* article: "Climate Change: Hurricanes Get Stronger on Land as World Warms"
    - *CNN News* article: "Laura 'Rapidly Intensified' Overnight. Here's What that Term Means"
    - Phys.org article: "Climate Change to Blame for Hurricane María's Extreme Rainfall"
3. Full narrative from *Mi María:*
    - **Zaira Arvelo Alicea**

Objective:

- Students will learn about the connection between climate change and more severe storms and weather systems.
- Students will deepen their understanding of the connection between colonialism and disaster recovery in Puerto Rico.

Related Puerto Rico Department of Education Standards:

English Standards	Social Studies Standards
9.S.1; 9.S.3; 9.R.10; 9.R.1a; 9.W.5.	CC 9.4; CC 9.12; PLA 9.7; DP.9.6; IC.9.5; CCD 9.4; CCD 9.6.

Essential Questions:

- What is the role of climate change in the current landscape of severe weather? How does climate change cause more severe storms?
- What role does personal experience and reflection play in mitigating the effects of climate disaster?
- How might your home and community prepare for severe weather considering the climate and political context of Puerto Rico?
- What are the roles of colonialism and climate disasters in the lives of those who survive them?

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Before diving into this lesson, we recommend reading over our Preface for Educators to better prepare your students for personal story sharing that may be challenging or overwhelming. Creating a trauma-informed classroom is key, and at Voice of Witness, we believe all activities should be designed for students to opt in when comfortable and opt out if they're not yet ready. In this lesson, we ask students to reflect on their personal experience with Hurricane María, and our intention is that they will be open to learning from each other. However, please make space for students to reflect privately if preferred.

If your students are not from Puerto Rico or did not live through Hurricane María, encourage them to think of another emergency situation they have either personally experienced or are very familiar with to use in their discussions.

Day One

Climate Disaster Preparation

Overview
In this lesson, students are given the opportunity to reflect on their experience of Hurricane María, using their own memories and insider knowledge to create a climate disaster preparedness plan for the future.

My Hurricane Experience (15 minutes)
Step 1: Have students reflect on the following questions individually: How did your family prepare for Hurricane María? Where did you stay? **Step 2:** Group students in pairs to share as much of their hurricane experience as they are willing.
Narrative Reading (20 minutes)
Have students read Zaira's story, or just the section "Water was everywhere." As they read, ask students to highlight passages that show Zaira and Juan Carlos's hurricane preparedness plan.
Preparedness in Aguadilla (15 minutes)
Encourage a whole class discussion on hurricane preparation using the following suggested questions: 1. What kinds of actions did Zaira and Juan Carlos take around the house prior to the hurricane to stay safe? 2. How was Zaira feeling the night before the hurricane? 3. How was she feeling the morning and afternoon of the hurricane? 4. Which aspects of her neighborhood, its geography, and home made her feel that way?
Connections (10 minutes)
Step 1: On a prominent space (whiteboard, easel pad), write the prompt: "For the next one, I will..." **Step 2:** Using sticky notes, ask students to respond to the question: "What would I do differently next time

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to be better prepared?" Have them suggest 1-2 actions they would take to fill in the prompt.

Remind students that this is not a judgment on their previous preparedness, and everyone did the best they could with the information they had for such an unprecedented event with little official warning. This activity is to encourage students to look forward and model this behavior for them by including an example of what you might do next time, knowing what you do now.

Extension: A Patriotic Month

These extension activities are meant to highlight the connections between climate change and colonialism, as well as provide students an opportunity to dive even deeper into Zaira's narrative.

Step 1: Read the following paragraph from Zaira for context for your students:

> I experienced Hurricane María on the west side of Puerto Rico, a coastal town with an active United States military base, but I grew up in a very different region: the rural center of the main island. As an extension activity, read my narrative section, "We're with the people now" to learn more about what it meant for me to grow up in the town where the Cry of Lares originated. As you read, think about two important questions: How was my school experience different from others? What is so special about September 23 to me?

Step 2: Give students time to read Zaira's narrative section, then come back for a whole group discussion about the meaning of September.

Day Two

Climate Disaster Aftermath

Overview

In this lesson, students will critique the systems of power responsible for the aftermath of climate disaster in Puerto Rico.

Activating Prior Knowledge (5 minutes)

Divide students into small groups to have a conversation using the following prompt: "What was the official response in your community/home like?" This can mean the municipal government, Puerto Rico government and its agencies, or federal government and its agencies.

Narrative Reading (15 minutes)

Revisit Zaira's story or just the following sections: "I am so freaking exhausted," "Those girls were so brave," "Those first weeks," and "I went back."

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As they read, ask students to highlight passages that relate to official and unofficial responses and types of aid that Zaira, Juan Carlos, and their community received.

Whole Class Discussion (15 minutes)

Encourage a whole class discussion on hurricane response using the following suggested questions:

1. What was the official response to Zaira's emergency like? Think of "officials" such as firefighters, police, and the government.
2. Who helped Zaira and Juan Carlos the day of the hurricane and the days immediately after the hurricane?
3. What was FEMA's response to Zaira's claim?
4. What was the federal response to the flood in Zaira's community?

The Worst Part Tally (5 minutes)

Create a simple poll with the prompt, "The worst part of Hurricane María was..." and the following options:

1. the hurricane itself (that day)
2. the aftermath (what came after it)

This can be a digital poll, having students raise their hands in response, or a T-chart on a white/blackboard that students can write their initials on. Tally their responses.

Human-Made Disaster (20 minutes)

Step 1: As an introduction to this activity, emphasize that the natural disaster was scary and traumatizing, but the long aftermath was human-made and ultimately avoidable.

Step 2: Have students work in groups to read one of the following five articles.

1. "Puerto Rico Residents Outraged After Discovering Warehouse Full of Unused Aid from Hurricane María" (Expired supplies)
2. "Why Puerto Rico Is Not Trump's Katrina" (Presidential apathy)
3. "The Jones Act, the Obscure 1920 Shipping Regulation Strangling Puerto Rico, Explained" (Jones Act effects on Puerto Rico)
4. "Trump Hasn't Treated Puerto Rico Well. But That's a Long U.S. Tradition." (Colonialism and lack of responsibility)
5. "How Trump Favored Texas Over Puerto Rico" (Colonialism and double standards)

Step 3: As they read, encourage students to note the human actions, political relationships, transport regulations, and systems responsible for the long aftermath.

Extension: A Premeditated September

Step 1: Read the following context from Zaira for students:

In the extension for Day 1, you read about my experience growing up singing an alternative revolutionary anthem in school and freely commemorating the anniversary of the Cry of Lares every September 23.

The meaning of this date is not lost to *Lareños*, *boricuas*, and the United States Intelligence

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Divisions. In fact, it was precisely on this date, on September 23, 2005, that the United States orchestrated an armed operative to assassinate Filiberto Ojeda, the head of the *Ejercito Popular Boricua (Boricua Popular Party)*.

When you watch the video "FBI Assassinates Puerto Rican Nationalist Leader Filiberto Ojeda Rios," think about the following questions: What kind of coordination was the FBI able to achieve in the rural community of Plan Bonito in Hormigueros? According to the video, what was the FBI's intention on this day?

Step 2: Play the *Democracy Now!* video about Filiberto Ojeda Rios and facilitate a whole group discussion after watching together.

Day Three
Climate Change

Overview
In this lesson, students will research ways to take community-based action against climate change by defining the specific needs of a region and discussing way to divert necessary resources to those communities.

Climate Change and Severe Storms (20 minutes)
Step 1: Divide the class into three small groups and assign one article each: 1. "Climate Change: Hurricanes Get Stronger on Land as World Warms" (Longer inland spans) 2. "Laura 'Rapidly Intensified' Overnight. Here's What that Term Means" (Rapid intensification) 3. "Climate Change to Blame for Hurricane María's Extreme Rainfall" (Rain totals) **Step 2:** As students read, have them annotate the factors causing longer storm life spans, faster intensification, and heavier rain totals. **Step 3:** Create a classroom web where "Climate Change" is written at the top or center. Ask each group to add their weather phenomena to the web (e.g., longer storm life spans, faster intensification, heavier rain totals). **Step 4:** Have a member of each group provide an explanation of exactly which aspects of climate change (e.g., heavy moisture, warmer water) are causing their assigned phenomenon.
Climate Change in Zaira's Narrative (15 minutes)

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Ask students to read from Zaira's full story or the following sections: "Water was everywhere" and "I went back" (including editor updates). As they read, students should look for evidence of climate change in her story. While reading, students should consider the following question:

- What types of severe storm effects do you see in Zaira's story?

Fighting Climate Change (20 minutes)

Step 1: Divide the class into small groups.

Step 2: Ask students to share: What were the biggest damages in your community? What surprised you after the hurricane?

Step 3: Assign or let students pick a region (e.g., coastal areas, rural/secluded regions, mountainous areas).

Step 4: Have students create a list that answers the following prompt: "Actions our community can take to be proactive against the dangers of climate change."

Extension: The Meaning of September

Step 1: Read the following context from Zaira for students:

> For me, September is meaningful in many ways. It is a month that brings up important childhood memories and the recurring dream of a free Puerto Rico. But for many Puerto Ricans, it is also a painful reminder of the violent attack of 2005 and how it proved that a nation fully capable of advanced logistical coordination in the Puerto Rican archipelago chooses to use their power only in certain ways. Still, for many other *boricuas,* September is less about armed events and more about the weather, brought by the peak of the hurricane season. As I said in my narrative update, "I think that the body remembers. The third week of September will just always be a lousy week for anyone who survived María. Our human clock will feel it, always."
>
> I want you to think about what September has meant for me and my community, but I also want you to think about what it means to you. Maybe you've never really thought about September before. Now is your chance to think about what this time and place means to you moving forward.

Step 2: Ask students to produce an artistic and personal response in a medium of their choice (drawing, poetry, music, collage, etc.) using the prompt: "For me, September is…"

Day Four: Taking Action

Overview

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In this lesson, students will research ways to take action against the destruction caused by climate disaster by creating a disaster preparedness checklist and locating systems of community support in the event of an emergency.

My Hurricane Preparedness Checklist (15 minutes)
Have students show the importance of individual preparedness in community recovery by working on their own hurricane preparedness checklist using My Hurricane Checklist as a template.
Support in my Community (15 minutes)
Ask students to conduct online research and incorporate their own experiences to produce a classroom list of local places and grassroots organizations that can help with basic needs. Use the collaborative table My Emergency Network: 1. Who helped your family/community during and after the hurricane? 2. Which places offer hot meals/fresh produce to your community? 3. Where can you get drinking water after an emergency? 4. Where can you get ice? 5. Where can you use a generator or solar power in your community/town? 6. Where are the nearest shelters located? 7. What are some community groups/networks you can rely on?
Action Diagram (30 minutes)
Have students co-create a chart by providing proactive actions for combating severe storms and addressing the human failures which exacerbate them by incorporating their notes from: ● Day Two's activity "Human-Made Disaster" where they read about systemic issues relevant to Puerto Rico (poor relief coordination and distribution, priority restoration of touristic vs local residential barrios, controlled import of goods and essentials, heavy fossil fuel dependency) ● Day Three's activity "Fighting Climate Change" in different geographical regions (urban, coastal, rural)

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Mi María Lección: Cambio Climático y Colonialismo (en Puerto Rico)

Tiempo Sugerido: 4 períodos de clase.

Materiales:

- Hojas y ejercicios:
  - Mi Plan de Emergencia para Huracanes
  - Mi Red para Emergencias
- Recursos de multimedia:
  - *BBC News*: "Qué se sabe del escándalo en Puerto Rico por la ayuda humanitaria del huracán María que se encontró vencida en un almacén"
  - *CNN*: "Visita de Trump a Puerto Rico es 'desafortunada, dolorosa y hasta vergonzosa'"
  - *Orlando Sentinel*: "Por décadas la Ley Jones ha dañado la economía de Puerto Rico, afirman ponentes"
  - *The Bridge/Global Voices*: "Puerto Rico, atrapado entre el colonialismo y los huracanes"
  - The Natural Resources Defense Council: "Vida, libertad y la búsqueda de la energía solar después del huracán María"
  - Video: A 15 Años de Impunidad
  - *CNN*: "Los huracanes mantienen su fuerza tierra adentro a medida que el planeta se calienta, encuentra un estudio"
  - El Centro de Periodismo Investigativo: "Huracán María sobrepasa los costos pronosticados debido al calentamiento global"
  - *Ciencia Puerto Rico*: "Científico boricua conecta la lluvia del huracán María con el cambio climático"
- Historias o pasajes sugeridos de *Mi María: Surviving the Storm*
  - **Zaira Arvelo Alicea**

Objetivos:

- Los estudiantes aprenderán sobre la relación entre el cambio climático y los fenómenos meteorológicos severos.
- Los estudiantes ampliarán su comprensión sobre las conexiones entre el coloniaje y el proceso de recuperación por desastres en Puerto Rico.

Estándares Relacionados del Departamento de Educación de Puerto Rico:
Estándares de español
9.AO.CC.1a; 9.E.I.9; 9.E.PE.4; 9.E.TP.1d; 9.E.TP.3; 9.L.CL.3; 9.L.NE.1
Estándares de estudios sociales
CG 9.1; CG 9.3; CG 9.4; CG 9.8; CC 9.4; DP.9.6

Preguntas Guía:

- ¿Cuál es el rol del cambio climático en el contexto actual de fenómenos meteorológicos severos? ¿Cómo incide el cambio climático en la existencia de tormentas o ciclones mayores?
- Teniendo en cuenta el contexto político y climático de Puerto Rico, ¿Cómo podrían tu hogar y tu comunidad prepararse para fenómenos meteorológicos severos?
- ¿Qué papel juegan el colonialismo y los desastres naturales en las vidas de aquellos que los sobreviven?

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Antes de abordar está lección, te recomendamos que leas el Prólogo para Educadores con el fin de preparar adecuadamente a los estudiantes en el proceso de compartir experiencias personales que pueden ser difíciles y en ocasiones abrumadoras. En Voice of Witness entendemos que es imperante crear un aula informada sobre el trauma donde cada actividad es diseñada con la opción de que los estudiantes puedan participar cuando se sienten cómodos y abstenerse cuando no se sienten listos. En esta lección, le pedimos a los estudiantes que reflexionen sobre sus experiencias personales con el huracán María y nuestra intención es que se sientan dispuestos y abiertos a la posibilidad de aprender el uno del otro. Sin embargo, es crucial que como educador proveas opciones para que los estudiantes reflexionen de manera individual o privada si así lo desean.

Si tus estudiantes no son de Puerto Rico o no experimentaron el huracán María directamente, invítalos a que consideren alguna otra situación de emergencia que hayan experimentado personalmente o con la que estén familiarizados y se refieran a ella para las siguientes actividades y discusiones.

Día Uno

Mi Experiencia con el Huracán (15 minutos)
Paso 1: Pídele a los estudiantes que reflexionen individualmente utilizando las siguientes preguntas: ¿Cómo se preparó tu familia para el huracán María? ¿Dónde se quedaron? **Paso 2:** Agrupa a los estudiantes en pares para que compartan su experiencia si están dispuestos.
Lectura (20 minutos)
Asigna la historia de Zaira o la sección "Había Agua por Todos Lados." Mientras leen, instrúyelos a marcar pasajes que muestran el plan de preparación para emergencias de Zaira y Juan Carlos.
Preparación en Aguadilla (15 minutos)
Establece una discusión oral sobre el plan de preparación para emergencias utilizando las siguientes preguntas: 1. ¿Qué pasos tomaron Zaira y Juan Carlos en la casa antes del huracán para procurar estar seguros? 2. ¿Cómo se sentía Zaira la noche antes del huracán? 3. ¿Cómo se sentía Zaira la mañana y la tarde en el día del huracán? 4. ¿Qué características del vecindario, su geografía y su casa alquilada la hicieron sentirse así?
Conexiones (10 minutos)
Paso 1: En un lugar visible (pizarra, hoja grande en un caballete), escribe lo siguiente: "Para el próximo, yo..." **Paso 2:** Usando notas adhesivas, instruye a los estudiantes a responder a la siguiente pregunta: ¿Qué haría distinto la próxima vez para estar mejor preparado? Ínstalos a escribir 1-2 acciones que tomarían. Recalca a los estudiantes que esta actividad no pretende juzgar la forma en la que ellos se

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prepararon en el pasado ya que sabemos que cada uno hizo lo mejor que pudo con lo que conocía para enfrentarse a un evento sin precedentes que llegó con muy corta advertencia oficial. El propósito de esta actividad es motivar a los estudiantes a mirar hacia el futuro de manera proactiva. Modela este comportamiento compartiendo una acción tuya a modo de ejemplo donde mencionas lo que harías en el futuro teniendo en mente lo que sabes hoy.

Extensión: Un Mes Patrio

Las actividades opcionales tienen como propósito resaltar la conexión entre el cambio climático y el colonialismo y su vez darles a los estudiantes una oportunidad de adentrarse de manera profunda en la historia de Zaira.

Paso 1: Lee en voz alta el siguiente párrafo compartido por Zaira para establecer el concepto de la actividad.

> Experimenté el huracán María en el oeste de la Isla Grande de Puerto Rico, un pueblo costero con una base militar estadounidense activa, pero me crie en una región muy distinta: La región rural central de la Isla Grande. Como actividad adicional, te invito a leer la sección "¡Estamos con el Pueblo!" para que puedas entender lo que significó para mí el crecer en la cuna del Grito de Lares. Mientras la lees, ten en mente las siguientes preguntas: ¿Qué hizo que mi educación escolar fuese distinta a otras? ¿Qué hace que el 23 de septiembre sea tan especial para mí?

Paso 2: Provee espacio para que los estudiantes lean esta sección de la historia, luego dirige una discusión con la clase sobre el significado del mes de septiembre.

Día Dos

Activando Conocimiento Previo (5 minutos)

Divide a los estudiantes en grupos pequeños para que conversen utilizando la siguiente aseveración: "¿Cómo fue la respuesta por parte de las agencias gubernamentales en tu hogar y comunidad?" Aquí nos podemos referir al gobierno municipal, el gobierno de Puerto Rico y sus dependencias, o el Gobierno Federal y sus agencias.

Lectura (15 minutos)

Regresa a la historia de Zaira o, en particular, a las siguientes secciones: "Estoy Tan Exhausta," "Esas Chicas Fueron Tan Valientes," "Las Primeras Semanas" y "Regresé Allí."

Mientras leen, pide a los estudiantes que marquen pasajes relacionados a la respuesta por parte de las agencias gubernamentales, informal y los tipos de ayuda que Zaira, Juan Carlos y su comunidad recibieron.

Discusión (15 minutos)

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Establece una discusión oral sobre respuesta y recuperación de huracanes utilizando las siguientes preguntas:

1. ¿Cómo fue la respuesta oficial en el caso de Zaira? Cuando decimos oficial, nos referimos a representantes del cuerpo de bomberos, la policía y el gobierno.
2. ¿Quién socorrió a Zaira y Juan Carlos el día del huracán y los días inmediatamente después del desastre?
3. ¿Cómo fue la respuesta de FEMA a la solicitud de Zaira?
4. ¿Cuál fue la respuesta a nivel Federal sobre la inundación en la comunidad de Zaira?

Conteo de la Peor Parte (5 minutos)

Crea una cuarta encuesta con la aseveración, "La peor parte del huracán María fue..." y las siguientes opciones:

1. El huracán como tal (ese día)
2. Sus efectos (lo que vino después)

Puedes llevar a cabo este conteo creando una encuesta electrónica, pidiendo a los estudiantes que levanten la mano o usando una tabla de dos columnas (una columna para cada opción) donde ellos escriben las iniciales de su nombre.

Un Desastre Humano (20 minutos)

Paso 1: A modo de introducción, recalca que este desastre natural fue aterrador y traumático, pero su larga secuela fue creada por el ser humano y pudo haber sido prevenida.

Paso 2: Ubica a los estudiantes en grupos pequeños, y asigna uno de los siguientes recursos por grupo:

1. "Qué se sabe del escándalo en Puerto Rico por la ayuda humanitaria del huracán María que se encontró vencida en un almacén" (Víveres expirados)
2. "Visita de Trump a Puerto Rico es 'desafortunada, dolorosa y hasta vergonzosa'" (Irrespetuosa visita presidencial)
3. "Por décadas la Ley Jones ha dañado la economía de Puerto Rico, afirman ponentes" (La Ley Jones y sus efectos en Puerto Rico)
4. "Puerto Rico, atrapado entre el colonialismo y los huracanes" (Colonialismo y huracanes)
5. "Vida, libertad y la búsqueda de la energía solar después del huracán María" (Colonialismo y la búsqueda de la soberanía energética)

Paso 3: Mientras leen, insta a los estudiantes a anotar acciones humanas, relaciones políticas, regulaciones de transporte y otros sistemas responsables por el largo y lento proceso de recuperación.

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Extensión: Un Septiembre Intencional
Paso 1: Lee en voz alta el siguiente texto escrito por Zaira. En la actividad opcional de extensión para el Día Uno leíste sobre mi experiencia creciendo, cantando el himno revolucionario en la escuela y celebrando libremente el aniversario del Grito de Lares cada 23 de septiembre. El peso de esta fecha es evidente para los lareños, los boricuas y las agencias de inteligencia estadounidense. De hecho, fue precisamente en esta fecha, un 23 de septiembre de 2005 que los Estados Unidos coordinaron un operativo armado para asesinar a Filiberto Ojeda: la cabeza del Ejército Popular Boricua. Mientras ves el video A 15 años de Impunidad, te invito a reflexionar utilizando las siguientes preguntas: ¿Qué tipo de cosas fue capaz de coordinar el FBI en la comunidad rural de Plan Bonito en Hormigueros? Según el video, ¿Cuál fue la intención del FBI en esa fecha? **Paso 2:** Vean juntos el video A 15 años de Impunidad y facilita una discusión con la clase cuándo finalice.

Día Tres

El Cambio Climático y los Fenómenos Meteorológicos Severos (20 minutos)
Paso 1: Ubica los estudiantes en grupos pequeños y asigna uno de los siguientes recursos por grupo: 1. "Los huracanes mantienen su fuerza tierra adentro a medida que el planeta se calienta, encuentra un estudio" (Los huracanes son más fuertes aún sobre tierra) 2. "Huracán María sobrepasa los costos pronosticados debido al calentamiento global" (desarrollo extremo de María) 3. "Científico boricua conecta la lluvia del huracán María con el cambio climático" (la precipitación) **Paso 2:** Mientras leen, insta a los estudiantes a anotar los factores responsables de que las tormentas o sistemas ciclónicos ahora duren más, experimenten desarrollo extremo y vean un alza en su precipitación. **Paso 3:** Diseña un mapa conceptual con el título "Cambio Climático" escrito en la parte superior o el centro del diagrama. Pide a cada grupo que añada su fenómeno al mapa conceptual (ej. Larga duración, desarrollo extremo, alza en precipitación) **Paso 4:** Solicita que un voluntario de cada grupo provea una explicación en sus propias palabras sobre qué aspectos del cambio climático (ej. humedad densa, océanos calientes) son los responsables por el fenómeno asignado.

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El Cambio Climático en la Historia de Zaira (15 minutos)

Asigna a los estudiantes la historia de Zaira o las siguientes secciones: "Había Agua por Todos Lados" y "Regresé Allí" (incluyendo las actualizaciones de la editora al final de la historia). Mientras leen, instrúyelos a buscar evidencia sobre el cambio climático utilizando la siguiente pregunta:

- ¿Qué tipo de efecto de tormenta severa ves en la historia de Zaira?

La Lucha Contra el Cambio Climático (20 minutos)

Paso 1: Divide la clase en grupos pequeños.

Paso 2: Instruye a los estudiantes a compartir: ¿Cuáles fueron los daños más significativos en tu comunidad? ¿Qué cosas te sorprendieron después del huracán?

Paso 3: Asigna o permite que los estudiantes escojan una región (ej. costera, rural/aislada, montañosa, urbana).

Paso 4: Solicita que los estudiantes creen un listado utilizando la siguiente aseveración: "Acciones que nuestra comunidad puede tomar para ser proactivos ante los efectos del cambio climático."

Extensión: El Significado de Septiembre

Paso 1: Lee en voz alta el siguiente contexto escrito por Zaira:

> Para mí, septiembre está cargado de significado. Es un mes que siempre me remonta a una niñez muy grata, al sueño de un Puerto Rico libre. Pero para muchos puertorriqueños, también es un doloroso recuerdo del ataque violento del 2005 el cual demostró la capacidad estadounidense para coordinar aspectos logísticos en el archipiélago puertorriqueño selectivamente: sólo cuando les conviene. Para muchos otros boricuas, septiembre no guarda conexiones a eventos bélicos sino al tiempo ya que marca el pico de la temporada de huracanes en el Atlántico. Cómo mencione en la actualización de la editora al final de mi narrativa: "Pienso que nuestros cuerpos tienen memoria. La tercera semana de septiembre siempre será pésima para aquellos que sobrevivimos a María. Nuestro reloj interno lo sentirá siempre."
>
> Te invito a reflexionar sobre lo que septiembre ha significado para mí y para mi comunidad, pero también te invito a pensar en lo que significa para ti. Quizás nunca antes habías pensado en el mes de septiembre de esta forma. Esta es tu oportunidad para pensar sobre lo que este tiempo y lugar significan para ti de ahora en adelante.

Paso 2: Invita a los estudiantes a diseñar un producto creativo de carácter personal en su medio favorito (ej. dibujo, poesía, música, fotomontaje, etc.) utilizando la aseveración "Para mí, septiembre es..."

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Día Cuatro

Mi Plan de Emergencia para Huracanes (15 minutos)
Los estudiantes demuestran la importancia de la planificación individual para lograr la recuperación comunitaria trabajando en su propio plan de emergencia para huracanes utilizando la hoja Plan de Emergencia para Huracanes como plantilla.
Apoyo Comunitario (15 minutos)
Instruye a los estudiantes a realizar una búsqueda en línea y a incorporar su propia experiencia para completar un listado sobre lugares a nivel local y organizaciones de base comunitaria que pueden ayudarle con sus necesidades básicas después de un desastre. Los estudiantes realizarán este listado colaborativo utilizando la hoja Mi Red para Emergencias: 1. ¿Quién apoyó a tu familia y a tu comunidad durante y después del huracán? 2. ¿Qué lugares le ofrecieron comida preparada (caliente) o productos frescos (entiéndase frutas, legumbres, vegetales) a tu comunidad? 3. ¿Dónde puedes conseguir agua potable luego de una emergencia? 4. ¿Dónde puedes conseguir hielo? 5. ¿Dónde puedes hacer uso de una planta (gasolina o diesel) o de una red de energía solar en tu comunidad o pueblo? 6. ¿Dónde se encuentran los refugios más cercanos? 7. ¿Cuáles son algunos grupos comunitarios o redes con los que cuentas?
Tomemos Acción (30 minutos)
Invita a los estudiantes a participar de forma colaborativa para crear una tabla dónde presentan acciones o pasos que pueden tomar para luchar contra actividad ciclónica severa y aplacar las fallas humanas que los empeoran. Recuerde a los estudiantes que pueden utilizar sus anotaciones realizadas durante las siguientes actividades: • Día Dos: Actividad "Un Desastre Humano" dónde leyeron acerca de problemas a nivel sistemático relevantes al caso de Puerto Rico (Proceso de ayudas humanitarias y distribución ineficiente, un enfoque erróneo en la restauración de áreas turísticas versus barrios residenciales, el control de la importación de bienes y víveres esenciales, la dependencia en los derivados de petróleo). • Día Tres: Actividad "La Lucha Contra el Cambio Climático" dónde exploraron distintas regiones geográficas (urbana, costera, rural).

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Mi María Lesson Plan: Systems & Power (in Puerto Rico)

Time Needed: 4 class periods.

Materials:

- Handouts and worksheets:
  - Describe, Infiere, Resume (DIR): Layers of Dependency (español)
  - Describe, Infer, Synthesize (DIS): Layers of Dependency (English)
- Media and text:
  - Discussion Image: Layers of Dependency
  - Calle 13's music video: "La Perla"
- Full narratives or suggested excerpts from *Mi María: Surviving the Storm*:

Belle Marie Torres Velázquez
"The island's only doctor" (pp. 209–212)
"I felt a beating heart" (pp. 212–215)

Carlos Figueroa Vázquez
"I learned to sleep anywhere" (pp. 233–235)
"The work should've been better" (pp. 236–238)

Lorel Cubano Santiago
"A 'taboo' community" (pp. 157–160)
"María parked on the island" (pp. 161–162)
"We watched the ships come" (pp. 162–165)
"Where people could come for a breath" (pp. 165)
"Everybody should have dignity" (pp. 166–169)

Objective:

- Students will be able to identify and explain the external and internal systems responsible for current conditions in Puerto Rico.
- Students will be able to articulate ways in which globalization creates opportunities and dependencies.

Related Puerto Rico Department of Education Standards:
English Standards
9.R.1a; 9.R.4L; 9.R.5L; 9.S.1; 9.W.4; 9.W.5.
Social Studies Standards
CG 9.1; CG 9.3; CG 9.4; CG 9.8; CC 9.4; DP.9.6.

Essential Questions:

- How are globalization and colonialism related?
- What are some ways in which globalization and colonialism create dependence?
- When and where does dependency break down? When and where does it work?

Before diving into this lesson, we recommend reading over our Preface for Educators to better prepare your students for personal story sharing that may be challenging or overwhelming. Creating a trauma-informed classroom is key, and at Voice of Witness, we believe all activities should be designed for students to opt in when comfortable and opt out if they're not yet ready. In this lesson, we ask students to reflect on their personal experience with Hurricane María, and our intention is that they will be open to learning from each other after community guidelines are created. However, please make space for students to reflect privately if preferred.

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Day One

Community Needs and Assets

Overview
In this lesson, students will discuss the needs and assets of a community. Students will identify the pros and cons of systems that exist within the community of Culebra and make connections to the systems that exist within their own communities.

Narrative Reading (15 minutes)
Read Belle Marie's story (or the suggested excerpts) and have students consider the following questions: 1. What does Belle Marie mean by "Culebra is not for everyone"? ○ *¿Qué quiere decir Belle Marie cuando nos explica que "Culebra no es para todo el mundo"?* 2. What does she imply/share about life in this municipality and the people who live there? ○ *¿Qué insinúa o comparte sobre el día a día en este municipio y las personas que allí residen?*
Rewind (10 minutes)
Step 1: Post/write the quote "Island life is not for everyone" *(La vida en una isla no es para todos)* in a prominent space in the classroom (e.g., projected slide, white/blackboard, easel pad). **Step 2:** Engage students in a discussion about globalization, geographical isolation, and dependency using the following suggested questions: 1. What are essential goods and services you and your community need to survive? ○ *¿Qué provisiones/víveres o servicios tú y tu comunidad necesitan para sobrevivir?* 2. How do our fellow Puerto Ricans in Culebra get the natural resources and essential services they need? (e.g., boat, airplane, the Big Island, the USA) ○ *¿Cómo logran acceso a los recursos naturales y servicios esenciales nuestros hermanos y hermanas puertorriqueños en Culebra?* 3. How did Belle Marie describe these services? ○ *¿Cómo describe Belle Marie estos servicios?* 4. If you have travelled to Culebra, can you relate to her narrative? ○ *Si has visitado Culebra antes, ¿te identificas con esta narrativa?* 5. Where do our (main island) essential goods come from? How do they get here? ○ *¿De dónde provienen las provisiones y víveres que llegan a la Isla Grande? ¿Cómo llegan aquí?*

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Artistic Response (25 minutes)
Step 1: Write the statement "We are all an island" *(Todos vivimos en una isla)* in a prominent space in the classroom (e.g., projected slide, white/blackboard, easel pad). **Step 2:** Ask students to respond to the prompt in a way that feels natural to them, such as journaling, creating a digital collage, drawing, poetry, etc. **Step 3:** Based on students' choices, consider asking them to share their writing with a partner, or display their responses and lead a gallery walk.
Homework Extension
Students conduct brief research on a current event when their community or the larger archipelago was unable to get an essential service or lost access to a resource. Share examples they can choose from, such as: Hurricane Irma, Hurricane María, the earthquake swarm, COVID-19, the shift from AEE to LUMA. You might also reach out to the school librarian for a reliable list of sources students can use to perform their research. Ask students to provide a 200-word summary on the community or country's response to this emergency. The summary should include a statement on whether the response was adequate or inadequate and why. It should also briefly explain the systems (natural or human-made) responsible for this incident.

Day Two

Systems & Power

Overview
In this lesson, students will identify the groups or individuals with a given system that hold the most (and least) power. Students will evaluate whether the existing power structure is effective in meeting the needs of the community.

Expert Report (10 minutes)
Step 1: Group students together by the events they researched (or similar events) and have them share their findings briefly by summarizing whether they discovered the community, state, or country's response was adequate or inadequate. **Step 2:** Instruct each group to select a representative to share a short summary of their current events,

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focusing on the systems responsible for the incidents.

Image Analysis (15 minutes)

Step 1: Project the Discussion Image and pass out copies of the English or Spanish Describe, Infer, Synthesize (DIS) worksheet.

Step 2: Model creating descriptions of the image ("I see six people in the picture. The first is a man in a suit who represents the Corps of Engineers..." *"Yo veo seis personal en la imagen. El primer hombre viste un traje y representa al cuerpo de ingenieros..."*). Give students a few minutes to examine the image and write down every detail, including characters' expressions, text, and positioning.

Step 3: Ask students to share their descriptions. Make a list on the board.

Step 4: Ask students to start making inferences based on what they see, using evidence from the image or their own background knowledge. Ask students to make inferences about the mood or tone of the image as well.

Step 5: Have students respond to the following prompts:

1. What is the artist showing us about line workers?
    - *¿Qué nos muestra la artista sobre los celadores?*
2. What does the artist want us to understand about their work?
    - *¿Qué quiere la artista que entendamos sobre el trabajo de los celadores?*

3. What has been your household or community's experience with the power service in Puerto Rico?
    - *¿Cuál ha sido la experiencia de tu hogar y tu vecindario con el servicio de energía eléctrica en Puerto Rico?*

Narrative Reading (15 minutes)

Have students read Carlos Figueroa's story (or the suggested excerpts) and ask them to keep the following questions in mind:

1. What are Carlos's work conditions before and after the hurricane?
    - *¿Cuáles son las condiciones de trabajo de Carlos antes y después del huracán?*

2. How are local (PREPA) and external power companies (Whitefish, disaster contractors) different from each other?
    - *¿Qué contrastes existen entre las compañías de electricidad locales (PREPA) y las externas (Whitefish y contratistas contratados para la emergencia)?*

Whole Class Discussion Activity (10 minutes)

Encourage a whole class discussion on power and dependency using the following suggested questions:

1. Who has the power to make major decisions in Carlos's story? (e.g., purchase orders, workloads, employee stations)
    - *De acuerdo con la historia de Carlos, ¿Quién tiene la potestad de tomar decisiones importantes? (e.g., compra, horarios, asignaciones)*

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2. According to Carlos, who or what is to blame for the blackout? Who gave them that authority?
    - *Según Carlos ¿Quién o quiénes son los culpables del apagón? ¿Quién les dio esa autoridad?*

3. Where do you see uneven power dynamics in your community and archipelago?
    - *En tu comunidad y archipiélago borincano, ¿Dónde observas desigualdad?*

Kindness Act (10 minutes)

Step 1: Prompt students to consider how people responded to Carlos's work, and the impact it had on him (e.g., examples of aggression or kindness).

Step 2: As a class, make a list of essential and/or front-line workers. This should include grocery workers, food service workers, healthcare workers, caregivers, teachers, and more.

Step 3: Students should think of someone they know in their family or community who fills one of these roles. If they cannot think of anyone, encourage them to choose someone who works at their school.

Step 4: Have students write a "thank you note" to their selected essential worker.

Extension Activity

Encourage students to deliver their thank you note (e.g., email, SMS text, in person). Another alternative can be to showcase their thank you notes collaboratively (a classroom poster of upstanders or a hallway display).

Day Three

Colonialism in Communities

Overview

In this lesson, students will explore the impact of colonialism in communities, exploring both the benefits and drawbacks of being dependent on a larger system.

Exploring La Perla (10 minutes)

Step 1: In preparation for the video, ask students to keep the following questions in mind:

1. According to the artists, which are the personality traits that matter in La Perla?
    - *Según los cantautores, ¿Cuáles cualidades tienen peso en La Perla?*

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2. How do the artists describe the neighborhood?
    - *¿Qué tipo de vecindario describen los cantautores?*
3. What/who do the artists criticize?
    - *¿Qué cosas o personas critican los cantautores?*

Step 2: Play Calle 13's Music Video "La Perla."

Step 3: Have students write down their impressions of the La Perla neighborhood as described and shown by the artists as a list or in journal form.

Sustained Silent Reading (30 minutes)

Have students read Lorel's story. Guide their reading with the following suggested questions:

1. What was the role of the diaspora in La Perla before and after María?
    - *¿Cuál ha sido el rol de la diáspora en el vecindario de La Perla antes y después de María?*

2. How is the Jacksonville port related to supply delivery in Puerto Rico?
    - *¿Qué relación tiene el puerto de Jacksonville con la entrega de bienes en Puerto Rico?*

3. How does colonialism materialize in La Perla?
    - *¿De qué manera se evidencia el colonialismo en La Perla?*

4. Has your image of La Perla changed after reading Lorel's story? How is it similar or different to the La Perla presented by Calle 13?
    - *¿Cómo ha cambiado tu percepción sobre La Perla luego de leer la historia de Lorel? ¿Cómo se asemeja o contrasta esta imagen de La Perla con la que presenta Calle 13?*

Graffiti Wall (10 minutes)

Step 1: Create two posters (on the white board or using easel pad sheets): one titled "dependency strengths" (*El poder de la codependencia*) and the second one titled "dependency failures" (*Insuficiencias de la codependencia).* Put them next to each other so students can see them side-by-side.

Step 2: Instruct students to take turns writing on sticky notes examples of strength and failure in the kinds of dependency that Lorel shares in her story, then place them on the appropriate posters.

Step 3: Encourage students to circle things they agree with or respond directly by adding text, drawing symbols, diagrams, pictures, or more.

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Day Four

Expanding the Graffiti Wall (40 minutes)
Step 1: Bring attention to the Graffiti Wall students created in the previous day. Prompt students to think about their artistic responses to "We are all an island," (*Todos vivimos en una isla)* and keep those reflections in mind while adding to the Graffiti Wall. **Step 2:** Give students different colored markers or sticky notes to add examples from Belle Marie's and Carlos's stories: Where do you see signs of strength in their experiences? *¿Dónde ves evidencia de fortaleza en las historias de Belle Marie y Carlos?*
Shifting Perceptions of Failures & Strength (20 minutes)
Step 1: Students select 1 of the following 3 prompts: 1. For many, Culebra is a cool holiday destination, an item in their travel to-do-list. How has Belle Marie's narrative helped you understand life in the sister municipality of Culebra besides the touristy spots like *Playa Flamenco*? ○ *Culebra es para muchos un destino de veraneo, un Ítem en su lista de lugares para visitar. ¿Cómo te ha ayudado la historia de Belle Marie a entender el día a día de nuestros hermanos/as en Culebra más allá de ser un destino reconocido mundialmente por la famosa Playa Flamenco?* 2. For many, La Perla is a colorful place for famous music videos like Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee's *Despacito*. It is also a *barrio* that we may singularly view as a violent and dangerous place due to news reports. How has Lorel's narrative helped you understand the history and daily life of people in La Perla? ○ *La Perla es para muchos un vecindario colorido que figura en videos musicales como Despacito de Luis Fonsi y Daddy Yankee. También es un barrio que según las noticias es violento y peligroso. ¿Cómo te ha ayudado la historia de Lorel a comprender la historia y el diario vivir de la gente de La Perla?* 3. La UTIER and the PREPA workers have gained fame as the culprits behind the crummy electrical grid. How has Carlos's narrative helped you understand the complexity of a line worker's job and the challenges of working in that agency? ○ *Los empleados de la UTIER y PREPA han sido los chivos expiatorios de nuestra colapsada red energética. ¿Cómo te ha ayudado la historia de Carlos a entender cuán complejo es el trabajo de los celadores?* **Step 2:** Arrange students in small groups by prompt (Culebra, La Perla, or La Autoridad) and ask them to discuss their past experiences and the knowledge gained from reading the narratives. **Step 3:** Guide them through a discussion about learning from an insider's perspective, using the following suggested questions: 1. Is this your first time reading a story from someone in La Perla, from Culebra, or La Autoridad?

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- *¿Es la primera vez que lees una historia sobre alguien de La Perla, de Culebra o de La Autoridad?*

2. Has their story challenged what you have experienced with La Autoridad at home, La Perla on your trips to San Juan, and Culebra during your holiday and summer travel?
    - *¿Cómo te han hecho las historias cuestionar tu experiencia en casa con La Autoridad, tus experiencias visitando el barrio de La Perla durante tus viajes a San Juan y tus visitas a Culebra en los días feriados y el verano?*

3. Has their story expanded your view of these places and people beyond what you have seen on the news and the media?
    - *¿Han ampliado tu percepción de estos lugares y estas personas más allá de lo que te presentan las noticias y las redes sociales?*

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Mi María: Ideas and Resources for College-Level Curriculum

At Voice of Witness, we strive to provide educators with a diversity of support and resources as they begin planning how they will use our books in the classroom. Below, we have outlined several "Big Ideas" around which to center your teaching of *Mi María*, as well as a list of suggested resources to pair with the book. The Big Ideas serve as a conceptual lens for instruction. They reflect academic research and expert understanding and should be used to anchor the discourse and can be connected together as these forces intersect in the experiences of Puerto Ricans. The Big Ideas connect the information in the book and the following resources to a larger framework and provide transferable ideas applicable to other topics, inquiries, contexts, issues, and problems.

Topic: Decolonization in Puerto Rico
Big Ideas (related to Globalization): • Puerto Rican statehood, independence, and commonwealth status • Austerity measures and debt in Puerto Rico • Privatization of Puerto Rico's power grid • Colonial history of Puerto Rico • Military bases in Puerto Rico **Resources:** • *Landfall*: A documentary set against the backdrop of protests that toppled the Governor in 2019, showcasing the trauma and resistance as Puerto Ricans navigate their dismantled social services and the newcomers eager to profit through disaster capitalism. • "Disaster Capitalism: Puerto Rico Plunged Into Darkness After Privatization of Electrical Utility": Interview with Arturo Massal-Deyá, executive director of Casa Pueblo, a community-based natural resources and sustainable development group. • *The Last Colony*: This 2015 documentary film features interviews with Puerto Rican politicians, historians, sociologists, economists and more as they debate the hotly contested issue of Puerto Rican Statehood, Independence, and Commonwealth status. • *Fantasy Island: Colonialism, Exploitation and the Betrayal of Puerto Rico* by Ed Morales: Author Morales offers an account of Puerto Rico's over 120-year history as a colony of the US. • "Colonial Legacy and Military Strategy: The US Military in Puerto Rico": A paper for the Latin American/Caribbean Program of the American Friends Service Committee Peacebuilding Unit. • "Vida, libertad y la búsqueda de la energía solar después del huracán María: A paper published by the Natural Resources Defense Council describing how the US promoted dependence on the oil-based power grid instead of allowing communities to rebuild with sustainable, renewable alternatives. • "Puerto Rico's Invisible Health Crisis": Author Pelet relies on scientific research to link the health crises in the island municipality of Vieques with the 60+ years of U.S. Navy Military exercises on that land in this article.

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Topic: Globalization
Big Ideas (related to Decolonization): • Privatization of Puerto Rico's power grid • Colonial economics • Globalization under the Jones Act • Imports and food security **Resources:** • "Hurricane María's Aftermath: Redefining Puerto Rico's Colonial Status": Pedro Caban outlines and analyzes the trajectory of Puerto Rico's downsizing economy as a colonial territory. • "Privatizing Puerto Rico": Article written by Ed Morales for *The Nation* on the ongoing privatization crisis seeking to "get public goods for private profits." • "The Jones Act Makes Little Sense in a Globalized World." A CATO institute article reporting the redundant and protectionist nature of the Jones act as it relates to globalization. • "Food Autonomy is Impossible in Puerto Rico": *The Weekly* journal article written by Christian Segarra that describes the agricultural decline present in the island accompanied by concerning statistics on Puerto Rico's import dependency. • "How Puerto Rico Lost Its Home-Grown Food, But Might Find it Again": Article hinting at the possible agricultural resurgence jump-started by entrepreneurs that could possibly strengthen the island's food security. • "Puerto Rico's Vieques Still Reels from Decades of US Navy Bombing": Aljazeera video showing the conditions of Vieques' residents and its gentrification after María. • "Puerto Rico's Vieques Island Ousted the US Navy. Now the fight's Against Airbnb": Authors Bayne and Dieppa present what Airbnb is doing to Vieques and its residents.
Topic: National and Community Response to Natural Disasters
Big Ideas: • The US government and FEMA's failed response to Hurricane María • Puerto Rico's Community-based responses to Hurricane María **Resources:** • *Blackout in Puerto Rico:* A 2018 *NPR* and *Frontline* documentary that examines the humanitarian and economic crisis in Puerto Rico after Hurricane María. • "FEMA Report Acknowledges Failures in Puerto Rico Disaster Response": A 2018 *NPR* story that discusses FEMA's internal report that assesses the failures of their response to Hurricane María. • *Hurricanes Irma and María in Puerto Rico*: FEMA's 286-page Mitigation Assessment Team Report about their handling of Hurricanes Irma and María. • *Puerto Rico a Year After Hurricane María:* Amnesty International's detailed report about the aftermath of Hurricane María that includes federal and local responses, as well as topics related to access to information and lack of transparency from officials. • "Months After María, Puerto Ricans Take Recovery into Their Own Hands": A 2018 *Christian Science Monitor* story highlighting local recovery responses. Story also includes a link to a short video, "After Hurricanes in Puerto Rico, Women to the Rescue," which follows a group of volunteers who

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set up community kitchens to feed residents across the island.
- Red de Apoyo Mutuo: This nonprofit's video captures some of the community-led projects integral to Puerto Rico's recovery after the hurricanes.

Topic: Migration and the Diaspora

Big Ideas:
- Leaving "patria" for the family and a future
- Trauma and migration
- Forced migration due to natural disasters, colonialism, and neoliberalism
- Being trapped and difficulties with travel

Resources:
- Puerto Rico Syllabus: Resources for a unit focused on migration and the Puerto Rican diaspora.
- *A Contested Caribbean Indigeneity* by Sherina Felicianos-Santos: This book provides an in-depth analysis of the debates surrounding Táino/Boricua activism in Puerto Rico, and the Caribbean diaspora in New York City.
- "I'd Still be Puerto Rican, Even If Born on the Moon": A Library of Congress and American Folklife Center webcast by Elena Martinez that tells the story of the Puerto Rican diaspora by drawing on the work of folk and traditional artists, as well as the work of contemporary artists.
- "Why Young Diasporicans Have Decided to Repatriate to Puerto Rico": A *Remezcla* story by Raquel Reichard that features seven first-person narratives highlighting the many reasons why *boricuas* are returning to preserve culture, reclaim land, and serve their communities.
- *Emotional Bridges to Puerto Rico* by Elizabeth M. Aranda: This book examines the experiences of incorporation among two groups of middle-class Puerto Ricans: one that currently lives in the US mainland and one that has resettled in Puerto Rico.
- "Mapping Puerto Rico's Hurricane Migration with Mobile Phone Data": A 2018 story by Martin Echenique and Luis Melgar that details the process of how Teralytics, a New York-based tech company, used data from 500,000 smartphones to track exactly where Puerto Rican residents went after the hurricane, and when they came back.
- "The Emptying Island: Puerto Rican Expulsion in Post-María Time": Negrón-Muntaner offers a critical look at forced Puerto Rican migration under its different colonial governments: Spain and the USA.
- "For Many on Puerto Rico, the Most Coveted Item is a Plane Ticket Out": The *New York Times* article recounts the reasons why many Puerto Ricans are trying to leave home.
- "Puerto Rico Needs A Major Military Rescue Operation Now": Varela urges the US to use its military assets to airlift citizens much like they have used said assets to invade countries.
- "Puerto Ricans showing 'very low level of interest' in airlift offer, FEMA says": In this news report, Begnaud explains that some hurricane survivors refuse to leave because they will face food insecurity and receive no support in the US.

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Topic: Climate Change
Big Ideas: • Capitalism and climate change • Actions against climate change in Puerto Rico • Rising sea levels in Puerto Rico **Resources:** • *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate* by Naomi Klein: Author Naomi Klein addresses how our economic model is waging war against life on Earth. • "Ten Demands to Stop the Climate Crisis in Puerto Rico": Article posted by the Sierra Club about climate activists in Puerto Rico. • "Puerto Ricans Begin to Abandon Their Beaches Due to Sea Level Rise": A 2019 *Daily Kos* article detailing the impacts of rising sea levels in Puerto Rico due to climate change. • *NASA Science Live: Rising Seas*: A video featuring NASA scientists who are studying the effects of sea level rise. • Climate Change Council of Puerto Rico • CocoPR: A nonprofit on the west side of the main island of Puerto Rico spearheading mangrove reproduction efforts to protect the coast. • Amigxs del MAR: Puerto Rican nonprofit making legal strides to defend the maritime-terrestrial zone and pushing education efforts to foster climate change awareness among youth. • "Restoring Mangroves in Puerto Rico Supports Human Health and Well-being": Article about University of Puerto Rico in Aguadilla faculty and students promoting dune restoration to combat the effects of climate change.

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Mi María: Discussion Questions

1. In the introduction to *Mi María,* co-editor Ricia Anne Chansky says, "What is named 'resilience' is in actuality what occurs when a people are taught not to expect equitable treatment from their own government, developing a necessary understanding that they must be self-reliant in order to survive." How does this theme resonate throughout the book?

2. Many of the narrators in *Mi María* express that the hurricane exacerbated problems related to Puerto Rico's colonial history. How did issues related to colonialism impact the US government's response to Hurricane María?

3. Narrator Belle Marie Torres Veláquez mentions that "Life in Culebra is not for everyone." What is she implying about this island-municipality and the people who live there? What does it say about the Puerto Rican archipelago generally, and the isolated and dependent experience of living on an island?

4. Many of the narrators in *Mi María* discuss how their relationships with family (bio-legal or chosen) play a significant role in their daily lives. How did these relationships influence their responses to the disaster and its aftermath, both for families on the Puerto Rican archipelago and the mainland US?

5. Narrator Carlos Figeroa Vázquez talks about the working conditions he experiences as an electric line worker before and after the hurricane. His story highlights the tension between frontline workers and the Puerto Rican power company, PREPA. What impact will the recent privatization of Puerto Rico's power grid have on Carlos and other workers like him?

6. Narrator Zaira Arvelo Alicea talks about the young girls from a *caserío* (public housing project) that weren't taken seriously by the authorities when they insisted that Zaira and her partner Juan Carlos were trapped and needed help. How does this story illuminate the opportunities and challenges of how communities respond to natural disasters?

7. Narrator Windy Diáz Diáz says, "I felt forgotten. I was forgotten." What were the major factors that contributed to Windy's isolation and how did she respond to them?

8. What are examples of cultural capital, strength, and familial/community support that you see amongst the narrators in *Mi María?*

9. Based on reading the first-person narratives in the book, how would you describe the relationship between the US Government and Puerto Rico? Do the citizens of Puerto Rico enjoy the benefits and privileges of "statehood," are they treated as second-class citizens, or are they something in between?

10. What were your perspectives about Puerto Rico before reading *Mi María?* After reading the narratives, have your perspectives changed? If so, how does the oral history format in particular influence your changing perspectives?

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