

Elizabeth de la Portilla
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Mexican American Studies Program
Bicultural Bilingual Studies
College of Education and Human Development
Shared Appointment with: Department of Anthropology
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EDUCATION:

- 2002 Ph.D. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Anthropology
Emphasis: Cultural Anthropology, Medical Anthropology, Ethnobotany
Dissertation: San Antonio as a Magical Crossroads: Healing and Spirituality in the
Borderlands.
Dissertation Advisors: Professors: Ruth Behar and Richard I. Ford
- 1998 MA University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Anthropology
- 1995 BA University of Texas at San Antonio, Anthropology

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

- 2002-present **Assistant Professor.** College of Education and Human Development, College of Liberal
and Fine Arts, Division of Bicultural Bilingual Studies and the Department of
Anthropology.
- 2000-2002 **Lecturer,** College of Education and Human Development, College of Liberal
and Fine Arts, Division of Bicultural Bilingual Studies and the Department of
Anthropology.

AREAS OF RESEARCH SPECIALIZATION:

Ethnographic research in curanderismo and identity formation through ritual healing; oral history,
cataloging of botanical material in Mexican American communities. Subspecialty: research using a medical
anthropological framework to build a discourse on the epidemiology of folk disease in a bicultural setting. Research
on Latino veterans, families and the issue of PTSD. Research in the ethnobotany of Central Texas and the Northern
Mexico-U.S. Border. Qualitative studies on health disparities in South Texas.

AREAS OF TEACHING SPECIALIZATION:

Anthropology (four field), Cultural Anthropology, Ethnographic Research Methods,
Bicultural Studies, Chicano/a Studies, Multicultural Studies

COURSES TAUGHT:

Multicultural Groups in the U.S., Multiculturalism in the Southwest, Introduction to Chicano/a Studies,
Mexican Americans in the Southwest, Latino Cultural Expressions, Introduction to Anthropology, Introduction
Cultural Anthropology, Fieldwork Experience, Honors in Latino Cultural Expressions.

HONORS, FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS (awarded):

UTSA. Early College High School program, summer initiative funded by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation geared towards high school students San Antonio. Lead instructor Summer 2006, 2007.

COEHD Mini-grant, January 2005

NACCS, Winner of Cervantes Graduate Student Paper, Spring 2001

Smithsonian Museum, Mexico-Norte Student Stipend Award, Summer 2000

UTSA Disability Services Teaching Award, Spring 2000

Association of Latino/Latina Anthropologist (ALLA), Winner of Graduate Student Paper Competition, Curanderismo and Theories of Personhood and Identity Formation Fall, 1998

University of Michigan Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives Project Grant, 1998

University of Michigan Rackham Research Grant, 1997

University of Michigan Department of Anthropology Predissertation Grant, 1997

University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology Grant, 1996

NSF Graduate Fellowship Program, Recipient 1995

University of Michigan, Rackham Merit Fellowship, Recipient 1995

NEH Younger Scholars Grant, Recipient 1994

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES, GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS:

Spring 2006, NIH Grant, COEHD, Women Studies Institute, University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio

Summer 2006, Closing the health care disparities gap among Mexican-American elderly and impoverished women suffering from diabetes. UTSA SCORES grant initiative. Co-pi. First round.

November 2005, NIH Grant with College Policy Institute Co-Pi

May 2005, NEH Faculty Fellowship

Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellowship Program, Honorable Mention, 1995

PUBLICATIONS:

Forthcoming Book:

de la Portilla, E. (2009) *“They All Want Magic: The Nature and Practice of Curanderismo.”* College Station, TX: Texas A & M Press, publication set for early 2009.

Refereed Journal:

de la Portilla, E (2007) Healing Magic. In *Journal of the Life and Culture of San Antonio*. Timothy Draves, editor San Antonio, TX: UIW. Publication date December 15, 2007.

de la Portilla, E. (1995) Comanche and Mexican-American Curers: A regional approach to folk medicine. In *Touchstone*,. The Texas State Historical Association: U.S.A., Vol. XIV: 70-90, 1995

Book Chapter:

de la Portilla, E. (2006) La Planta es Vida: Plants and Curanderismo on San Antonio's Westside. Jaime H. Garcia (Ed.) *Beginning a new Millennium of Ccana and Chicano Studies: Selected Proceedings of the 2001 NACCS Conference*. Inkworks Press, Berkley and Community Printer: Santa Cruz:CA

de la Portilla, E. (2006) Celebrating Spirituality and Cultural Traditions in the University Classroom. In Sharon Shelton-Colangelo, Carolina Mancuso, Mimi Duval (Eds.), *Teaching with Joy*. Latham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

de la Portilla, E. (2005) Curanderismo. In Deena J. Gonzalez, Suzanne Obler (Eds.) *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Latinos and Latinas in the United States*. NYC, NY: Oxford University Press

Works in Progress:

de la Portilla, E.(2007) "The Anthropologist as Subject: Reflexivity, Spirituality and the Self" part of an anthology project, *Fleshing the Spirit, Spiriting the Flesh: Expressing our Spiritualities*, Elisa Facio and Irene Lara (Eds.). Chapter accepted as part of anthology, waiting for final comments on revisions.

de la Portilla, E. (2007) "Learning to Heal" for *Anthropology and Humanism*.

de la Portilla, E. (2007) "Traditionally used Medicines in the Treatment of Diabetes: Traditional Healers at Work in San Antonio" for *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*.

de la Portilla, E., "Vietnam at my Doorstep: Engaging *Nepantla* to Heal the Trauma of War." In writing stage, memoir essay on PTSD and families.

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS:

Refereed:

Traditionally used medicines in the treatment of Diabetes: Traditional Healers at Work in San Antonio, Southern Association for the History of Medicine and Science, San Antonio, TX. February 2006.

Who Told You, You Couldn't Write? ETS Conference on "Women and Girls in Education and Work." Princeton, NJ. May 2005

Hispanic Folk Medicine: Implications for Practice. Southern Medical Association, San Antonio Texas. April 2003

Curanderismo as Community Activism, MALCS Conference, San Antonio, TX. August 2003

The use of curanderismo in the treatment of HIV/AIDS. NACCS Los Angeles, CA. April 2003.

Rolling through Oakland, and strolling San Anto, NACCS Tejas FOCO, San Antonio, TX. October, 2002.

La Planta es la Vida: the Cultural Life of Plants in curanderismo, American Anthropological Association Conference, November 2000, San Francisco, CA.

Ethnobotany and ritual healing in San Antonio, Texas, Mexico-Norte Conference, June 2000, Chihuahua City, MX.

Testimonios de Fe: Traditional Healing in the Barrios of San Antonio, AAA Conference, November, 1999.

Invited presentations based on professional expertise:

- They all want magic: the practice of curanderismo. Invited speaker for Women's History Month, San Antonio College. March 2008
- The summer of a hundred book, invited panel for San Antonio's Central Library, Testimonios, How the Library Changed my Life. September 2006
- Curanderismo and its practice in San Antonio, University of Texas Health Science Center School of Nursing continuing education May 2006
- Traditional Plant Use in Mexican American culture, Invited presentation, UTHSC Physician Assistant program, June 2003.
- Healing and Spirituality, Trinity University, San Antonio TX. October 2003.
- Spirituality, Identity, and Healing: curanderismo in San Antonio, Indigenous Spiritualities Lecture Series sponsored by the Texas Council for the Humanities, presented by The Center for Spirituality and the Arts, San Antonio, TX. March 2004
- Use of medicinal plants in the Mexican American Community, Conference: Hispanic Health Disparities: A Kaleidoscope of Nursing Care." UIW School of Nursing and UTHSC-SA Division of Genetics and Metabolic Disorders. September 2003.
- Curanderismo and its Cultural Context, Invited talk, Mexican American Cultural Center, Mini-Pastoral Session., San Antonio, TX. September 2003
- Curanderismo and Mexican-American Worldview, Invited talk, MACCS, Mini-Pastoral Session, San Antonio, TX. June 2003
- Mexican American Worldview and its implications in a doctor-patient relationship, Physician Assistant program, University of North Texas, Fort Worth, TX, March 2003.
- Mexican American worldview and theories of illness and wellness. Physician Assistant Program, UTHSC. July 2002.
- Alternative Medicine: The ways of curanderismo. UTHSC sponsored by Latina/o Medical Student association. April 2002.
- Worldview and illness, traditional healing in San Antonio, Lecture sponsored by Allied Health at the UT Health Science Center for PA faculty and department heads. February 2002.
- Spirituality and Healing: curanderismo at work in San Antonio. Allied Health at the UT Health Science Center for PA faculty and department heads. September 2002
- La Planta es la Vida: the Cultural Life of Plants in curanderismo, American Anthropological Association Conference, November 2000, San Francisco, CA.
- Ethnobotany and ritual healing in San Antonio, Texas, Mexico-Norte Conference, June 2000, Chihuahua City, MX.
- Testimonios de Fe: Traditional Healing in the Barrios of San Antonio, AAA Conference, November, 1999.
- Traditional healing in San Antonio's Westside. Lecture for the Center for Research on Ethnicity, Culture and Health (CRECH) in the UM School of Public Health. March 1999.

Workshop panels and presentations:

Mestizaje. Workshop lead by Arturo Madrid and John Philip Santos, sponsored by Trinity University, San Antonio. February and March 2006

Training on how to collect oral histories. Sponsored by the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center, San Antonio, Texas.

Curandero's Secrets. Workshops sponsored by Centro Cultural, San Antonio; on the medicinal properties and preparation of botanical materials. September and October 2003

Community Health and Medicinal Plants. Invited talk with Jacinto Madrigal. Casa de Esperanza, sponsored by grupo Xinachtli in connection with their Festival de las Plantas Medicinales, San Antonio, TX. September, 2003

Understanding curanderismo: tradition and application. Workshop for promotoras, migrant health care liaisons in training, Monroe, Michigan, June 1998.

Presentations in Service to the University

Minority Health Disparities, Traditional Healing Practices. Allied Health Program. February 2007

Love, Research, and Nerdiness, Keynote speaker, COLFA Student Research Forum. April 2005

Learning to Heal, UTSA Anthropology Club. November 2004

What We Give Up, What We Gain, Keynote Address for Who's Who Among American University Students. February, 2007.

Spirituality and Healing in San Antonio Community presentation, Latino Heritage Week, UTSA, Public forum on the nature of traditional healing and plant use in San Antonio with Berta Valdez (curandera) and Jacinto Madrigal (yerbero). September 2003

Spirituality and Healing: curanderismo at work in San Antonio. A panel of curanderas in a community presentation on traditional healing practices in San Antonio. Part of Hispanic Heritage Week, UTSA. September 2002

SERVICE:

Doctorate and Master Level Committee Service :

Doctorate:

Virginia Mika, Ph.D. granted 2007. Qualifying Examinations committee, UTSA

Lucy Ramirez, Ph.D. candidate UT-Austin. Dissertation committee

Master's Level:

Comprehensive Exams Master's Degree Bicultural Bilingual Studies, 2002-2007 (14 students)

Comprehensive Exam, Anthropology, 2006 (3 students)

NATIONAL LEVEL SERVICE:

National Association of Chicana\Chicano Studies (NACCS) FOCO Chair 2005-2006

Reviewer for panels and presentations, National Conferences: NACCS and Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social (MALCS)

Site committee member and organizer, MALCS,

Washington Post interview, curanderismo practices in Boston, 2006

UNIVERSITY LEVEL SERVICE:

University Graduate Council, 2007-2008

College of Education and Human Development Blue Ribbon committee on student retention
Diversity Issues subcommittee

Bicultural Bilingual Studies Department, DFRAC committee 2007-2008

College of Education Scholarship committee 2006-2008

Honors College Scholarship committee, 2006-2008

Standing Committee member COEHD, student recognition awards

Member, Women's Studies Institute, University of Texas at San Antonio, 2003-2006

Member, COEHD College Council, Fall 2003-Fall 2005

University Panel on Immigration. Information presentation for students, Spring 2006

Advisor, RSO MASSO, Mexican American Studies Student Organization, 2002-2004

COMMUNITY LEVEL SERVICE:

Center for Integrative Health, UTHSC-San Antonio. Advisory board member 2003-2007

AVANCE, San Antonio, Texas. Advisory board member since 2006

San Antonio Express-News, interviews on curanderismo (2003), folk magic beliefs (2005), cultural traditions (2005).

KENS News Television, interview on health disparities and alternative health practices (2005)

Centro Cultural in San Antonio Texas, consultant, 2003-2006

Esperanza Peace and Justice Center, San Antonio, Texas. Volunteer, community history oral project.

MEMBERSHIPS:

American Anthropological Association

NACCS

MALCS National

MALCS San Antonio Chapter