

**Center for Public History**  
**Shawnee State University**  
Interview Transcription/Translation

Archival Collection Name: Latine in Southern Ohio/Latine del Sur de Ohio  
Interviewer(s): Cassie Rosita Patterson  
Interviewee(s): J.D. Emnett  
Date of interview: October 28, 2022  
Location of interview: South Central Ohio Educational Service Center  
Original language of interview: English  
Transcriber: Cassie Rosita Patterson  
Translator: Ileana Perez

Interview Summary: J.D. discusses his family's history of service to community and his interest in learning about other cultures and languages. He also discusses his career as an educator, and how he came to work at the South Central Ohio Educational Service Center. J.D. discusses the ways in which he has built infrastructure for language access in the schools that he serves and connected with the Latine community over the past several years.

Description of Transcription Methodology and Choices (Explain representational choices and any special use of linguistic markers.):

Brackets “[xxx]”: Indicate transcriptioner's commentary and/or asides, such as [hearty laughter] or [inaudible]

Italics “but I didn't want to go *there*”: Indicate speaker's emphasis on particular words or phrases. This should be used sparingly.

Shifts in language, for example from English to Spanish, are not represented in any way. All languages are transcribed using the same methodology.

Quotation marks (I said “I can't, I can't do that”) are used when the interviewee denotes someone, including themselves, speaking.

Verbal fillers such as “um” and “uh” have not been captured in the transcription process. Translations will remove repetitions and fillers. The reason for these decisions is for ease of translation and readability, as well as funding limitations for labor for transcription and translation. Those who wish to obtain access to word-for-word interview materials should consult the original recordings.

0:00 – 5:00	<p>Cassie Rosita Patterson: So this is Cassie Patterson, and I'm here with JD Emnett. And we are at the South Central Ohio Educational Service Center. And it is October 28, 2022. Around 11:30 am. Thank you so much for being here, JD.</p> <p>J.D. Emnett: My pleasure.</p> <p>Cassie: Appreciate it. So I wanted to talk to you a little bit today about the work that you've been doing here at the ESC really creating a lot of important infrastructure</p>
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that's serving the Latino community. But first, can you tell me a little bit about your background? Where did you grow up? And what was your childhood like?

J.D.: I grew up in Wheelersburg, Ohio, and still living in Wheelersburg and attended Wheelersburg local schools. One of three, I have a younger brother, that's four years younger than me and a younger sister, that's eight years younger than me. I have a mother and a father, my dad worked in industry. And my mother worked in doctors offices, her whole life as an insurance biller.

We were raised to put others first. There was high priority on serving the needs of those that are less fortunate than our family, even though we probably you know, growing up, we weren't rich by any shape of the imagination. We were regular middle class, but it was a priority that my parents both I think, probably intentionally conveyed to me and my brother and sister that the needs of others and those that are less fortunate and need to be taken care of. And we had a I would consider it, I don't know, normal upbringing, as far as you know, we, me and my brother didn't get along that well. And me and my sister got along really well. And so we would fight argue we would go on vacation.

We all three attended Wheelersburg schools. And we participated in athletics, academics. We were raised by a Protestant mother, a Catholic father. And so we had like, a mixture. But faith was really important in our home. And it wasn't like oppressive. It was very just offered up. And we took advantage of it and still something that's very important to my parents. So that's kind of my upbringing.

My background, this is my 21st year in education. I started my career as a teacher at Sciotoville Community School, and taught there for four years and moved on to South Point High School where I was a high school Principal for four years or high school Assistant Principal for four years. And from there to Green Local Schools where I was the high school Principal for eight years. This is my fifth year here at the Educational Service Center. My job here is broad. So I help facilitate evaluations for about 60 teachers that work in our cooperative units throughout five counties. I also am assigned to three local districts in whatever capacity that they would need me. On top of that, I work with nine individual schools in Lawrence County in a capacity as a consultant. And then, recently, over the last three years, after receiving my TSOL endorsement on my license, and doing work at University of Findlay, I've overseen our English Learner Services here both at the student level and then just recently, we began an adult program. So all of that is kind of what I do.

The background on English learners services probably began for me when I was 21 or [2]2. A friend of mine invited me to go on a mission trip to Belize. And I had never been on a big airplane, never flown anywhere and never been outside the United States and hadn't been ever really very far from Ohio. And so I went and drastically changed my life. Just the I don't know. I don't think there's one thing about the trip that changed my life. Just the fact that there's a whole nother world out there with really cool people in it.

5:00 – 10:00

J.D.: Some of them are really in need. But at the same point in time, being in need didn't have anything to do with their disposition and the way in which they loved and cared about me and wanted to be my friend. And it intrigued me to a very high level and created something inside of me that about after that every four years, I was trying to do something that turned into some trips to Navajo Reservation in Arizona. Trip to Jamaica, to work there. Then it turned into, I was introduced to some friends in Nicaragua. And that turned into seven years of going every summer, and leading trips there to work in a community. And nine years leading trips last two years, I didn't go, but it still led you to put the trip together and everything.

In the meantime of going to Nicaragua, a friend of mine, Enid Klaxon [sp?], and I really hit it off, she started attending the church, I was tending her and her husband, we became good friends, me and my wife, and her and her husband, and she, fluent Spanish speaker, Spanish teacher, but was working on her master's in TSOL. And for her Master's, she had to have a culminating project. And so her culminating project was at our church, we began an adult English language, English as a Second Language service, and just began to reach out to families. We spent a year with one person, there's one Latino, Latina, and she came religiously weekly, for services. And then one turned into 19 by the end, and it was 19. That was about split in half that half were Syrians, and half were Latinos. And so it was really, really fulfilling work. It replicated the work that I did in other places, but doing it at home. And we would have cultural nights where once a month, we would all just bring in our favorite dish. And so you had different dishes from all over. And we did holidays with some of our friends from Saudi Arabia, and tasted interesting food and drink with them. And when she moved away Enid and her husband moved away, like the umph behind that ministry kind of fizzled, and it went away. But recently, over the last three years, being able to do it for my vocation, has been super rewarding. To begin to that, to go back to advocacy, go back to caring go back to finding connecting people, helping them grow and learn. But at the same point in time, I'm growing and learning with them. So that's it.

Cassie: Yeah, that's wonderful. I was kind of curious, going back to your parents, do you know where that that sense of obligation to others, especially who might be less fortunate than you? Did you ever find a line of thought that that traced back to for your parents.

J.D.: My mother and father go about it in two different ways. So my mother is a very hospitable person. And that's a direct result that her mother was that way. So she just recently passed away, not this past Labor Day, but the Labor Day weekend, year ago, and she was 94 years old. And anytime you would stop at her home, it was her job to feed you to make sure you're extremely comfortable had everything you needed. And she did that not only for those who were related to her, but anybody that would stop at her home. So she was one of the most hospitable people that I've ever encountered. My mom his the exactly the same way. And my sister carries a lot of that with her as well. That it's about making you feel comfortable in providing for you. So that was ingrained into us. I mean, she didn't

	<p>ever have to say it, but we just saw it modeled for us with our mother and my grandmother.</p> <p>My dad on the other hand, it we would talk about it, and it would be brought up you know, you could tell that he wanted to make sure that somebody he would talk about you know, those that need a second hand maybe we should be the one to provide that or um I remember Thanksgivings when he would invite people over that we know that didn't have somebody to have Thanksgiving with or maybe didn't have a Thanksgiving meal.</p>
<p>10:00 – 15:00</p>	<p>J.D.: I remember him taking us places to serve other people. I didn't really care much for it at that time. His father died when I was in fourth grade. But his father was a thinker like that, that it was super important. He worked for the Department of our it'd be HUD housing. And he was the director here in Portsmouth and believes that, you know, good housing is needed by all. And so it was kind of ingrained into them. And I think it's part of their faith as well. His Catholic faith and my mom's Protestant faith. And so fast forward now, my sister hosts our Thanksgiving, and we will have maybe 50 people. Aren't now we may have more than that, but it's a very multicultural Thanksgiving. So there's a family that from Peru that comes every year, a couple fellows from Veracruz, Mexico come and have Thanksgiving with us. We usually have some Hondurans that have Thanksgiving with us, friends of ours that aren't even related to us come and have Thanksgiving. So it's a very open format. And actually, like one of my favorite days of the year. So I think, I don't know that they were intentional about doing that. I think it was part of their faith, and what the way in which they've been were brought up. But, you know, mixing both of them, gave me and my brother and sister a very good dose of that. It's super important. So me and my brother, I think we traveled to Nicaragua together probably six times. And my sister went one time that I didn't go, I would have liked went with her. But her and I'd went to Jamaica together. And and they both work in helping positions. And so that's kind of, I think, the line goes back to family heritage. And it probably extends back further than that. But I didn't know any of those people personally to tell you that so.</p> <p>Cassie: So it sounds like you have at least a couple of generations of family that are rooted in this area. Do you know how far back your family goes here.</p> <p>J.D.: I have visited the home that like my dad's mother's family. When they came across from Germany, where they settled, so it's just here locally, it's not very far away. It's been torn down now. So I don't know how many generations that would go back. But the house was still standing up until like last year, and someone lived in it. So I would assume that, you know, it would be a couple, four or five generations back. On my mother's side of the family, we really don't, I don't know. They were my grandfather was from West Virginia. And he moved a lot. Like he said, he came home from school one day, and they had moved across the street. And they moved maybe 20 some times in his lifetime, very poor. My grandmother grew up on a farm on in West Union in the Nile township area, and out that way, I don't know anything about their family any further back.</p>

	<p>Cassie: So kind of bringing that thread of service that seems to really run through your family forward. What made you interested in shifting from your Principal work at Green, to working at the ESC?</p> <p>J.D.: Simply well, there's other dynamics. But one of the biggest attracting features of it was an opportunity just to help people each and every day, just to provide help. And it fit the way my makeup, the things that put gas in my tank, the passions that I have align with the work that I do. And so I'm given the opportunity by the administration here to create a job and create opportunities to better serve people. And we're challenged to serve people the best that we can and supported to serve them the best we can. That's a really neat position for me.</p> <p>Cassie: When you just in getting to know you over the past few months, I can tell that you're a real infrastructure builder and a problem solver. Can you tell me a little bit about the infrastructure that you've built that really serves Latinos and the Spanish speaking community?</p> <p>J.D.: So three years ago, after attending university of Finley and picking up my TSOL endorsement, and we just began the work of</p>
15:00 – 20:00	<p>J.D.: How are we identifying English learners in our area properly, by the way, that the Ohio Department of Education and Ohio Revised Code sets fourth? We found that we weren't—not, and it wasn't like people weren't doing it on purpose. It was just they didn't know. And so not identifying allows that population to not exist on paper, if that makes any sense. And so we started simply saying, the state says every enrollment packet should have a home language usage survey, which is the trigger. After they fill that out, that triggers whether or not your screened to see if you would be provided English Learner Services. We got that going in all of our schools and brought an awareness to the fact that we're not doing that. And that we should be, and brought an awareness, through meetings with principals and guidance counselors, that if we have students that we think may be English Learners, then we maybe need to get a Home Language Usage Survey sent home.</p> <p>So that work allowed us to capture and identify a large group of students in the area. From that we began, that's stemmed that we would see, “okay, if this student qualifies who's their brother or sister, they probably need screened as well,” you know, getting all of those branches taken care of, now that it's taken about three years, but at this point in time, I feel pretty comfortable that we have identified all the students that should be receiving the services, and have given a Home Language Usage Survey to anybody that would potentially be screened. The second step that we needed to do this, then we needed to begin to screen the students. And so Ohio Department of Education provides a Ohio English Language Proficiency Screener. And we began to screen those students. That gives us some data back of how well they read, write, and listen and speak in English. After that point, then we need to be able to provide services. “What do those services look like? What does this student need in order to succeed and become proficient in English?” So we have an English Learner Plan, we write for every student. I write the bulk of those that happen in this area. And we use teacher input, the regular regular ed [education], teacher input, parent input, guidance, counselor input, you know, it's a</p>

	<p>team effort, put the plan together, and then we'd follow the plan. In the spring, we have to give the OELPA, Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment each year to see the progress that the student is making. So then we use those scores to help guide us, we also use some other assessment features, assistive technology, translators, any of those things.</p> <p>We also found that as we began to do that work, we were giving a voice to parents for the first time, some because we would, if before most of the parents didn't come in for a conference, because there was no services provided as far as translation. And the embarrassment of coming and trying to communicate with somebody was too much to get over. So we started really advocating for anytime you have a parent in, let's make sure that there's translation services, even if they say that they don't want em. I mean, if they're adamant we don't, but if they're kind of on the edge, we've erred on the side of having translation services, because sometimes in academics there's a vocabulary term that the parent is trying to convey to us that maybe the word doesn't exist in Spanish, or they just can't come up with the word. And the same point in time. There's sometimes we're trying to convey something to them. And we're having a hard time. And so having that translator allows that to happen. What we saw was there was a whole population of people that really wanted to support their kids' education that didn't have an avenue to do it. And we spent a lot of time in education complaining about parents not wanting to support children. And here we have this whole population of, by and large, like a mother and a father who wanted to be involved.</p>
20:00 – 25:00	<p>J.D.: Weren't involved. But weren't complaining about it. To me that breaks my heart.</p> <p>And so then we the I remember the first time we did this, we had a tran- we had conferences set up at Portsmouth City Schools, which has has the our largest population is there. And we had a translator and in-person translator, and I saw parents cry, like for the first time, or not for the first time, but I saw them cry, because they were hearing these positive things about their kids that they'd never heard before, in their in their own language. And then another mother was able to express concerns that she had piled up. I mean, it was like, "Oh, I got this going on." And they weren't complaints. They were just concerns that any good parent would have, but she'd never been able to get them across to somebody. And so that was, to me, that was like, yeah, this is what we should be doing. And so that work is continued. Just building those networks of helping those families, providing good services for our students trying to grow our services. We're in the process now maybe trying to find an itinerant English learner teacher that we could have at different buildings that that could go around and help. We do have a couple of translators in-person translators that we use as well. We've just recently contracted with some digital translation services, where we have 24/7 100 different languages that we can have somebody on the phone translating for us in a three-way phone call or in a conference call. We want to continue that work with families and connecting them. And then one of the most recent things was the development of our adult program. Through our adult GED program, we're doing adult English as a second language, and to try to build capacity for the parents. And, you know, I think it's working. I think there's a lot of work still to do.</p>

	<p>Cassie: What are some of the languages that folks are speaking that you're assisting at the schools and at the in the adult program?</p> <p>J.D.: Our adult program probably is 100% Spanish speakers. In the area we serve, we have a Japanese speaker. We have a few Indian students that come from the regional area of Gujarati [Gujarat]. And therefore they speak at Gujarati. We have one Cambodian student and Khmer would be her language. We have a Ukrainian student and he speaks Russian, Ukrainian. And we have and then the our largest population is Spanish speakers. I think we have one Arabic student, one, two Chinese students. I think right now, that's the gist of all the languages that we have.</p> <p>Cassie: Within your Spanish speaking students, what is the kind of range of countries that and kind of areas that they come from?</p> <p>J.D.: Peru, Honduras, Mexico. We have one El Salvadorian student. And I think that's it right now. That would be that those three.</p> <p>Cassie: And these are spanned across several counties that you serve.</p> <p>J.D.: Yes. So that would be 1, 2, 3, [counting] three to four counties.</p> <p>Cassie: And there are they all kind of neighboring here?</p> <p>J.D.: Lawrence County is neighbor to Scioto County. So the bulk of the students fall between those two, we do have a student in Vinton County. I think there probably is somewhere where it touches one of those counties in there. So that's a new area for us. And it was new to them. They have one student now but there's a brother and sister supposed to be coming in at some point.</p> <p>Cassie: So given the amount of work that you've done already, what gaps do you see still that you want to work on filling in the community to continue serving not only the Spanish speaking students, but the larger Latino community.</p> <p>J.D.: One is like services and inside the school.</p>
25:00-30:00	<p>J.D.: So I think the framework and the structure is there to identify, and put together a plan to help but the implementation of that plan. And so I, I do I try to do some of that, but I can't follow, see all that through. And so one of the things is we may be looking to hire an itinerate ESL teacher in order to help that implementation. We do we do monitor and track our students progress on the OELPA. And their attainment of, you know, proficiency, and how are they moving through? The good thing about language acquisition is is it takes place, even if you didn't have anything by just being emerged [immersed] in the culture here. But we would like to help expedite that and reduce stress on student and teacher. Because it affects both. If you're a regular ed [education] teacher, and you've never had an English learner that is stressful. So can we can we, by having that person can we maybe reduce some of that stress for both and provide great services for the student. So I think there's a gap there in the implementation.</p>

	<p>The other is I don't know if everybody knows about our services for our adults, or that the services is that we would help you find what you need, if you're looking for, you know. As a family, if you were looking for somewhere to go to the doctor, or somewhere because you wanted to start your process for citizenship, we can help connect you with those people. I don't know if people know that. There's not really a centralized place for the Latino or Latina Latinx population to go and say, I need something. It's a very informal network. And sometimes, we may not know that someone needs something. By and large, I think we hear about most of it. But it may be delayed, because it has to go through those channels. I would like to see it not have to go through so many channels before someone gets help.</p> <p>Cassie: And does Hector work with you. And the ESC to connect that a little bit better?</p> <p>J.D.: Yeah, he does, he will keep me up to date if someone needs something or he has resources that he can provide if they get a hold of him. So once again, a very informal way. Maybe he gets connected through somebody at the hospital that knows his sister that works at the hospital that knows him that three people removed, or maybe someone has his number. We've used him a lot with a lot of our English at a year, year two three ago, we used him a ton when we had our parent meetings, so he has a lot of connections, a lot of phone numbers in his phone. And when they call, you know, someone answers that speaks Spanish. So I think that makes it important. But once again, to it's a very informal process. With, you have to know someone that knows, Hector, if you're new here, and you need something. If you don't know someone that knows Hector, or they don't recommend Hector, it, you know, it's delayed, that we get the information.</p> <p>Cassie: Yeah. And I had a follow up to that, that I can't think about right now. I was trying to think about that really quickly. I know that you capture most of your talking about being able to connect with students primarily through the school system, and you're able to really get a sense of who's out there who might need your services that way. And obviously, Hector is out there as well and probably other folks that you're connected to. Are there other kind of catch networks that you've noticed that are available to help folks who are new to the area to become connected to either the resources that you offer or the larger informal network?</p> <p>J.D.: I don't think so. Other than like a family net. In my education, at University of Finley, there was conversation about like, if you this idea about if you build it, they will come kind of like <i>Field of Dreams</i> [this is a movie title] things. And I don't know if there's research that backs it. For me, it's just perception right now.</p>
30:00-35:00	<p>J.D.: But once we started doing things kind of the right way, in providing services and, and caring for people, our numbers grew. And they grew in family units, if that makes any sense. So we have what we would call a matriarch of the Honduran family in Portsmouth. She went from having two students in her home to like having six. And they weren't her direct grandchildren, maybe a great niece or something. And their parents were living in Indiana, but the school here, they were getting good feedback that, "hey, this school cares, the school is doing this." And so</p>



	<p>then they send their kids here to come to school. When family units are looking, where to go, I think their kids are super important to them, which all of our kids are super important. And so they want to go somewhere where there's other students like them, and that there are people that are providing them a good education. So we've seen that grow. And I guess the family net catches them and helps them integrate. And if that family net has some connections with me, or Hector, you know somebody else, then we can, or if they have school-aged children, we we get access to them pretty quickly. We don't get access to the 20-year-old that comes over here by himself and goes right to work. I don't know, I don't, I guess the integration is is that he's found his way to Portsmouth. He will find other Latina, Latino men. And he gets a job at either one of the restaurants or the lumberyard or at the wood flooring place. It's where primarily all of our Latino Latino men work. So I guess that's a kind of another integration place. But yeah, no formal process. Once again, another informal process.</p> <p>I did meet a family just recently, maybe a month ago. Husband and wife in their like 19 and 20-year-old with a child coming, fleeing Venezuela. But had lived in Peru, lived in Puerto Rico, lived in Mexico for a while now here at 19 and 20 years old. And they ended up crossing paths in Peru with a Peruvian family that lives here, some of their relation. And somehow this loose, passing turned into them staying with him for a while, and I haven't seen them for a couple months. So I don't know if they are that they've moved again, or if they're still here. But that family is helping them integrate. They're introducing them to people and trying to help them find employment and those type of things. And I think by and large, that's the way it happens. The majority of the time.</p> <p>Cassie: And what's your sense of the kind of receptivity of the larger community and the schools to you know, we kind of talked with other folks today about the Latino community is really growing in this area. What's the receptivity kind of temperature like?</p> <p>J.D.: I have had conversations with other Latinos about why how they end up here, because always interests me. Some have said that the the reception they receive is warm. And that's that's the reason they ended up here and more ended up here. Others have said that it's it's just a place that most people don't make a big deal about it. You know, I'm saying I mean, the police aren't giving them a hard time they're not searching them out, you know, they're able to find employment. People help them get around. So I think that I don't know if that's intentional by the community. I don't think so. And the only reason I don't think so is because I don't think the community as a whole is doing enough to help these families and to recognize them.</p>
35:00-40:00	<p>J.D.: There's other people you talk to and they're blown away by the numbers that I share with him of how many students we serve. Like, I didn't realize that. So I think those people are just indifferent. I don't think they know. And so to say that they have a feeling one way or the other, I don't think they do. I always felt growing up in this area that it was kind of a very close-minded place, and they different different kinds of people weren't well received. I don't know about that, you know, I'm a little bit perplexed about that. I still kind of feel that way, personally. That</p>

being different is scary. People use terms like “those people.” And but I may be a little over critical of my hometown. You know, from what I've heard from some other people that aren't from here, they say that it's been a welcoming place.

Cassie: And how about in the schools? What kind of vibe are you getting from educators and leadership in the schools about serving the students that are a part of your your work?

J.D.: Very supportive, I have to say that the educators, almost every educator I've ever met is about helping a kid grow, no matter the kid. And no matter the challenge, now does create stress. And it is a challenge.

It, it's been a cool education for some. And some of the things that they have learned, have really surprised them. Like, I would say, 95% of the students that we deal with, their parents are so supportive, more supportive than any other students that we have. And 95% of our students work so hard, never get in trouble, are super conscientious. And that's not a typical student that you have in this area. And it's super refreshing. It's like, “wow, this is really cool.” And they didn't know that was going to be something that they were going to learn. And it was like, “aw this is a very positive consequence of this.” And like, yeah, and then like other students getting some cultural sensitivity training just by a student from another culture being in their classroom. So I think those things have been pleasant surprises for a lot of the educators.

And the other thing that's a pleasant surprise is how quickly the students are picking up English. Not maybe like reading and writing it, but how quickly they pick it up when speaking and listening.

But to actually see that transformation is super encouraging for any teacher, because that's why they that's why they want to teach, they want to teach because you come to them and kindergarten, you can't say your, you know, your alphabet or whatever. And the kindergarten teacher wants to there's, there's like something inside to you that happens when a kid does that. Same way with a high school teacher, the student comes into your geometry classroom and, and, you know, maybe can't do surface area or volume are those type of things and then they walk out able to do that. But that's what makes you want to teach more. And so to be able to see it with an English learner, you see it maybe even more than you see it with a regular student, because it happens so quickly. In that person can't communicate, that person can't do anything. And then they start doing things. It's like, “wow, this is really happening.” So I think it's been I don't want to speak for those people. But I think it's been funner and more pleasant than they thought it would be. And more surprising that the commitment of the family and the hard work and that the students put in that it's been like, “well this isn't as bad as I thought it was going to be.” I've not come across anyone saying that “I'm not going to serve that student, I'm not going to try to serve that student, I'm not helping that student,” you know, or or anything like that. Super accommodating.

Cassie: What are you excited about that's coming up for your work at the ESC?

	<p>J.D: Well, the opportunity of maybe getting an itinerant teacher to provide to implement those plans more fully, and to maybe increase the pace of that language acquisition, I think would be really important. The other thing is is to build building better inroads with the families,</p>
40:00-45:00	<p>J.D.: and the possibility, you know, of down the road, through the adult program of helping more, there is an opportunity if any business wanted to. We haven't talked about this with any businesses yet. But we've been brainstorming that there's some funds available in our adult program that if, if a bit, one of our businesses probably employs 20 Latinos, that if they wanted to do an hour class every day, we have funding that we could put somebody there. So it'd be on the work time, if they felt it was important enough for their employees to have an English understanding. We could pay somebody to be doing those classes. One of our restaurants is probably boy it's, maybe 10. I think it would be worthwhile there. So that's something that I've not got off the ground and running yet, but that's something that, you know, we've had some conversations about, which I think would be really powerful. I think the work we're doing in Southern Ohio folklife, you know, trying to bring this more to the forefront. I would love to see us get some way where you brought up that integration spot, or that spot where I could go, if, if that was me, and be like, "hey, I need some help." Or "how do I get my kids enrolled in schoolwork," or all these things?</p> <p>Kind of like, I think Pablo [Salinas] has mentioned this to kind of a hub, where you can, you know, a starting point where that informal network usually has to work to distribute information or to have a kind of like a hub for information.</p> <p>J.D.: Exactly.</p> <p>Cassie: Get you connected to the folks and that would have equal access, because I imagine that the informal networks depend on somewhat of chance, or maybe interacting with somebody that happens to be connected. And being kind of taken in and brought in, which might also involve, you know, personalities and family dynamics and things. But if you have something like a service, like you provide that's available to everybody, it's public service, then that would have a different tone to it.</p> <p>J.D.: Yeah. For sure. Yeah, those things. And over three years, we went from serving maybe around 20 students to serving now, around 40 students. If in three more years, we serve 80 students. That's exciting to me. I assume we probably will. Just way we have seen it.</p> <p>Cassie: Yeah. So there's a larger trend that you've been noticing. In the local area. There's just an increase in</p> <p>J.D.: Yeah.</p> <p>Cassie: Latino community members.</p>

	<p>J.D.: Yeah. And not centralized in, in the, you know, in Portsmouth, but in other parts like that. The Vinton County, you know, it's an interesting thing to me, because typically, you know, that's a part. It's a very rural school. It's only one it's a very large school, because it's a large county, it's only one school in the county, but not for sure. You know, how'd you end up there from Honduras?</p> <p>Cassie: What are some of the stories that you're hearing about newer residents? I know there are residents that have been here for a long time, from I think one of the folks that we met at Cantina last time we did fieldwork had been here for something like 16 years. But the newer residents that you're getting that are coming from Latin American countries. What are some of their stories about coming here?</p> <p>J.D.: Seems like some had been fleeing either poor political environment or chaos. Some asylum seekers. That's been the bulk of what we've been seeing. Sometimes it's they lived in another part of the United States but moved in with his family here in Portsmouth. Almost all of them are centralized around that I have an opportunity to make a lot more money here and take care of my family. It's with me and take care of my family that's back home by sending money back home by being here. Find a ton of employment and even extra employment so working landscaping jobs in the evening or on the weekends. So I you know, I still think it's in search of something better. That's that's a pretty big umbrella. But I think you know, I most of the I would speak with, I think it goes [inaudible].</p> <p>Cassie: Well, and then there's a I think somebody was mentioning earlier today that having grown first come to California and the kind of density of population and for sure how expensive it is to live there. This is a very affordable place to live</p>
45:00-50:00	<p>Cassie: for those folks. And I can imagine that that balance of wages and cost of living might be helpful as well.</p> <p>J.D.: Yeah. And in Portsmouth, there's some large homes. And so I think there's some doubling up, that takes place, which I don't think that that's anything that would be. You know, I've been to Mexico, and I've been to Nicaragua, and there's family units that lived together, I think that's a natural thing. So even though we may see it as doubling up, they see it as a natural thing, but then their sharing of expenses at that point in time, which allows for to even become more affordable. And so yeah, I think that's probably one of the other reasons that we see a growth here is just due to the fact that you can live cheaply if you want to.</p> <p>Cassie: Yeah, and that, that idea of families living together is also very kind of Appalachian, as well. And like country living you know I see that out where I live, where, you know, someone can add a home to a property or divvying up property is also part of that lineage of this place. And this region,</p> <p>J.D.: That's good point.</p> <p>Cassie: And that, that interconn- I'm wondering if there's also a synergy in terms of connections to family, and interdependence, and helping one another, and sharing</p>

	<p>resources and expenses, that's also maybe a shared perspective or a shared approach to life.</p> <p>J.D.: I also wonder, though, like that strength in numbers thing, not that there needs to be strength in it. But just having more than just me by myself, you know, that more people in my neighborhood, we do notice a little bit, that there's a couple pods in Portsmouth where the Latinos live. And so they may live in two or three houses in one neighborhood. And then you go to another part of town, there's two or three more houses. Few live just randomly out by themselves. And, you know, I just wonder if there's a sense of community there, sense of comfort, familiarity? So, yeah, I think so.</p> <p>Cassie: So what, what do you envision or hope for the future of Latino communities in southern Ohio? If you could, will a future to happen, what would you like to see?</p> <p>J.D.: Well, I think that hub, a place to go to. And I'm new, but also a place to go the after I've been here a while to receive services for my children, for myself, to know that there's people that care, and that love and the want to help. And an efficient way to be able to connect all those people together. To those that have students and those that don't have students. In the school setting, you know, just building more capacity of the regular ed teacher to be okay with a new student from XYZ country. And like, "yes, I've done this before. And this is how we're going to do this." And a less stress level. And a more of like, "okay, good. Here we go." And we'd get started sooner, because getting over that stress level takes some time. And then you know, so there's some wasted educational time there. But if you're prepared, and the capacity is there, whether or not you have an itinerant teacher, you can hit the ground running. And so getting more people to start talking about, "hey, next year, you're going to have so and so these are the things we know about so and so this is their language acquisition, as at this point, right now, this is what we have planned for them. Are you on board with that? What feedback you have?" And then from day one, you're like, "Yeah, okay, this was all right," instead of maybe October, getting comfortable. So those things, I think, to continue to grow, are the resources that we can provide. Whether it be adults or children, and the resources we can connect them to. We need to find some funding sources as well. I think that that would be important for this work. So those would be the things that you know, I may not be a super big dreamer, but I those things, have a lot of steps to them from where we are right now to there.</p> <p>Cassie: I know you were also talking about some cultural appreciation in the schools that you wanted to work on.</p> <p>J.D.: I think you bringing that to the forefront, you know that like "Hey,</p>
50:00-55:00	<p>J.D.: there's a population that exists. And they're right here." And, and for those students to feel okay about their heritage, and that it's alright. It's alright I speak Spanish. And really, it's a really neat thing that you have two languages and not to lose that language. You know? Because I think sometimes that can be what they want to do. So they fit in with everybody else and not speak Spanish, because then I'm different. Can we highlight families and diversity at a point where it makes it</p>

like, a pretty neat thing that you have two languages. And that you share that with other people. And, and that that, even though I think they feel comfortable here, are they heard? And do they feel like they belong? And I think those events help that of shedding light on all the great things about them. So how do we do that as well, I think that would be really neat. Thanks for reminding me that.

Cassie: Yeah, I think that's one of the things that I found really exciting about the work that you're doing is that, that we talked about earlier, that kind of mutual respect, and that mutual recognition of where people are coming from, and that inter cultural exchange, and that opportunity to learn about somebody else's culture. I mean, I kind of think back to the beginning of our conversation, where you're talking about that spark that you had when you were going on these mission trips,

J.D.: Right.

Cassie: That excitement of learning about somebody else's culture and connecting with somebody from another culture on a deeper level, having a friendship, and that that special feeling that it can really grow inside of somebody and can, as in your case, shift the trajectory of their lives,

J.D.: One hundred percent. Right.

Cassie: and what they end up doing in the world and the way that their service looks or the way that their the way that their their their work looks. So I think that's a big opportunity as well.

J.D.: Yeah. I agree.

Cassie: Is there anything that I didn't ask you that you're hoping I would?

J.D.: No, I don't think so.

Cassie: Okay. Well, thank you so much for your time today, J.D. I really appreciate it. And thanks for all the hard work that you've been doing in this community.

J.D.: My pleasure. Thank you.