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# A Guide for Deconstructing Social Reproduction: Pedagogical *Conocimientos* within the Context of Teacher Education

*Jesus Jaime-Diaz and Josie Méndez-Negrete*

## Abstract

As the mosaic of student demographics continue to change into the 21st century, teacher credential training programs must necessarily prepare educators to be culturally affirming and responsive to the equitable schooling of students. Through pedagogical *conocimientos*, educators-in-training may rely on self-reflexive methodologies, which facilitates the engagement of self and others in interaction, as they collectively retrieve family legacies, focusing on gathering histories on their family's origins, language, religion, work, education, and migration. This prepares future teachers to unearth and examine internalized prejudices, traumas, and stereotypes, to thus counter and contest deficit thinking and distorted views of student populations, beginning with them. This chapter introduces pedagogical *conocimientos*, illustrating the praxis as it problematizes social reproduction in the context of schooling.

**Keywords:** pedagogical *Conocimientos*, *pláticas*, *testimonios*, chicana feminist theory, social reproduction

## 1. Introduction

By the end of the century in the United States of America, the majority of people will trace their origins to Latin America, rather than Europe [1]. With demographic changes, teacher credential programs must necessarily engage the preparation of educators to become culturally affirming and responsive to the equitable schooling of students. The trauma associated with the ever-shifting nativist rhetoric of immigrant bashing by those who have long established roots in the nation-state must be contested [2, 3]. Alternative pedagogical practices must be utilized to disrupt a history of Anglo-conformity and Americanization that dehumanizes people of color and immigrants who are perceived as a threat of difference. A social justice and approach to teacher preparation must begin with a culture of love and healing, thus interweaving each other's humanity in the context of schooling. Ideologies that reproduce and continue to socially transmit deficit and otherized thinking dehumanize those who are perceived as foreign or alien [4, 5].

This chapter focuses on Chicana pedagogical *conocimientos*, which [pertains to knowledge and the dialogic processes of knowing self in interactions with others

as a self-reflexive methodology], and used to prepare teachers to engage self and others in interaction, as they reciprocally examine student/learner views of the world, working with students to retrieve family legacies in relation to family origins, language, religion, work, and education, as well as other systemic or structural sites of oppression and domination. This approach prepares educators to unpack their own internalized prejudices, traumas, and stereotypes, as they gain awareness and become conscious about the ways in which they reproduce oppression and domination in the context of schooling. In addition to self-awareness, educators mindfully contest deficit views to impart a socially just education informed by an equity literacy lens in spirit for the common good, by socially locating and positioning students and themselves within the structuration of society.

### 1.1 Overview

These are troublesome times in teacher education where teacher attrition mirrors student push outs from schooling. There is a dire need to take upon a holistic approach that demonstrates the ways in which critical pedagogues deconstruct oppressive and pervasive teaching practices deriving from the early socialization of teacher educators within the structure of schooling [6, 7]. Thus, it is imperative to unpack ideologies closely aligned and along racial, ethno-racial, political and economic, and gender structuration of minoritized groups [8]. Critical pedagogues have long problematized norms in teacher preparation as deeply entrenched in Predominately White Institutions (PWI), where white supremacy is the master scroll in teacher preparation [9–12]. These scholars continue to scrutinize and deconstruct the socialization of teachers as reproducers of inequality [13, 14].

As an alternative, Chicana feminisms avail notions in the training of educators. This simultaneously draws upon epistemologies that engage students in dialogue along with their own self-reflections. Founded on cultural expressions that simultaneously affirm respect, with discourse or [*pláticas* as informal conversation used as research methodology by Chicana feminist scholars]. This approach begins with dialogic *pláticas* [15] or praxes implemented with the objective of deconstructing privilege, power, and difference as norms of communication and interaction in schooling, while modeling the transparency of becoming agents of transformation, with the expectation of humanizing pedagogies through *pláticas* and dialogue [16, 17]. With difference, subordination, and privilege on the table, consciousness about space and place emerges allowing teacher/learners to engage the contradictions with which they contend in daily life.

To contest normative expectations, the emphasis must be placed on pedagogies of domination and ideologies of whiteness and how these serve to veil inequities and discourses of exclusion that dominate those for whom schooling was not intended. Drawing from Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS), Critical Chicana/o scholars have problematized white innocence as a discourse that mediates the racial formation of minoritized groups which continue to ‘otherize’ and exile them throughout the educational systems [18]. Such views pervade the justification of surveillance and punitive disciplinary action against minoritized students, purging them as the problem while placing whites at the center [19–21].

Given the historical legacy of educational institutions, trauma informed teaching and the importance of embodying a domain of awareness emerges. It calls to recognize trauma among students, especially in those instances where it may surface as internalized thoughts, feelings, and emotions that trigger cultural, institutional, or social spaces where injuries were perpetrated. In such contexts affirmation and acknowledgement become invaluable in working with students [22].

The critical importance of equity literacy, and pedagogical approaches is to prepare culturally responsive teachers, entails examining the ways in which schooling reproduces social inequity [23]. Teachers must recognize embedded norms within the structure of schooling and disrupt the oppressions—in themselves and in the students.

It is of vital and critical importance to disrupt the vicious cycle of the inequity sociohistorically reproduced in higher education. Toward that end, the process of pedagogical *conocimientos* is a praxis that challenges its reproduction. This self-reflexive methodology calls for learners/teachers to place themselves historically and in relation to others, through the facilitation of dialogic interactions with self, peers, and instructors. This approach has shown to be useful, as it makes visible the oppressive realities experienced by people of color, while simultaneously honoring and locating their learning experiences within intersectional struggles of the human experience, which generates healing through dialogic interactions [24]. These first-person accounts or [*testimonios* speak to socially significant experiences of a collective group expecting to contest and change their circumstances]. Thus, as an intersubjective methodology, *testimonio* further humanizes the complexity of student/learner experiences, while embodying a praxis that is supportive of students of color when unmasking oppressive realities in relation to racialized social class and other intersectionalities [25]. Moreover, *testimonio* provides an alternative space for coming to voice, telling one's truth, and speaking back to the social powers of oppression [26]. *Testimonionio* is a catalyst for social transformation, where trauma facilitates social consciousness, collective memory, and the formation of theory with the responsibility to act [27–30].

## 2. Chicana Feminisms

Feminists study and theorize Chicana lives and their respective communities, focusing on political strategies for accessing social institutions and employment [31]. Within this understanding, they embody an oppositional consciousness for social change, countering cultural nationalist ideologies, while arguing for certain traditions of Chicana culture to remain intact, as they problematize heteronormative views in traditional Mexican family structures [32]. Urquijo-Ruiz, calling out such oppressive ideologies as a means for acceptance and inclusion, argues that these heteronormative values, norms, and beliefs ostracize and devalue the LGBTI community [33].

The New Mestiza survives in the contradictions of spiritually imagining, creating, and advancing a theory in the flesh, to uncover dialectics for social change where personal and cultural healing may be found [34–36]. In the in-between-spaces or positions situated along the interstices of multiple, social, political, and cultural systems [37]. Chicanas make a case for an inclusivity that promotes multicultural, multilingual, and multiethnic identities, whereby monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual identities are contested or affirmed in the holistic experience of socialization—a complex process in relation to region, class, and generation [38]. As Indigenous mestizas, Chicana feminists reject racialized social class, race, and gender as isolated spaces, but conceive of them as intersectionalities connected to each other [39].

### 2.1 Contestatory spaces

While critical education—ethnic studies, critical multicultural education, bilingual education—thrives, right-wing politicians have identified schooling as

a purview of whiteness [40, 41]. During such times, professionals have dismissed research findings that culturally responsive pedagogy has the potential to close the achievement gap [42]. For these reasons, the authors rely on pedagogical approaches that raise awareness in responding to diverse student populations who are preparing to become teacher educators [43, 44]. What participants and researchers have lived, seen, and endured provides the intersubjective consciousness to mediate an understanding of the cultural transmission of knowledge [45].

## **2.2 Epistemologies at the center**

Embodied perceptions and our senses are central to understanding the world in relation to one another in the context of language or religion or any other system of power. Knowledge is conceptualized as embodiment of experiences that allows the extraction and creation of alternative forms of knowledge [46]. Thus, when engaging in critical learning, teacher/learners must necessarily re-examine historical traumas as they take into account the healing of the mind, body, spirit, and soul. For Paulo Freire education was an act of love and an act of courage, rather than a practice of objectivity in the delivery of content, as it is the engagement with a whole being [47]. Objectivity and professional distance reproduces inequalities and hierarchies in schooling. Scholars of intersectionality studies counter-argue for the creation of knowledge as a critical process that focuses on situatedness.

## **2.3 Excluded epistemologies**

For those who are sociohistorically disenfranchised, it is critical to recognize that theorizing through lived experience is not a bias, but a foundation for analysis, whereby subjectivity is integral, rather than distant from knowledge production. Critical scholars argue that epistemologies attest to a realism that evidences the marginalization, oppression, and traumatization of communities of color [48]. Thus, epistemologies provide a narrative of events that derives from subjective knowledge grounded in personal and professional experiences [49]. Historical epistemological privilege the structures of social sciences where knowledge is created for and by those positioned inside structures of power [50].

## **2.4 Critically conscious epistemologies**

Values norms and beliefs guide and mediate understandings of difference, which when left unchecked leaves space for selective perception and ethnocentrism [51]. Such beliefs, feelings, and thoughts are manifested in social structures that shape the socialization of students. Thus, it is critical to be mindful of the various disciplinary technologies that transmit society's core values directly, indirectly, and by happenstance—denial, collusion or collaboration with dominant thinking.

In the creations of knowledge, agents of socialization play key roles in the subgroups, hierarchies, and power relations within the social order [52, 53]. Within such spheres of influence, it is important to understand that consciousness is reproduced, not only through a person's contact with work, an ascription to social class, a racialized identity, but also through institutions that facilitate socialization through religion, schooling, language, and immigrant origin [54].

## **2.5 Critical epistemologies as instruments of knowledge**

To understand the ways in which white supremacy and whiteness persist, it is imperative to identify and locate these practices in the present [55], beginning

with settler-colonialism, whereby whiteness is socially constructed through various forms of violence, as an established norm within the racial caste system of the nation-state. Such ideologies set the pillars of nationhood through slavery, genocide, and the colonization of minoritized groups. Whiteness is tied to European immigration, where Euro-Americans reinforce whiteness, and cash in on the privilege tied to such ideology, subordinating otherized groups [56]. In liberatory epistemological praxis, multiple subjectivities must be placed at the center in positioning the historical experiences of non-whites [57]. This necessarily implicates that mixed heritage people must work as agents of transformation while carving collaborative inside/outside venues for the creation of social justice and social change [58, 59].

### **3. Whiteness in education**

Whiteness permeates in education and there is a critical need to further scrutinize, problematize and expose, and change normative discourses that continue to reproduce inequality in schooling. Whiteness is the sociohistorically transmitted ideology with which the government institutes and maintains laws that benefit white people, with privilege and advantage to resources over non-whites. Such notions are often invisible to its beneficiaries [60], given that these cultural and institutional practices are firmly embedded throughout US society and reinforced in “common sense” notions of white supremacy that normalize it as a dominant discourse [61]. These beliefs and practices have had a profound effect on the psyche of the nation and in its hierarchical ordering of humans based on the phenotypic, or physical attributes that racialize human beings.

The practices of schooling and pedagogical approaches utilized to teach homogenous students, meaning white populations, rely on the stripping of language, culture, and identity, perpetuating a common culture of domination through schooling practices that have long been argued as outdated [62]. Such archaic pedagogies are closely tied to the era of the Industrial Revolution, and the factory model or schooling chain command which confines a person’s spirit in the name of economic productivity [63, 64].

For the aforementioned reason, in the preparation of educators there is a pressing need to expose white middle-class students to a critical history, so that they understand and are mindful of their whiteness as privilege, as well as how it is constructed by agents of socialization [65–67]. This is of critical importance, especially when interrogating ideologies that shape white middle-class teacher beliefs and attitudes, in relation to culturally responsive teaching, as it pertains to broader sociocultural and historical realities.

Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) scholars have deconstructed whiteness, problematizing the ways in which institutions of higher education reproduce such ideologies in the curricula and pedagogical praxes that prepare educators, thus transmitting such practices in the maintenance of social control. An awareness of such power imparts notions of mindfulness. When white students are taught and guided to engage intercultural interaction, they are better able to deal with ideological tensions, which are then transformed into learning experiences [68]. Whiteness as racial superiority is the most vexing issue that needs to be dismantled in the United States [69].

Critical mindfulness of whiteness has the potential for building bridges of understanding, not only of the social location, but also of the positionality of white middle-class teachers [70]. Thus, gaining consciousness of the power dynamics regarding the organization of class, race, ethnicity, and gender is of uppermost urgency [71]. Intersectional scholars argue that students must come to understand

the ways in which such discourses protect curricula that is vested in normalization and upholds the status quo, which is transmitted as normalcy and common sense in the United States, while obscuring and denying their histories and contributions.

Schools with majority Mexican American populations continue to be socially stratified, where negative attitudes and low expectations reinforce deficit views of the population [72]. Such expectations have profound life-long effects making students feel disengaged with a long-term unequal distribution of sadness that burdens Chicanas/os where an unfulfilled desire to do well academically in schools fails them. The dominant curricula stifles dreams and diminishes aspirations, creating not only a depressive mindset but also increasing the educational disengagement of Chicanas/os [73–75].

Conceptualized as less able and capable of succeeding, which reproduces inequality, particularly when white middle-class teachers view discourses such as White innocence, disempowers Mexican American students. This “snow white” syndrome facilitates the reproduction of unconscious racism, which is promoted by ethnocentric and selective perceptions that stigmatize Mexican American students as less bright or committed to education. For these reasons, it becomes a pressing need for whites to understand the ways in which whiteness has been utilized as a tool of oppression, whereby a stressful learning environment reinforces a culture of fear that exiles them from the educational-learning process. This historical pattern regarding schooling, whereby the rhetoric of white innocence through altruism negates the schooling experience of minoritized students, reinforces inequitable education leaving intact the moral mandate of White policy makers, regardless of the harm inflicted upon students of color [76, 77].

As a critical necessity in their professional formation, educators must gain an understanding of the ways in which the ineffective schooling of minoritized students is actualized, as they cultivate the resilience of talking back and responding to oppression, from a place of complex and deep understanding such as utilizing white innocence as an investigative framework [78–82]. Future teacher educators must necessarily understand the ways in which whiteness persists in everyday interactions, particularly when teachers sidestep emotionally uncomfortable activities that pertain to class, race, whiteness, gender, and sexual orientation as points of discussion. The creation of an emotional comfort zones is necessary to create spaces that examine the privilege of whiteness and its consequences. Brave spaces for educators to resist, contest, and challenge the oppression of dominant groups in activities that reinforce the exclusion of non-majoritarian students [83]. This must be engaged in discussions that include all views. With pedagogical *conocimientos*, educators benefit with an instrument that allows them to recognize the persistent normalization of supremacist discourses of the “isms” in the structuration of schooling [84–87].

Future educators must reflect with clarity and courage on their consciousness to call out the cultural denial and silence that dehumanizes those who are perceived as inferior. Toward that end, critical pedagogues must identify and deconstruct pedagogical practices as they examine and interrogate notions of white innocence [88–90]. To unmask and pull out from under the sheets and robes of white supremacy in the 21st century, educators must focus on the learning experiences of minority groups. This is a demand for social justice, whereby critical humanizing pedagogies are enacted in the pursuit of the common good [91].

#### **4. Teaching in predominately white institutions (PWI's)**

The preparation of educators primarily take place in PWIs and often faculty of color experience microaggressions as ordinary slights of indignity [92]. These

interactions relay derogatory and hostile messages towards the individual or a group [93, 94]. Moreover, hostile views are often reinforced by deficit ideologies that depict faculty of color as less than qualified. Such notions are deeply embedded in racialized social class narratives, the culture, and the identities of faculty of color [95–97]. When these prejudices are not problematized during the early socialization of students through schooling, students are conditioned to see this as the norm when obtaining a university education at PWI's. With that, the reactionary impulses of symbolic racism remain unchallenged.

A pedagogical *conocimientos* approach is informed by our notions of deconstructing ideologies that are deeply embedded within the structure of schooling as mainstream norms [98]. This practice emerges from an understanding that acquired knowledge through lived experiences shapes academic training. In addressing the creation of knowledge, knowledge and praxes must be examined in the training of educators [99].

## 5. *Pláticas*/conversations

*Pláticas* cultivate constructive dialogue in the classroom, and departing from *confianza*/trust, participants assertively acknowledge that each student is valued in the class and brings knowledge to the schooling space. Regardless of background, they have something to contribute as they gain understandings of oppression [100]. Student knowledge and their lived experiences give them the right to critically interrogate course content [101].

In engaging with teachers, students must qualitatively understand difference within the culture of schooling. *Pláticas*/Conversations, a Mexican expressive cultural form of communication, derive from stories unearthed and reclaimed from their ancestors and themselves. *Pláticas* are methodology that promotes students' stories and experiences as knowledge or as a pedagogy to express familiar cultural forms, while respectfully affirming these practices.

*Pláticas* become critical pedagogy when provoked to nurture critical consciousness in a community of learners' processual approach [102, 103]. Also, they are an instrument for cultural brokering that enables an insider to understand the way in which Mexican Americans communicate, how they identify, and the importance of respect for elders. *Pláticas* may be a pivotal component in transforming academic spaces, whereby a community of learners engages the personal and the academic while weaving it into an interdependent whole [104].

It has been documented that [Chicana/o originally referred to working-class Mexican Americans in the United States. From the early 20th to mid-century, the term was derogatory and reclaimed during the Chicano Movement in the late 1960's and early 1970's as a self-assigned ethnic identity]. Chicanas would modify the term to signify gender equality and acknowledge the contributions of Chicanas]. Chicanas would bring in past cultural practices into the creation of knowledge. Thus, to make visible Chicana/o intellectual knowledge, *pláticas* are useful and necessary as pedagogical tools of inquiry. To problematize early schooling socialization, *pláticas* facilitate the cultivation of parallel relationships with students, engaging perspectives that make comprehensive and inclusive the counterargument found within the contradictions of teaching and learning [105, 106].

Finally, when relying on *pláticas*, the dialogue that emerges departs from mutual respect, by agreeing to disagree [107]. A key perspective is that the development of dialogue cannot emerge in the absence of a profound love for people and the world. In the nurturing of such relationships, it is important to establish a rapport of inclusivity whereby students know the importance of their presence, whereby each voice is honored in the context of learning experiences.

Intersectionality is central in this pedagogical approach. Students learn to interrogate race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, ability, and age to identify privilege, power, and difference within the various strata of society, to keep them 'actively engaged' within the *pláticas* [108]. By building *confianza* through reciprocity with *pláticas* and dialogue, an understanding of co-laboring is affirmed and strengthened. It calls for teacher/learner collaboration to understand underlying issues and dilemmas in the creation of knowledge. These pedagogical praxes build upon prior knowledge—individual, communitarian, and collective—to evolve into holistic approaches to learning [109].

## 6. Trauma Informed Teaching (TIEP)

Trauma Informed Educational Practice (TIEP) relies on trauma informed (TI) pedagogical strategies. With the objective of closely aligning the learning community with social justice and human rights, TI argues that institutions of higher education must be reimagined as therapeutic communities [110]. It begins with the premise of safety in relation to the physical and emotional well-being of the individual and the learning community, whereby trustworthiness is cultivated in the learning experience as a form of support and connection. Throughout this experience, TI adheres to inclusivity and a shared purpose, while acknowledging trauma and addressing it, to act critically responsive by finding venues for healing [111]. To practice a TI lens, empathy, compassion, and sensitivity, must be cultivated so as not to retraumatize the person, by retriggering or reactivating traumatic life events.

For a trauma informed care approach, educators must gauge the complicated ways that traumatic experiences may be affecting the lives of students. Trauma is not a noticeable or fixed entity, but vast and fluid in definition; it is attributed to being upset or in distress, such that experiences result in trauma related symptoms. In education, a holistic approach must be utilized where a definition includes but it's not limited to boundary violations, betrayal, neglect, abuse, powerlessness, vulnerability, and objectification, and in many instances it is normalized and sanctioned through trusted authority figures [112].

Educators must have access to pedagogical theories and tools for addressing trauma, particularly as it may commonly impede learning and development. This calls for the preparation educators with specific non-deficit trauma informed pedagogies, which encumber the complexity of the human experience in the engagement of teaching/learning interactions [113–116].

## 7. Equity literacy

Equity literacy calls for teachers to be mindful of the dialectic of the oppression and domination that resides within schooling and its aim is to disrupt such practices that limit equity for students and their educational experiences. To deeply engage learners, educators must be self-reflexive about their social location and positionality, and be mindful of what is available and effective in the teaching/learning preparation of minoritized students. As an educator who aims to be culturally affirming and responsive, oppressed groups must be brought to the center of discussion so as to counteract the dominant discourse, without placing them in the position of experts but as co-creators of knowledge.

For future educators to become equity literate, they must be ready to confront deeply embedded mainstream ideologies normalized in everyday practices.

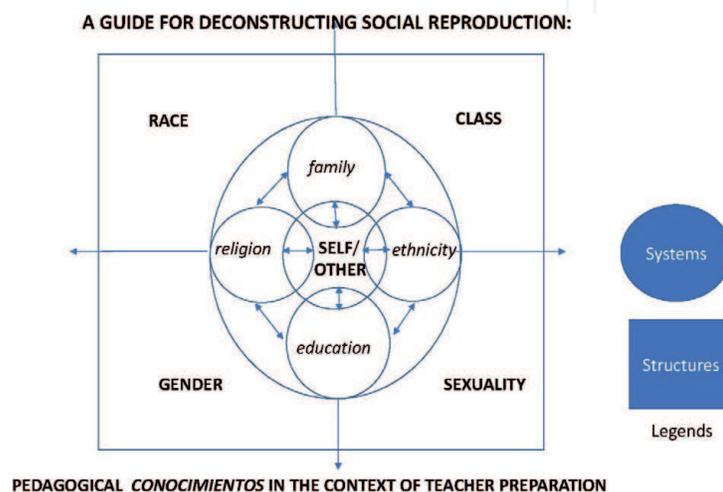
Teachers must necessarily consider the ways in which minoritized student behaviors, mindsets, and emotions, challenge assumptions of institutionalized racial presumptions as well as inequitable policies [117].

To create an inclusive environment that equally engages student experiences, and to incorporate the broader community, it has been suggested that educator's study and query institutional diversity efforts that are being implemented. What will these diversity efforts fix? Where are resources being directed to address equity? What are the school's diversity professional development efforts built around? Is diversity woven into curriculum? [118]. It must be pointed out that when progressive initiatives are not mindfully implemented, those who work in the institutions collude to reproduce and reinforce the very ideologies they intended to address. With equity literacy, learners/teachers become aware about the ways in which voices are disqualified, oftentimes quelling social justice as they challenge inequity [119].

Educators must have the necessary preparation to interact with students, so as to relate in multicultural, diverse, free, and just societies [120]. Toward that end, teacher must value multiple cultures, and disrupts hegemonic ideologies to promote equity, while shaping student positionalities and social locations within a social justice lens [121]. As such, educators must problematize the meaning of liberty and justice for all [122]. This preparation must include a constructive approach to patriotism, rather than masking it with racism [123]. It takes an act of courage and love to teach those who stand outside the norm and are perceived different as a point of unity [124].

## 8. Pedagogical *Conocimientos*

Through Chicana self-reflexive methodologies such as *conocimiento* and *testimonio*, learners identify privilege, power, and difference, and reflexively speak to their lived experiences. Through self-reflection, they critically analyze structures and systematic arrangements that impact students at individual and collective levels [125]. As Méndez-Negrete posits, pedagogical *conocimientos*, in teacher/learner interactions, engage self and other in the construction of knowledge as a social imperative that incorporates all cultures into the discussion [126]. Thus, teachers and learners engage themselves and others, thereby acquiring skills to participate and co-create as community-informed learners [127]. Méndez-Negrete illustrates the intersectionalities of critical consciousness in the creation of knowledge (see figure below).



To become self-reflexive and counter the cycle of racialized classism and other positionalities, learners must engage their early socialization [128]. Complete an analysis of four generations of their families' historical legacies of immigration, language, work, education, and religion to uncover the domination/oppression dialectic of experience [129]. Initially, this process allows students to claim their history and find the gaps in the knowledge they carry, relying on self-reflexivity to reclaim their legacies, and thus liberating themselves from the traumas [130–132]. As educators engage teacher/learner endeavors, they uncover and critically analyze their legacies to recognize and unpack the privileges and oppressions they faced, as well as to understand their place in society, beginning with their relationship to immigration and migration, as well as the time it takes to lay roots in a foreign country and the losses it implicates to leave ones past behind, providing a common point of experience. Unless they are Indigenous and not immigrants because they've always been here.

To understand their working-class origins, teachers/students must also learn about their work history legacies, as it makes visible the sacrifices that have been made by previous generations. This has the potential to cultivate critical empathy and compassion in relating to the struggles of recent immigrants [133]. Language loss and devaluation is another teaching/learning tool.

Teachers may map their privilege in relation to their place in history, by understanding the human capital that allowed them to acquire their education. Finally, teachers may be able to engage ideologies that have influenced their beliefs about education which are directly related to religion. In the cultivation of critical dialogue through *pláticas*, and *conocimiento* as a self-reflexive methodology, students must engage their ancestral lived experiences, including their own upbringing, by writing about it and sharing these narratives with peers, but only when they have processed it and have become comfortable with the knowledge they have culled.

## 9. *Testimonios y Reflecciones*

Students talk about their lived experience in the context of their sociohistorical reality, often implicating their coming to knowledge about oppression, domination and subordination. Part and parcel of this dialogic implicates the ability to reflect on one's own experiences, as such [*reflecciones* are expressed as self-reflexive thought in the examination of their lives with the intent of creating change]. Within this approach, they are empowered by the narrative of their own experiences [134]. *Testimonio* is a vehicle for an individual act of having seen or personally experiencing a social state that departs from the individual to intersect with the collective [135]. Thus, they arrive at an epistemological consciousness regarding the critical importance for minoritized students to use their cultural intuition as an instrument that facilitates their social consciousness in the context of the intersectionality of experiences as community of learners [136, 137]. Such self-reflexive pedagogical and methodological tools offer the potential to unearth deeply embedded historical traumas and provides teachers/learners spiritual healing. Through *testimoniando*—or collaborative community discourse—learners/teachers come to self and community knowledge, enriching learning experiences through self-reflection. *Testimonios* serve to problem solve and advocate for others and their respective community rights [138].

*Testimonio* and *conocimientos* create the space for critical reflection and self-examination for students from diverse backgrounds to identify and ask meaningful questions that derive from the heart [139, 140]. This enables critical empathy in understanding and activates critical compassion and transformation through a heightened social consciousness for the common good and to change the world.

## 10. Discussion

Demographics changes into the 21st century will not render obsolete the traditional philosophies of schooling, particularly as these pertain to contemporary sustained factory model schooling that has closely aligned with notions of productivity where diverse immigrant languages, cultures, and identities are viewed as barriers. These pedagogical approaches have viewed student populations as homogenous units where teachers deliver content by lecturing, expecting students to regurgitate the acquired knowledge through rote memorization, whereby schooling is a favorable technology for the coercive assimilation of immigrants. Such practices have been found to be class biased and reproduce white-middle class privilege. Thus, social mobility through the promise of schooling has become a taken for granted outcome for the majority as the academic achievement gap widens. Currently, educational equality is a delusion.

Critical pedagogues, in addressing the social reproduction of inequality, propose equity literacy in the preparation of educators within credential programs. The legacies of Anglo-conformity and Americanization through schooling must be contested, problematized, and shelved as historical artifacts. Race, class, gender, language, sexual orientation, and perceived ability have been historically justified as barriers of exclusion and these practices must cease.

The historical relationship between student and teachers have generationally instilled fear and stress, with the dread of falling out of societal expectations, or of being labeled a failure in justifying a permanent underclass. These practices must be excised from the classroom, to create a liberatory practice of schooling that values each and every student as teachers/learners in the educational environment. To do this and humanize each other's histories and cultures, teachers/learners must recognize the differences amongst them, as they embrace a common point of engagement in the schooling of future citizens.

## 11. Conclusion

To mediate teaching and understanding, Chicana/o critical pedagogues emphasize the centrality of departing from divergent ways of knowing. They incorporate social justice in the context of intersecting oppressions, and rely on self-reflexive methodologies to humanize the learning experience.

Such pedagogical practices call for acts of love and healing when unearthing and expunging the internalized historical traumas and prejudices that have permeated throughout schooling institutions. Thus, to implement non-oppressive learning, educators must rely on self-reflection, as they examine their own historical trajectories. Engage self-knowledge as vulnerable humans moving towards the co-creation and cultivation of empowered community learners. This requires *platicando* or actively communicating and listening to access and validation of experiences of those who are marginalized as well as dominant communities, to serve as lenses for learning through equity literacy. Furthermore, educators must engage a critical empathy to understand the compassion to act for the common good, in partnership with learners [141–143].

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