

RESEARCH STATEMENT

Diversity and multiculturalism in education through the lens of critical pedagogy are at the center of my research interests in order to address social equity and justice. My research work privileges qualitative methods as I advocate for seeking in-depth understandings and meanings of phenomena as people experienced them. I strongly believe that qualitative inquiry allows a researcher to establish a deeper connection, and thus, to acquire a more thorough understanding of research participants. Drawing on theorist such as Paulo Freire, Joe Kincheloe, bell hooks, Gloria Anzaldúa, Sonia Nieto, and Guadalupe Valdes among others, and integrating varied theoretical frameworks such as critical theory, critical pedagogy, Chicana feminist epistemology, and a constructivist approach to education, my goal in researching is the construction of intersubjectivity between participants, the context of the research, the readers, and myself.

My research agenda highlights two of my academic passions: home-school-community relationships, and women's issues, particularly intersectionality. The first of my interests involves exploring ways to incorporate community and local contexts into the lives of students and the school curricula, both within and outside school sites. I am concerned with ways in which teachers could use parents' and students' funds of knowledge as they integrate students' lived experiences in the learning process. I have approached this topic from different perspectives. My dissertation explored the experiences of Latina immigrant mothers who are raising or have raised children in the American culture. I describe how mothers unfold what I called a cultural curriculum of the home. Particularly, I highlighted the differences between *educación*, as the ways of being and doing (funds of knowledge) that a person acquires at home from mothers' teaching, and education, as instructed by formal schooling. I believe *educación* is many times disregarded as an important input in the learning process, and schools could gain significant insights if they are more open to include it in their curriculum. I intend to continue exploring this topic by investigating the other side of the story. My dissertation describes significant aspects at the core of the cultural curriculum of the home such as language, family bonds, and cultural consciousness. As classroom become spaces in which multiple cultures and realities coexist, so it grows the need of pedagogical practices that promote inclusive, comprehensive, and collaborative learning not only among students, but also extended to the community. By integrating home and school perspectives, I aim to find better ways to bridge the gap between the two main sites in which a child develops. To further advance this research, I plan to include the perspectives of K-12 teachers to examine what is the conceptualization of parent involvement and the ways in which they integrate the cultural curriculum of the home into the school curriculum. In addition, I currently am working on getting the students' voices as well, to better understand how they perceived the role of the *educación* they acquired at home, and in what ways they use it in their learning process. Furthermore, I propose to expand my dissertation research to including women from different cultural backgrounds by exploring what components of the cultural curriculum of the home are consistent across diverse cultures and which ones are unique or distinctive to a specific cultural group.

My second academic passion reflected in my research encompasses studying issues related to multiculturalism. I believe that gender, culture, race/ethnicity, language, class, and social contexts are critical in impacting the way a person understands the world and construes his/her personal ways of knowing. I am especially interested in searching ways to promote equity and social

justice, as well as in creating opportunities to develop empowerment and agency so minorities could be better prepared to challenge the hegemonic social structures that prevent them to fully realize their potential as active co-constructors of the society in which they live. In this sense, I am attentive to decolonizing, post/anti/colonial perspectives as they examine the social, cultural, and political structures that sustain power relations and unequal conditions. I want to identify possibilities of using these theoretical perspectives in more practical and concrete situations in order to provide specific opportunities to marginalized groups. In doing so, I have been collaborating for three years with a research group focused on the uses of testimonio in U.S.- based education research and we plan to continue our scholarly efforts.

My research and social justice goals merge as I want to bring diverse and multicultural issues from the margins to the center of hegemonic discourse to construct inclusive education and a democratic and just society.