

A Living Curriculum of Orgullo

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TODAY'S LIVING CONTEXT is full of inconsistencies and paradoxes, and such ambiguities require individuals to be in constant change. We position ourselves from the premise that identity is a complex construction involving an indefinite contextual process of morphed availability (Calderon, O'Donald, & Reynolds 2013). This process of identity (re)(de)construction occurs intrinsically associated to personal lived experiences. Accordingly, as every person makes sense of the particular experiences in the context in which they occurred, he or she is (re)shaping his or her identity. The changes that a person undergoes are in conversation with his or her positionality in relation with mainstream ideology that permeates the US context. The social and cultural background of a person determines the way he or she is perceived and treated. In turn, the kind of opportunities he or she will have access to shapes the way in which he or she constructs the intricacy of the self. In this paper, we claim the necessity to provide open spaces in the curriculum and in all areas of potential learning where one can discuss and make sense of these identity complexities. We argue that the lived experiences that propel an individual to (re)(de)construct his or her identity are at the core of a living curriculum. When composing a living curriculum an individual must take into account his or her roots and origins, the present moment and context, and the goals to achieve. In so doing, the person embraces his or her cultural background and should be proud of it; that is what entails a living curriculum of *orgullo*.

First, we present a framework for the creation of a living curriculum and proceed to describe some ways to provide opportunities for its development, including an example of how it did happen to one of us. Next, we elucidate the importance of embracing *orgullo* as it intertwines in the diverse ways of unfolding a living curriculum. Following, we provide two examples of educators who implement the development of living curriculums. Last, we discuss the significance of such living curriculum of *orgullo*, and advocate for the inclusion of spaces in which all students – but particularly those at the margins – are encouraged to explore and develop their own.

Framing a Living Curriculum

Curriculum Studies considers the social, cultural, and political context of the learning process and pays particular attention to issues of equity, access, and voice. Furthermore, this field does not limit the understanding of curriculum to what happens in schools but accounts and questions the places and spaces where any production and acquisition of knowledge occurs in order to uncover, and deconstruct oppressive and marginalizing epistemologies that are overshadowed in educational practices.

Several scholars (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, and Taubman, 1995; Malewski, 2010) assert that curriculum theory provides educational possibilities to reflect more profoundly on one's individual experiences and situations. Yet, scholarly works within Curriculum Studies still are noticeably pervasive, and profoundly influenced by white scholars and their interpretations, overlooking the presence, knowledge, and experiences of people of color. Gatzambide-Fernández & Murad (2011), Tuck & Gatzambide-Fernández (2013), and Brown & Au (2014), have called for the browning of the field as they observed how the previous reconceptualization emerged from the dominant culture perspective diminishing the significant contributions of scholars of color in a variety of fields. The plausible incorporation of new and innovative epistemologies and methods that have been developed and enacted by marginalized groups render us all with an afresh polymorphic (re)(de)construction of not only the field of Curriculum Studies but the way in which the world is viewed through newfound inquiries and approaches.

Pinar et.al (1995) highlight the different ways to approach curriculum and incite educators to understand curriculum as a text that intersects ethnicity, race, culture, gender, class, and political effects, as it impacts individual's ways of being in the world. Therefore, when analyzing and enacting curriculum one must account for the lived experiences and avoid the fragmentation of an individual's identity because one could marginalize and minimize the kaleidoscopic essence of his or her personhood. This aspect is intrinsically relevant when a person enacts a living curriculum that aims to analyze one's background.

In various fields, women of color have impacted the perception of those marginalized by race, gender, class, and ethnicity and their positionality within the curriculum (i.e., bell hooks, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Gloria Anzaldúa, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, among others.) Trinh T. Minh-ha (1989) tells us about the importance of the individual's creation of his or her curriculum,

You who understand the dehumanization of forced removal-relocation-reeducation-redefinition, the humiliation of having to falsify your own reality, your voice – you know. And often cannot say it. You try to unsay it, for if you don't, they will not fail to fill in the blanks on your behalf, and you will be said. (p. 80)

The notion of curriculum that we conceptualize for this postulation entails a wide range of experiences that influence the way in which an individual develops a personal, social, cultural, racial, political, and professional self throughout his or her life. An individual's lived experiences occur in the multiplicity and intersectionality of his/her existence which varies from situation to situation, from one context to another, according to the people with whom he or she interacts, the location where those interactions take place, and so on. Those experiences are the foundation for the creation of subjectivity, which differentiates the sense of self that forms and shapes a person's identity. Enclosed in this understanding, we need to recognize the rapid globalization and interconnection of today's world. We must consider the ways in which the local and the global are co-constructed and influenced by new technologies, social media, trans-politics, and culturally

diverse encounters because this contributes and alters the information that creates knowledge about each person's life. Consequently, the individual acquires a level of understanding regarding the self that provides insights and wisdom and that affects how the self will develop, grow, and respond to the social context it inhabits.

It is essential to look at previous efforts in curriculum that have worked toward the affirmation of an individual's complex existence. William Pinar (2004) introduces *currere* -the infinitive form of the Latin noun curriculum- as a way to approach curriculum from an autobiographical standpoint. Pinar (2004) explains:

The method of *currere* conceptualized curriculum from course objectives to complicated conversation with oneself (as a "private" intellectual), an ongoing project of self-understanding in which one becomes mobilized for engaged pedagogical action—as a private-and-public intellectual – with others in the social reconstruction of the public sphere. (p. 35-37)

Sankofa (Hanley, 2011) is another proposition an individual can adopt when expressing a personal curriculum. *Sankofa* derives from the Akan language of Ghana and proposes the opportunity an individual has to reach back into one's past to (re)capture and (re)evaluate what one lost, what one had to diminished, or what was taken away from the person in order to develop the present self. In this manner, both *currere* and *sankofa* are similar, but embedded in *sankofa* is the necessary evaluation of aggressions that have marginalized and oppressed the self. *Sankofa* and *currere* expect the person to reflect upon the internalization of these attacks and validate the efforts that have come to pass in order to endure those experiences that ultimately had to be questioned and analyzed. As a result, a person can have a better understanding of issues related to race, gender, class, and ethnicity because these methods allow the individual to measure the repercussion the self has endured in the process of (re)(de)constructing the self. It is with this encouraging cacophony of curricular efforts that we invite educators to create the necessary conditions for the creation of a living curriculum.

Developing a Living Curriculum

*A living curriculum is personal and social,
engaging all elements of a person's life.
(Kissling, 2012, p. 111)*

The development of a living curriculum will permit the individual to express him or herself fully and form an authentic dialogical relationship not only with other individuals and their epistemologies, but also with other contexts that influence his or her lived experience. An individual's living curriculum is under constant (re)(de)construction and (re)evaluation. In that sense, we conceptualize a living curriculum as a personal opportunity to engage in praxis in order to participate with the world and the word (Freire, 1970). Therefore, every living curriculum is a personal endeavor that is, as mentioned, in constant flux. To comprehend lived experiences and transfer them to the core of a living curriculum, one must deliberately engage in the development of conceptual tools to actively participate in the world (Freire, 1970). As educators, we believe that each person should start by developing and enhancing at least three components of this living curriculum: voice, safe spaces, and *querencia*, as we deem these essential aspects that nurture personal and cultural identity. These components are critical tools that will allow the individual to

engross in praxis. Such praxis is intrinsically personal; in other words, there cannot be two identical praxes which asserts and proves our unique ways of (re)(de)constructing our world. Following, we broadly describe how we envision these three components interrelating and promoting a living curriculum.

Voice is essential but gaining voice does not mean that a person simply speaks. Having voice implies a critical and reflexive process that results in thorough thought. Thus, acquiring voice means that an individual consciously commits him or herself to stand up for a cause and speak against unjust and oppressive tactics and rhetoric. In this sense, it is necessary for a person to gain voice, rather than achieving voice through someone else. Some people might be in a position to provide the right conditions or facilitate spaces and platforms for others to speak. However, acquiring voice is a personal action and is crucial to the process of enacting a living curriculum that embraces issues of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, language, or any other issue used to separate rather than integrate. This personal voice must find a target audience and in this way, the ideas gathered in the speech and engaged in dialogues will be nurtured and challenged. The individual must seek spaces where his or her message will resonate and has the possibility to bring awareness and action to a specific issue. Consequently, another tool that one needs to develop is the ability to find or create those spaces where one's differences are valued and appreciated as opposed to being the cause for marginalization. The enactment of a living curriculum will permit the individual to express his or her voice by enhancing dialogical relationships in order to complicate and expose spaces in which one can question the dominant rhetoric and continue to(re)(de)construct one's view of the world.

A living curriculum provides the possibility of engaging with a mosaic of personal experiences that endorse self and communal growth and simultaneously challenge rigid and hegemonic notions of personhood in communion with others. Those experiences eventually find ways to express their meaning and are shared through one's enactment of voice either as a way of liberating or as a way of resisting oppressive situations. Subsequently, personal experiences laid the foundation for the advancement and creation of a living curriculum as a space in which an individual can develop intellectually, culturally, personally, spiritually, and academically. Those experiences do not occur in isolation; they are situated in a specific context. Therefore, another tool a person must acquire is a sense of place and the relations that place has with an individual's experiences. De Veaux indicates, "(You) have to understand what your place as an individual is and the person who is close to you. You have to understand the space between you before you can understand more complex or larger groups" (as cited in Ault, 2008, p.54). We use the term *querencia* to refer to the understanding of the individual's kinship to place and space in combination with the powerful psychological connections to one's image and vision of the place and space one wishes to occupy. Ault (2008). maintains that "Having a sense of place means achieving knowledge of the inhabited world, from many perspectives, for the sake of bettering self and society, for the sake of equity" (p. 610). *Querencia* reinforces the individual's commitment for praxis, impacts the origin of his/her voice, and morphs the meaning of places and spaces one makes use of as outlets for one's message.

We emphasize that a living curriculum is dynamic, ongoing, and constantly unfolding. Kissling (2012) asserts that a living curriculum is an individual developing a course of learning experiences. One is not able to use all experiences when facing a particular challenge or situation. Rather, the individual like in a mosaic, gathers the necessary pieces represented as experiences, in order to create the impact and the change the person wishes to provoke. Thus, a living curriculum is enacted when a person gives meaning to his or her life experiences in relation to the context in

which they occurred and according to the intellectual tools he or she possesses at the moment, to critically analyze its impact on his/her self. The attainment and understanding of these tools is essential for a valuable process when engaging with the creation of a living curriculum. We call on educators to be open, creative, and sympathetic by providing students with opportunities to reflect on their personal experiences away from polluted rhetoric that negates and invalidates their living curriculum. We advocate for educators to harvest places and spaces filled with *querencia* where students can analyze and reflect how their experiences have transformed, shaped, and influenced the self. Such opportunities will allow students to better understand how they have composed and (re)(de)constructed their identity, and how the social context has impacted the process. In this manner, the students will be using their personal experiences not only to become part of the learning process but also to enhance it through the acquisition of a voice that will empower them and lead them to praxis.

Our goal here is to offer suggestions about how to seek such spaces in which a living curriculum might take place and propose ideas and metaphors that relate to this endeavor. We encourage educators to understand the enactment of this living curriculum as a personal dialogical task within a supportive community. Connelly & Clandinin (1990) affirmed, “Miller, Noddings, and Hogan all agree that time, relationships, space, and voice are prerequisites for collaborative work” (p. 524). Furthermore, they assert, “There is no better way to study curriculum than to study ourselves” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p.31). For this reason, here we present a vignette about how one of us came to experience a living curriculum. In the following section, we introduce a vignette about how one of us came to unveiling a living curriculum,

One day towards the beginning of the semester and a few minutes before class began; Dr. S came into class and walked to where I was sitting with a few other students and slid a book across the table towards me. I caught it, picked it up, and turned to glare at her in confusion. She told me to open it to a certain page and to read it to the class. This was not the norm but I was not shaken by the request, hell, I do this to my students all time, so I just thought it was karma getting back at me. I held the book between my hands to the page she had asked me to read and began. After a few lines, I became very conscious of what I was reading. This text intertwined words in Spanish, which is my first language, and this made me wonder if I should, could, or needed to translate these words to the rest of the class which did not speak Spanish. I decided not to worry about making that decision and just read and listen to my voice echo the words. Slowly, the words I was uttering reached depths in me that I had kept hidden, protected from others and from the pain and hurt that had been done to me. When I finish the section, Dr. S thanked me and promptly looked to another student and asked him or her a question regarding what I had just read. Meanwhile, I sat there frozen, drowning in a flood of polymorphous emotions. I tried to get myself together and be present for class but the words I had read kept pulling me back to a limbo of uncertainty. My eyes wonder the room in my attempt to pay attention to the class, but I just could not. After a while I notice that Dr. S was also watching me, but it was more like she was keeping a vigil over me. She did not expect me to say or add anything; she was just watching me deal with the emotions that reading the passage had caused me.

At the end of the three-hour class, Dr. S approached me and I bombarded her with a series of questions. What was this thing she made me read? Who was the author? Where did

she find it? What else did she know? I wanted her to tell me everything and instead she simply responded that she knew that I needed to read it and to please take the book with me. That was all. I sat there stunned for the second time in a few hours. The gaze and smile she gave me at that moment became constant in my life. It accompanied and guided me until Dr. S passed away. You see, the couple of semesters that I spent with her prior to this moment were preparing us both for each other. Dr. S was getting to know me and trying to figure out what I needed to be exposed to in order to become myself. She found material that could open the gateway that I had sealed, even from my own self, which inhibit me from being my true being.

This might be difficult to understand, or perhaps even sound like a cliché, if you have never felt marginalized, isolated, or diminished, but I became anew. I felt welcome, appreciated, empowered. I had ideas to share, important points to make, and I was heard. Dr. S provided me with a space where I could speak my own voice. With her help, guidance, and support, I was able to understand that I did not need to live a compartmentalized life that I could and needed to be my complete self. This is how I engaged in the connection of the different pieces of my life that make me infinite and that provides me the opportunity to seek places and spaces where I could learn and continue to evolve in a constant (re)evaluation and (re)imagination of my duty, capability, and potential.

We believe educators interested and invested in supporting students' diversity and complexity will benefit greatly by taking the time to become more attentive to the students and their needs. This will provide both, educator and students, with opportunities to enact a living curriculum and, in doing so, embrace a personalized a sense of *orgullo*.

The Contours of *Orgullo*

Take inventory...pero es difcil differentiating between lo heredado, lo adquirido, lo impuesto... this step is a conscious rupture with all oppressive traditions of all cultures and religions. She reinterprets history and using new symbols, she shapes new myths. She adopts new perspectives... she strengthens her tolerance (and intolerance) for ambiguity. She is willing to share, to make herself vulnerable to foreign ways of seeing and thinking. She surrenders all notions of safety, of the familiar. She becomes a náhuatl, able to transform...She learns to transform the small "I" into the total Self.

Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 104-105

As we have been conveying, a living curriculum emerges through the analysis and reflection of personal lived experiences. In that way, a living curriculum is intrinsically an individualized process and we proposed that it must be founded in the notion of *orgullo*. The term *orgullo* here goes far beyond a simplistic translation of being or feeling proud. *Orgullo* recapitulates the wholeness of the person, embracing all that is valued, necessary, significant, and meaningful to the existence of the individual. *Orgullo* solidifies the essence of the person and harvests the fluidity of the self, its multiplicity, intersectionality, and interconnectivity. With a living curriculum of *orgullo*, one celebrates the contradictions and the sense of unbalance that a *mestiza consciousness* (Anzaldúa, 1987) brings to the individual. This living curriculum of *orgullo* demands deep analysis and critical reflection (*currere*) that leads the individual to make meaning

and gain a better understanding of how his or her experiences shaped or influenced the person he or she is now (*sankofa*.) Making sense of the impact these lived experiences have had on the person is a basic condition to enact any living curriculum.

A second requirement consists in identifying or being aware of the challenges, barriers, and borders the individual must cross and overcome. Since every person has had different lived experiences or make sense of each lived experience in a different way, delimitating how to implement, create, or evaluate a living curriculum of *orgullo* will contradict the very core of a curriculum of this nature. However, we want to emphasize the need for the three characteristics, previously mentioned, that promote this type of curriculum: voice, safe spaces, and *querencia*. These components will permit the individual to seek and express their *orgullo* while (re)(de)constructing the self. This living curriculum of *orgullo* propels the individual to move from a location of silence, erasure, and pain toward a place where he or she can (re)(de)construct the self because he or she expects, desires, and awaits constant change. A living curriculum of *orgullo* is an ongoing personal process; thus nobody else can set goals or determine specific steps in order to create it. Although, we contend that a person must go beyond personal advancement and remember that one is potentially building a path for others that might experience similar circumstances but have not gained full conscious awareness of their situation. The intersection of personal curriculums of *orgullo* create and promote possibilities that can provide a person with the conditions and space to produce change, think about alternate ways of engaging with others, and keep growing in one's own and communal *orgullo*.

The living curriculum of *orgullo* that we are proposing is fundamentally grounded in the theories and methodologies introduced by Gloria Anzaldúa. In the quote opening this section, we catch a glimpse of the concepts Anzaldúa advocates in order for an individual to claim his or her position in the world. The main concepts we draw from Anzaldúa's work to frame a living curriculum of *orgullo* are *mestiza consciousness* and *la facultad*. *Mestiza consciousness* is the "she" Anzaldúa names in the quote above and it is "*la consciencia de la mestiza*," the consciousness a person acquires when he or she is in contact with different cultures, groups, classes, and social contexts at the same time. *Mestiza consciousness* aims to break the duality of the modern rhetoric imposed on our lives and proposes a newfound awareness that allows one to travel and juggle life while living among different worlds simultaneously. Anzaldúa (1987) writes:

La mestiza constantly has to shift out of habitual formations; from convergent thinking, analytical reasoning that tends to use rationality to move toward a single goal (a Western mode), to divergent thinking, characterized by movement away from set patterns and goals and toward a more whole perspective, one that includes rather than excludes. (p. 101)

Mestiza consciousness grants the individual the possibility to live in contradiction and helps him or her accept the discomfort that discrepant messages delineate because he or she learns not to hold ideas or concepts in rigid categories or definitions. *Mestiza consciousness* is "an act of kneading, of uniting and joining" (Anzaldúa 1987, p.103). Developing a *mestiza consciousness* is an ongoing process in which the individual will face moments of confusion and doubt. This kind of consciousness allows the person to find their sense of *orgullo* within the place and space they inhabit and propels them to facilitate safe spaces in which they can acquire their voice and the acquisition of a new inclusive perspective.

Anzaldúa also introduces the concept of *Nepantla*. This is a liminal space, a space in between, which the *mestiza* can inhabit in order to withdraw from the cacophony of contradiction and chaos, from the clashing and crashing, *el choque*, that can lead to despair and confusion. When the self enters *Nepantla*, this place of reconciliation and acceptance, under a rhetoric of heteroglossia that allows for the coexistence of multiple ways of inhabiting the world, *la mestiza* is able to obtain *la facultad*. Anzaldúa defines,

La facultad is the capacity to see in surface phenomenon the meaning of deeper realities, to see the deep structures below the surface. It is an instant “sensing,” a quick perception arrived at without conscious reasoning... The one possessing this sensitivity is excruciatingly alive to the world. (1987, p. 60)

Developing *la facultad* allows a person to acquire the ability to discern the dominant rhetoric that labels the self according to socially constructed categories that disregard the personal and unique background of each individual. *La facultad* and its distinctive ability allows the person to embrace a sense of *orgullo* and gain agency in order to help others and the self in the act of praxis. Anzaldúa (1987) adds, “Knowledge makes me more aware, it makes me more conscious. ‘Knowing’ is painful because after ‘it’ happens I can’t stay in the same place and be comfortable. I am no longer the same person I was before” (p. 70). This painful way of living does not aggravate the *mestiza*. To the contrary, it strengthens her. Anzaldúa further declares that is *conocimiento*, which is the knowledge embedded in experiences, what the *mestiza* gathers while crossing the worlds she dwells in. This *conocimiento* develops into an epistemology that envisions new ways of existing in the world. The kind of *conocimiento* that is acquired through a living curriculum of *orgullo*. The *mestiza* in her *consciousness*, stands as an amorphous being that is decentered and has moved away from oppressive, marginalized, and divisive rhetoric that has suffocated her possibilities and development. Still, it is imperative that change begins with the self, and this is a personal laborious task.

Significant to pursuing the construction of a living curriculum of *orgullo* is the attainment of spaces that allow the development of *mestiza consciousness*. Such spaces are pivotal to the advancement of individuals in the process of self-actualization. One would have to engage in deep reflection, critical analysis, and self-evaluation to be able to make sense of the changes he or she has undergone. Such reflections might occur in *Nepantla*, where the self dwells in a safe and protected place in order to analyze one’s lived experiences. This space also presents the opportunity to take advantage of *currere* and/or *sankofa* in order to understand what one has (re)defined and (re)configured within the self in order to account for the discomfort and distress that this (re)(de)construction has caused. It is pivotal to recognize that others, and even the self, may not always recognize the changes or see them as positive. Actually, these adjustments could be perceived as counterproductive in the process and how one reacts toward them might create confusion and resentment. The person may agonize about some of the issues that are modifying what is of value at the core of the self. Still, we believe that a *mestiza* armed with her newfound *conocimiento*, empowered by *la facultad* harbored in *Nepantla*, emerges *orgullosa* as an agent of change engaged in praxis. *La mestiza* stands with a new gained voice, necessary component to embrace *orgullo*, in order to communicate to the world how one has changed and how one’s agency has evolved. This task may seem daunting for someone just becoming aware of his or her consciousness, and the duty that this recent awareness brings to the person is challenging. Audre Lorde advises us, “Of course I am afraid, because the transformation of silence into language and

action is an act of self-revelation, and that always seems fraught with danger” (as cited in Collins, 2000, p. 104).

Another significant tool in this process of analyzing lived experiences and developing *mestiza consciousness* is the practice of *confesión*. *Confesión*, the way we chose to describe it, goes beyond the religious ritual or the legal process that most are familiar with; although, the religious and spiritual aspect of confession does not need to be divorced from this process. Klenck (2004) writes,

Confession is, in essence, a relation-building project, even though it may often feel like a tearing apart of something. If you think of a time when you had something to confess which felt painful or dangerous, part of the inner drama was the fear that by confessing you would be destroying something precious and necessary to your survival... inner, personal truths set us free to think and feel outside our complexes and, in turn, set those around us free to interact with us in new and more related ways. (p. 142)

We conceived *confesión* as part of a living curriculum of *orgullo*. *Confesión* is an act of liberation in which one is able to voice the pain, sorrow, and confusion that one has suffered, caused, or endured when crossing borders in order to free the self from those past aggressions. María Zambrano (2007) tells us,

La confesión surge de ciertas situaciones. Porque hay situaciones en que la vida ha llegado al extremo de confusión y de dispersión... Precisamente cuando el hombre ha sido demasiado humillado, cuando se ha cerrado en el rencor, cuando sólo siente sobre sí <el peso de la existencia>, necesita entonces que su propia vida se le revele. Y para lograrlo ejecuta el doble movimiento propio de la confesión: el de la huida de sí, y el de buscar algo que le sostenga y aclare.

Confession emerges from certain situations. Because in certain situations, life has arrived at an extreme place of confusion and despair... Precisely when the person has been humiliated enough, when he has closed himself within ill-feelings, when he only feels the pressure, the weight of his existence, he needs then for his life to be revealed to him. And to be successful at this task, he performs the double-movement inherent to confession: the escape of the self, and the search for something that can sustain and provide clarity (p.32).

In enacting a living curriculum of *orgullo*, we embrace *confesión* as the threshold that allows us to enter into an open dialogue with others and with the self in order to express and (re)count the damage and impact that *golpes* (blows and punches) the self, the body, the spirit, and the psyche have had to sustain in order to establish more truthful and meaningful relationships fundamentally embedded on reciprocity. It will be in the communal verbalization of the *confesión* that the individual will have the opportunity to find what sustains him or her. The reiteration of those *golpes* will lead one toward the opportunity of reconciliation with the self in relation with others. As educators, we must recognize that *confesión* is connected to deep personal roots and this may not be something that some students want to be engaged in with us or not yet be willing to share with others. The creation and availability of safe spaces is an imperative condition that is

essential to a learning community that is committed to the formulation of living curriculums of *orgullo*. Hence, we must endorse possibilities for *confesión* to happen and be open to the gift that everyone would receive if we partake in the process of liberation that such *confesión* promises. The acceptance of one's and others' trespasses will give one the clarity to express to the world who one is and what is important to the self. *Confesión* allows the emergence of *orgullo* and this empowers the individual in the process of personal and communal transformation.

Creando Posibilidades in Education

Tears were flowing freely as Hispanic women used this ritual to reveal themselves, their failures, fears, dreams, and expectations. Here they did not have to “translate” themselves in any way. Here, in the safe space provided by this ritual, they had not need to pretend, for they were with others who accepted them even without full understanding. Here in this safe space many recovered their voices, voices silenced by the marginality that we suffer as Hispanic...
(Isasi-Díaz, 1996, p. 197)

The quotation opening this section describes a space constructed by the sharing of ritual and faith among Hispanic women. This example attests to the possibilities and necessity to create places and spaces in which individuals, particularly those labeled as minorities, can explore, propose, advance, and enact their living curriculum of *orgullo*. As educators that are open to understanding and celebrating the plurality and diversity of students, we must promote the creation of spaces in which people are able to transcend their present subjugated state and become the individuals they are meant to be. If in our teaching practices we refuse, are hesitant, or unwilling to offer opportunities for students to investigate the roots of their *orgullo* to (re)(de)construct their sense of self, we will be guilty of denying them the opportunity to experience a democratic autonomous life, and will be accomplice of sustaining a hegemonic system.

To facilitate the enactment of a living curriculum of *orgullo*, an educator must start by understanding the learners' individual lived experience and provide support for the foreseen impediments and confusion this process brings. As previously stated, the living curriculum of *orgullo* that we are proposing cannot be prescribed in anticipation because all involved in this effort are continuously and consciously co-constructing such curriculum. Nonetheless, it is necessary to encourage students to become active participants in the process of enacting a living curriculum of this kind. This (re)(de)construction process is compulsory due to the uniqueness of the individual's life experiences that are at the core of this kind of curriculum. A living curriculum validates, aids, and celebrates the experiences that the individual wants or needs to reflect upon depending on the situation that he or she is facing or struggling with at a particular moment.

A clear example of creating conditions and offering space for the developing of a living curriculum of *orgullo* could be seen in the work of Curtis Acosta, a leader teacher who developed the Mexican American Studies (MAS) program in Tucson, Arizona¹. Unfortunately, this program was terminated by the state in 2012. Acosta's curriculum for this program (2007, 2012, 2013) explored an individuals' cultural group, which it is usually positioned at the margins by a traditional curriculum. The development of one's cultural relevance and cultural competence facilitates one's critical understanding of the self. This can lead the individual into questioning social justice issues that impact his or her community's advancement in a more profound manner.

¹For a more complete representation of Curtis Acosta's work, please visit www.preciousknowledgefilm.com
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One of the tools that Acosta used in order to create a safe space for students to explore and create what we call a living curriculum of *orgullo* was the Mayan saying: *In Lak'Ech*, “you are my other me.” Acosta (2012) described it as the embodiment and guiding principle of his classes which he used daily to remind students of “how [they] should embrace the world” (p. 17). He also avows for a strong emphasis on students’ voice as a component that facilitates engagement and empowerment. Acosta (Acosta & Mir, 2012) demonstrates how his program impacted not only Chicano students, but also students from other cultural background such as Asiya Mir, his Pakistani-American co-author.

Lastly, another tool that we consider meaningful for students to enact a living curriculum of *orgullo* is *testimonio*. We endorse and exalt *testimonio* as a narrative tool that aids the expression of the complexity of the process that one must embark on when the person is composing one’s living curriculum of *orgullo*. *Testimonio* enhances a living curriculum of *orgullo* because it provides an outlet for the individual to present and expose the trials and tribulations he or she experienced while in the process of identity(re)(de)construction. Sharing one’s *testimonio* propels the individual into praxis and instills the duty to become an agent of change. Presenting one’s *testimonio* strengthens the person’s commitment to evolve into an ally that is willing to support others’ emergence in the process of change seeking reconciliation for ourselves and for others. Rebeca Burciaga (Burciaga & Cruz Navarro, 2015) describes how, as a professor, she uses *testimonio* as an educational tool in her undergraduate seminar class. The authors define *testimonio* as an epistemology of the storyteller and recognize it as a significant source of personal knowledge. Burciaga explains how she understands experiential knowledge as an intellectual resource and thus brings it to her classes. Using *testimonio* as pedagogy, she asked students to write an educational *testimonio* tracing their own educational development and contextualizing it in juxtaposition to social science theories, quantitative data from national public data sets, and relevant social policies. Cruz Navarro, as a student in that class at the time, recounts how analyzing her life experiences and background she learned to trust her familial and community values and see them as assets personally and professionally. Burciaga and Cruz Navarro (2015) also reflect on *testimonio* as critical pedagogy and identify two components to inform their work in the academia: 1) they view educational *testimonio* as intergenerational process that challenges traditional models of mentorship, and 2) the process of creating an educational *testimonio* helped in making sense of who they were and who they were becoming through identifying crucial experiences that influenced personal and professional lives. The work of Burciaga on *testimonio* (2007, 2012, 2015) has revealed significant implications for the education field, such as the relevance of integrating students’ experiences in the curriculum, including diverse backgrounds in readings or course assignments that increase critical thinking and the essential role of educators in supporting the students’ exploration of themselves.

If educators include a guiding process of writing *testimonio* that is drenched in *querencia* into their classrooms, these places can become spaces, as Pendleton Jiménez (2006) envisioned, “It is that space carved out by our people where we can think, love, desire, create art, dance, eat, sing, and learn in safety... We need any safe space we can get our hands on” (p. 226); similar to the space that Acosta offered to his students. As teachers, we must demand the freedom to create these spaces and places in order to provide our students with the liberty to question the cultural and social context in which they live. As learners, we should be given opportunities to know how to demand and create such spaces and places for us and those around us. Only by interrogating our surroundings can we, as individuals, see the discrepancy that dominant hegemonic rhetoric still imposes upon marginalized people and their lives. Let our *testimonios* be the *confesión* that

demands fairness, equality, and justice in order to recount our experiences. These will be entrenched in *querencia* that will allow us to find a voice; a voice that together supports each other's growth in *orgullo*, appropriating our intersectionalities, and finding ways for interconnectivity.

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