

Claremont Colleges

Scholarship @ Claremont

CMC Senior Theses

CMC Student Scholarship

2022

“¿Te Acuerdas?” An Anecdotal and Critical Analysis of Storytelling as a Pedagogical Tool for Chicano Nationalism and Pride

Lesley Chavarria

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarship.claremont.edu/cmc_theses



Part of the [Curriculum and Social Inquiry Commons](#), [Educational Leadership Commons](#), and the [Educational Methods Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Chavarria, Lesley, "“¿Te Acuerdas?” An Anecdotal and Critical Analysis of Storytelling as a Pedagogical Tool for Chicano Nationalism and Pride" (2022). *CMC Senior Theses*. 3030.
https://scholarship.claremont.edu/cmc_theses/3030

This Open Access Senior Thesis is brought to you by Scholarship@Claremont. It has been accepted for inclusion in this collection by an authorized administrator. For more information, please contact scholarship@cuc.claremont.edu.

Claremont Mckenna College

“¿Te Acuerdas?”

An Anecdotal and Critical Analysis of Storytelling as
a Pedagogical Tool for Chicano Nationalism and
Pride

submitted to
Professor Diana Selig

by
Lesley Chavarria

for
Senior Thesis
Spring 2022
Friday, April 22nd

“I am going to give you a description of the place where my grandfather would tell us stories. It was a gate/doorway; there was a garden and there was a little bit of water that would pass underneath the gate and you could hear the sound of running water a little- not always, but sometimes you would be able to hear the water. And my grandfather would sit in a corner and the kids would sit around his chair on the floor, waiting for him to tell us a story, our story of that day. Sometimes he would fall asleep. He slept a little bit and when he woke up and saw us, he would remember some story. Often times the stories were about family, the past, and sometimes (like this story) they were about things he had read. My grandfather didn’t learn how to read until he was an adult, but he did know how to read a little bit. This story is one he read. He gifted me his book and I also read; I read this story. It was a very, very old book; the pages were held together with tape. But now I am going to tell you the first story.”

-My dad, Edgar Martin Chavarria

Introduction

Growing up in Colorado, one of the few ways I felt connected to my family and my Mexican heritage was through my father's stories. He would talk about just about anything; his childhood in Mexico, ghost stories, jokes, urban legends and even Greek mythology. Back then, my siblings and I didn't see my dad very often because he was constantly working, so the time we did spend with him was special. He carried the pressure of being the main source of income in an immigrant household, yet he was and still is the most positive person I know. My father's smile is one that gracefully hides all the hardships from his life without a trace.

I write this short introduction of my father because he is what inspired this project. At my bilingual elementary school, he would often be invited to my Language Arts class to share a story with us (most of my education was taking place in Spanish at the time, so my dad felt comfortable participating). He has a way of captivating the audience, whether that be a class of 3rd graders or guests sitting at the dinner table. After I got over the initial infantile embarrassment about my parent talking to my classmates, I really enjoyed his visits and his stories altogether.

As I got older and began being caught up in the world of extra curriculars, AP classes, leadership conferences, and preparing for the college process, I stopped valuing and caring about my family's stories. While my classmates were receiving help from

their parents on their calculus homework or English essays, I was having to spend some of my nights listening to my dad while I accompanied him to his job as a janitor. My Americanization process narrowed my perception of knowledge and the world around me; I began feeling resentful about my parent's inability to give me the "proper tools" to succeed in college and in the US. This time in my life also correlated with an active rejection of my Mexican heritage in my public life (such as refusing to speak Spanish at school).

Now, I hold patience for my past self while understanding how wrong I was. The purpose of knowledge and education is not solely upward mobility on a single path. Education takes place in a classroom, but what about the education outside the classroom- the education you gain from your community? My own experiences have taught me that the learning that occurs outside of the classroom holds equal value and may be even more important in the development of student identity and pride.

This education premise is what my project will explore. In the first section, I will present the value of storytelling and communal education using Zapatista philosophy and indigenous examples. The goal of this theoretical foundation is to begin to critically think about what education is, versus what it can be. Then, I will introduce the main case study for this project in the next section: Escuela Tlatelolco. Escuela Tlatelolco is a Chicano centric school in Colorado that closed in 2017. Through numerous primary sources, my discussion of the school will illuminate how this community used storytelling and what key lessons we can pull from this era in terms of pedagogical practices that lead to student pride in identity. Finally, I will end with my own personal collection of stories that I have gathered from my dad, the lessons they taught me, and why I believe more

intergenerational conversations/stories are needed in schools to make up for the lack of ethnic education and radical schools in our present.

This thesis will closely look at education, storytelling, and identity as it relates to the Chicanx community. Chicanxs, the gender inclusive term for Chicanos, is a political identity for many Mexican Americans that primarily grew up in the 50s and 60s (but Chicanxs of all ages exists). Unlike the term Mexican American, the Chicanx identity is intertwined with activism and cannot be separated from the Chicano Movement of the 1960s which promoted shared cultural, ethnic, and community identity. The strong identity present among Chicanos is what led me to focus on this community for my project, as well as their strong presence in Denver during the Chicano Movement and the Colorado Crusade for Justice (the name of the regional Chicano Movement in Colorado). Not only that, but my older brother wrote his own capstone project about Chicanos in Denver and he introduced me to important characters, such as Chicano leader Corky Gonzales and his school, Escuela Tlatelolco. I saw my interests in ethnic studies, education, and social justice work overlap in this school and I knew I had to write about it in my thesis one day.

The stories I will include in the last section of this thesis are stories that I heard from my dad either recently over the COVID-19 quarantine, or throughout my childhood. While I began working on this thesis, my dad took on the task of learning how to record/send voice memos on his phone for me to write them out and share them here. As I explain the value of storytelling, I hope the reader can take time to absorb the real stories that run within my family to apply the theoretical topics, since I personally found

new meaning and inspiration from these stories by writing them out and being in constant conversation with my dad.

The story that follows this section of writing is the first story he recorded for me; *Siete Venado*. Although most stories will be shared in the last section of this project, I want to include this one at the start because it provides a perfect transition into chapter one and sets the tone for the entire project. This story takes place in Mexico back when the Aztecs were the ruling civilization. The Aztecs, who originated as a nomadic tribe in northern Mexico, arrived in Mesoamerica around the beginning of the 13th century. From their magnificent capital city, Tenochtitlan, the Aztecs emerged as the dominant force in central Mexico, developing an intricate social, political, religious, and commercial organization that brought many of the region's city-states under their control by the 15th century.¹

Apart from an interesting historical orientation, this first story lays out a foundation for the first part of this thesis; the theoretical breakdown of what is considered to be valuable knowledge, questioning how we got to this definition of knowledge, and what other theories we can tap into to broaden our definition of knowledge.

¹ "Aztecs." Edited by History.com Editors, *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 27 Oct. 2009, <https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-americas/aztecs>.

Historia #1: Siete Venado

“Many years ago, there was a boy that they called Siete Venado. He was an indigenous boy from one of the tribes that was brought under by the Aztecs. He was impatient and playful, but he was an orphan- he did not have his dad or his mom. He lived with his grandfather. His grandfather was a very good person, but he was also very religious. He honored his Gods often; the Gods they believed in back then. They honored the earth, the sun, the stars. He always taught Siente Venado to respect nature and to be a good person.

Every so often, their tribe had to travel to the city of Tenochtitlan, the city of the Aztecs, to deliver a tribute and to pay taxes. On one of those trips, the grandfather brought Siete Venado with them. He said, “You are growing up, Siete Venado. Let’s go so that you can see Tenochtitlan.” And so Siete Venado went to Tenochtitlan.

The boy was left in awe at what he saw in the city; it was enormous, very beautiful, and he especially liked the monks that were studying astronomy. “That’s what I want to do”, he thought to himself. He wanted to study with the Aztecs and become an astronomer.

After that trip, life continued like normal for a while until the grandfather fell ill. On his deathbed, he told Siente Venado, “Siente Venado, I only have one favor I need from you. Please promise me that you will look for and find the land of *Hule*. It is a promised land that we are all looking for, everyone in the tribe. We just don’t know what it is or where we can find it.” Siete Venado was left pensive and in grief.

Sometime later, he left his tribe to live in Tenochtitlan and pursue astronomy as a Monk. In the depth of his studies, he would always remember his grandfather's final wish; his promise that he would find the land of *Hule*. Siete Venado began to realize that he never has the opportunity to search for the land because of his studies. He needed to leave to truly begin his search.

He began asking around and searching, leading him to discover that the Aztecs had a group of merchants that they called the *Pochtecas*. They traded, bartered, and exchanged Aztec objects with other tribes (even things like exotic animals). They travelled all of Mesoamerica through unique areas and were constantly discovering new things, learning new languages, and meeting new people. They traveled in enormous caravans of just merchants. Siete Venado asked the *Pochtecas* if he could be a part of their caravan, even though he was not a merchant. He explained that he was in search of the promised land and that he did not want to be a bother, but travelling alone is very dangerous. They agreed and Siete Venado left Tenochtitlan.

At every village or tribe, he would ask the people if they knew anything about the land of *Hule* but received no answers. He traveled and asked communities for years without any success.

This changed when one day, the *Pochtecas* found a traveler in the hands of some bandits. Along with the *Pochtecas*, Siete Venado saved the traveler and the traveler looked at him and said, "What are you doing, child, what are you doing out here? You're not part of the *Pochtecas* are you?" Siete Venado explained his search for the promised land and his grandfather's last wish, and the traveler responded, "To show my gratitude since you saved my life, and because I believe you are a good person, I will tell you who

can give you information about the land of *Hule*.” He instructed Siete Venado to take a caravan traveling north, “With that caravan, you will find a village as you approach the mountains. Ask to speak to this woman; she’s very old but she is who you are looking for.”

Siete Venado was ecstatic to embark on this trip; he was finally going to fulfill his grandfather’s wish. He traveled for many, many days until he finally found the village at the foot of the mountains. He asked for the woman upon his arrival and when he arrived at her house, she greeted him with, “Come in, Siete Venado, I was waiting for you.” Astonished, he asks, “But how did you know my name? I haven’t told you who I am.” She calmly responded, “I know, I know Siete Venado. But I do know your name is Siete Venado and I also know why you are here.” In confusion, Siete Venado continues to look at her as she says, “I know what you are going to ask me, but you need to ask. Ask what you came here to ask.” “Well, ma’am, with all due respect,” Siete Venado says, “I tell you that I lived with my grandfather; just the two of us. I made him a promise when he died. I promised I would find the land of *Hule*.”

The woman asks him, “So besides studying, what else have you done child?” He explains, “Well, I joined the caravans of the *Pochtecas* and we’ve been visiting many places for years now.” “Have you learned new languages? Met new people?” she asked. “Yes, learning new languages is essential for trade and I’ve met new people at every tribe we visit.” “So,” the woman says, “You have been meeting new people and learning new languages. Siete Venado, you are already in the land of *Hule*. The land of *Hule* is not a physical land; the promised land comes from going to new villages, learning from their cultures, and growing as a person. When you meet different people, you grow. And the

land of *Hule* is a state of being, a state of change in your mind and person. You are not the same person once you interact with others and their cultures, since then you have been in the land of *Hule*.”

Siete Venado was in disbelief. He has been in the land of Hule ever since he’s been with the *Pochtecas*; all that time he spent learning, traveling, seeing new people and cultures. With this knowledge, he continued to travel with the *Pochtecas* until he also fell ill. Before his death, however, he made sure to share his discovery with all the kids he came across. He wanted all people, especially the next generation, to live in the land of *Hule*.”

- *Edgar Martin Chavarria*

Chapter 1: Learning to Unlearn

Intro to Zapatista Philosophy

The story of *Siete Venado* shares the moral that community, travel, exploration, and interpersonal connection are the key to life. Many spend their whole lives searching for a physical, tangible measure for success and happiness but fall short of that, just like Siete Venado when he thought the Land of *Hule* was a physical land he could find. There are real consequences in our modern world to this historical phenomenon that continues to dictate American happiness. In the US, the percentage of college students with symptoms of depression between the years of 2020-2021 was 41%, with suicide also being the third leading cause of death amongst college students.² I believe that one of the reasons these numbers are this high (and alarming) is due to the college system being treated as a business in the United States; putting learning and student wellbeing as mere factors to track for damage control in the future and keeping profit as the real priority of American schools.

In order to step away from education as a business and to be able to assess education in isolation, I would like to start by grounding our understanding of knowledge in Zapatista philosophy to challenge the toxic perception that learning only happens in a classroom or lecture hall. In doing this, narratives and stories that emerge from communities, such as the immigrant and indigenous communities, are legitimized,

² Eisenberg, Daniel, et al. 2021 Winter/Spring ed., Healthy Minds Network, Ann Arbor , MI, 2021, pp. 1–25, *The Healthy Minds Study*.

considered equal to Anglo knowledge, and in turn challenge the traditional roles of oppressor and oppressed in arts and academia. Not only that, but education is humanized and researchers/educators can begin to evoke strategies that lower rates of depression and general student dissatisfaction.

Those who call themselves Zapatistas are indigenous Mayans from the state of Chiapas in central Mexico, many from the Lacandón Jungle.³ By naming themselves Zapatistas, they invoke the memory of the famed Emiliano Zapata, a leader during the Mexican Revolution of 1910. Zapata led a group of Indigenous Mexicans in a struggle for land and the right to be land-based people.

Although a detailed history on Mexican politics as it relates to Zapatistas is beyond the scope of this paper, their philosophy is important to talk about in this project because it inspired many Chicano ideologies and grounds projects like the Escuela Tlatelolco. The militarized concept of *Zapatismo* emerged from the continuing resistance of the indigenous Zapatistas who introduced themselves to the world via an armed insurrection in Chiapas, Mexico on New Year's Day, 1994 (the day the North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA, was operationalized).⁴ While the implementation of NAFTA appeared to be the direct cause of their revolt, the uprising occurred in response to over 500 years of ongoing colonial oppression, which was being exacerbated by intensifying privatizations and dispossessions of their land and freedom by the government.

³ Anderson, J. K., & Springer, N. J. (2018). Zapatismo as a Resonant Public Pedagogy. *Latin American Perspectives*, 45(3), 151–170

⁴ Ibid.

Despite an ongoing counterinsurgency being spearheaded by the Mexican Government, the Zapatistas have focused their efforts on living a peaceful life of decolonial, anti-capitalist, collective resistance, concentrated upon recuperating land, mutual aid, and exercising autonomy. The Zapatistas achieve this by centering their Indigenous traditions and the practice of horizontal governance, equitable gender relations, anti-systemic health care, grassroots education, and agro-ecological food sovereignty. Additionally, The Zapatistas are working towards constructing what they refer to as '*Un Mundo Donde Quepan Muchos Mundos*' (A World Where Many Worlds Fit) by emphasizing the dignity of others, belonging, and common struggle, as well as the importance of laughter, dancing, and nourishing children.⁵ Unfortunately, history tends to remember Zapatistas for their revolts rather than their remarkable lifestyle that spans hundreds of years before being colonized.

For the Zapatistas, Zapatismo can neither be defined, nor captured in the language offered by modernity. Despite its intangible nature, Zapatismo is often described as an *intuition* rooted in dignity that is felt in the chest and compels one to say 'Enough' in the face of injustice and the suffering of others.⁶ In this way, Zapatismo closely aligns with the statement: '*Para Todos Todo, Para Nosotros Nada*' (Everything for Everyone, Nothing For Us), a motto found throughout Zapatista communities.

Zapatismo grounds this work in storytelling and pedagogical analysis in two significant ways. First by introducing this idea of *Un Mundo Donde Quepan Muchos Mundos*' (A World Where Many Worlds Fit), Zapatismo opens our research and our

⁵ Anderson, J. K., & Springer, N. J. (2018). Zapatismo as a Resonant Public Pedagogy. *Latin American Perspectives*, 45(3), 151–170.

⁶ Ibid., 175

sources of knowledge to include more than just sources that are often cited in academia. Storytelling, oral histories, art, and other valuable indigenous sources of knowledge enter the frame of reference when we are thinking about pedagogy and larger reform from a Zapatista perspective.

The second way Zapatismo is important to this project is by bridging the concepts of injustice, community, and education. Community is at the core of Zapatista beliefs which drives the fight against inequality. Education is pursued in various forms with a focus on nurturing the self and finding dignity. Zapatismo directly combats the forces that have led the American education system to fail its students by providing a wholistic approach to learning and student life. Zapatismo will be referred to in later sections of this thesis, as it is also a theology that directly impacted Rodolfo (Corky) Gonzales while he was shaping the Crusade for Justice in Denver, the focus of the next chapter. Gonzales has expressed that while he respected other organizers from his time, such as Cesar Chavez and Martin Luther King Jr, he truly looked up to and resonated with the work of radical thinkers like Emiliano Zapata and Malcolm X.⁷

History of Storytelling Amongst the Lakota

With a theoretical background set through Zapatismo, I would like to continue by talking about storytelling amongst Native American communities, particularly the Lakota, as they are a significant part of Colorado history and contemporary life. Today, about 54,000 people, or roughly one percent of Colorado's population, identify as Native American.⁸ The vast majority live in urban areas; descendants of the Cheyenne, Lakota,

⁷ Vigil, Ernesto B. *The Crusade for Justice: Chicano Militancy and the Government's War on Dissent*. University of Wisconsin Press, 1999.

⁸ Sadler, Christa. "The Original Coloradans." *Uncover Colorado*, 25 Apr. 2020.

Kiowa, Navajo, and at least 200 tribal nations live in the Denver Metro Area. Although the largest tribal group by origin in Colorado is the Lakota, there are only two federally recognized tribes in the state: the Southern Utes and the Ute Mountain Utes.⁹

In the early 70s, The American Indian Movement (AIM) was at its peak at the same time as the Chicano Crusade for Justice in Colorado. The two organizations maintained contact, primarily through the organization leaders Corky Gonzales (Crusade for Justice) and Vernon Bellecourt (AIM).¹⁰ Younger members of the Crusade and the local AIM chapters were friends, and the Crusade endorsed the struggle of Native people and hosted their activists at political gatherings and cultural events. Chicanos identified with AIM's struggle because of their ties to the concept of "Aztlán" (the homeland of Chicanos in the modern American Southwest) and the glorification of mestizaje/mixed bloodlines that are a result of Spanish colonization on indigenous Mexican land.

The Crusade for Justice actively supported the efforts of AIM and elevated communities such as the Lakota, therefore I feel a responsibility to continue elevating their voices in this paper and continue the coalition between Chicano and Native American work in Colorado. Although I cannot write an extensive analysis on Lakota storytelling, I will now highlight some practices that emerged from Lakota tradition that continue to shape the way we think about storytelling and will continue to inform my definition of storytelling throughout this thesis.

Over decades, storytelling has consistently played a very important role in humanity because it is the main way that we pass down information to one another. I saw

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Vigil, Ernesto B. *The Crusade for Justice: Chicano Militancy and the Government's War on Dissent*. University of Wisconsin Press, 1999.

examples of this at the Lakota Reservation of Pine Ridge in North Dakota, a place where their cultural traditions had been passed down over generations to create their current way of life. I was intrigued by this awareness of past legends, their strong belief in these lessons, and the focused continuation of religious practices and ways of life as a form of unity among the community.

The setting of a story telling is most often in the context of a large social gathering of sorts. Requests of stories in these setting traditionally come with a gift of tobacco. Sometimes individuals seeking knowledge from storytellers can approach them with gifts individually to ask for a story. The audiences of stories differ. Some are for all people and ages. Others are only for those of a certain age. Others are only for people partaking in special rituals. Additionally, contemporary storytellers may be hesitant to tell stories to outsiders because they fear that the outsider may record the story, thus taking away the storyteller's control over who can hear the story.¹¹

There are many different and vital purposes to storytelling in Lakota traditions. In the case of oppressed people who were forced away from their homeland, stories could maintain their connection to their native homeland. For those not moved away from their land, stories contained information regarding how to relate to their land as humans and how to survive by living off their land. This can be observed by the place-specific monsters that show up in some stories.¹² Relating to culture, storytelling is a way to maintain and hand down language, pass down morals and ethics, tribe pride, and knowledge about the culturally appropriate ways to act in certain situation.¹³ Stories also

¹¹ Marshall, Joseph. *The Lakota Way: Stories and Lessons for Living*. Penguin Compass, 2002.

¹² ¹² Marshall, Joseph. *The Lakota Way: Stories and Lessons for Living*. Penguin Compass, 2002.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 32

contribute to cultural history including creation myths, tribe origin, and family genealogy. Lastly, stories serve as entertainment for all the people in the tribe, making the greatest story tellers those who could tell the story in a way that re-lived the stories in a highly dramatic way.

As is the case for many Native American tribes, the continuation of traditional belief systems and ways of life for the Lakota people has relied primarily on storytelling. Through passing down information, history, and ways through voice from generation to generation, younger Lakota tribe members can connect with their ancestors and continue important rituals and traditions to maintain ancient ways of life. One example and possibly one of the most important and influential stories to the Lakota people is the story of White Buffalo Calf Woman.¹⁴ There are many different versions of this story, perhaps it is important that no one definitive version exists as this has allowed the story to shift and adapt itself to specific people and settings. Perhaps too, without living in the Lakota culture, this story has varied meaning (even lack of significance) for outsiders.

While continuously changing to a certain extent, it is evident that many aspects of current Lakota culture stem from this story. Most versions of the story agree that White Buffalo Calf Woman brought the Sacred Pipe, as well as the sun dance, the sweat lodge, the vision quest, and other rituals to the Lakota people.¹⁵ It is said in this story that it was she who taught the Lakota people the ways of the earth, how to walk on the earth, and how to pray. It is said that after the day when White Buffalo Calf Woman visited the buffalo were plentiful, meaning that the Lakota people were able to support themselves.

¹⁴ Ibid., 40

¹⁵ Marshall, Joseph. *The Lakota Way: Stories and Lessons for Living*. Penguin Compass, 2002.

Many interpret this story as saying that one does not need to struggle to survive, especially if one incorporates prayer into their lives.¹⁶ By learning to appropriately unite the mundane with the divine, all that will be needed will be provided. This story has further led to cultural distinctions between men and women, including women's roles, gendered language, and general guidelines such as the placement of the doors on a sweat lodge. The four sacred colors of the Lakota can also be traced back to this story, as after giving the Lakota people sacred instructions for living, the woman turned into a calf and walked away from the tribe. Each time she laid down to rest, the calf was a different color, four colors which now make up the sacred Lakota hoop.¹⁷

While the story of White Buffalo Calf Woman plays an important educational and cultural role in the Lakota culture, there are other stories that focus on healing, humor, history, creation, and so on. These stories are writing the past, living in the present, and preserving the future. These are the lessons that preserve culture and unit the people of Pine Ridge.

The Lakota tribe gives us a beautiful demonstration of what value storytelling holds historically for communities and nations. The Lakota teach us that all stories hold value, even if you don't think they do. A story that means nothing to you can change the life of the person sitting next to you, and I believe this concept is a beautiful one to explore as we think about the way we educate kids (especially kids of color). The next section will transition into a discussion about the state of education in our country as it stands today, with an emphasis on Colorado, and what my vision for the future of

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

education is with an understanding of Zapatismo, Lakota tradition, and other pedagogical reformers.

The Current State of Education

Colorado has historically been a pioneer in seeking out educational innovation and change. Over the last several decades, the state often has been ahead of the national curve in implementing reforms like standards, accountability measures, and school choice. However, these changes, while arguably improving parts of the state education system, have failed to increase overall achievement, graduation rates, or college attendance in any meaningful way. In fact, in January 2008, Education Week gave Colorado's public education system a grade of "C" and ranked it 38th in the nation in terms of overall educational performance and policies.¹⁸ That same week, in his State of the State address, Governor Bill Ritter reiterated his goals of cutting the dropout rate and achievement gap in half, doubling the number of college degrees and certificates awarded, and announced a new package of reform policies. While there may be some disagreement as to how the state can support achievement of these goals, policymakers and advocates alike believe that improving the state's education system from preschool through college is critical to the future of Colorado and remains the best economic development strategy for the state.¹⁹

The need to complete a successful high school education has never been more important for an individual's future success. But, across the nation, high schools are not living up to their promise. U.S. high school graduation rates have remained virtually the

¹⁸ Padgett, Heather Clapp. Cross & Jofus, LLC, Denver, CO, 2009, pp. 1–30, *High School Reform in Colorado: A History of Efforts and Lessons for the Future*.

¹⁹ Ibid. 35

same for the last 30 years—about 30 percent of students fail to graduate from high school with a diploma—while the intellectual demands of college, work and life have increased dramatically.²⁰ Overall achievement in the U.S. continues to dip relative to other countries and students in most minority groups perform at levels far below their white counterparts. While the 1980's saw some success nationally in narrowing the achievement gap at the high school level, the gap has held steady, or in some cases widened, since 1992.²¹ In addition, high school seems to be a large part of the problem. While elementary students are progressing reasonably well as measured on international tests in math and science, by the end of high school U.S. students' scores are below those of most other developed countries. Colorado youth are not doing any better. According to a recent report from the Manhattan Institute, Colorado graduates only about 70 percent of its students on time, ranking Colorado 29th among states.²² Even more disturbing, the state's graduation rate has declined by around 10 percentage points since the early 1990s (likely a result of Colorado's changing demographics and minority populations increasing). Among Colorado's minority students, graduation rates are much worse—while about 80 percent of white students graduated, only 61 percent of black students and 47 percent of Hispanics graduated in 2009.²³

These trends in Colorado can be attributed to a concept discussed by Angela Valenzuela called Subtractive Schooling. Valenzuela discusses the importance of genuine care in education, particularly for first- and second-generation Mexican Americans.

²⁰ Ibid. 2

²¹ Ibid., 3

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

Through a three year ethnographic investigation of academic achievement and schooling orientations among immigrant Mexican and Mexican American students at Juan Segun High School in Houston, Texas, it was discovered that some large high schools leave bicultural students progressively more vulnerable to academic and social failure.²⁴ At this school and surely others similar to it, teachers fail to forge meaningful connections with their students, students are alienated from their teachers, and are often hostile toward one another (especially immigrant kids and first/second generation students being hostile toward each other). Among students, there is a pervasive feeling that no one cares, and distrust is at the core of their educational experience. In all these ways, students of Mexican origin are left worse off after completing high school; hence the term *subtractive* schooling.

In Colorado, it has been reported that nearly 80% of Latino millennials are second generation Americans or more.²⁵ This figure is used to show the successful assimilation of Mexican Americans into the general population; making specific Latino specific resources *seem* unnecessary. However, Valenzuela demonstrates that among Mexican and Central American students, generational status plays an influential role in schooling experiences.²⁶ First- and second-generation students academically outperform their third- and later-generation counterparts. Rather than revealing the upward mobility pattern historically evident among European-origin groups, research on generational attainments

²⁴ Valenzuela, Angela. *Subtractive Schooling: U.s.-Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring*. State University of New York Press, 1999.

²⁵ Latino Data Project. Latino Leadership Institute, Littleton, CO, *LATINO COLORADO*.

²⁶ Valenzuela, Angela. *Subtractive Schooling: U.s.-Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring*. State University of New York Press, 1999.

points to an invisible ceiling of blocked opportunity for Mexican people, which is also reflected in the general academic patterns among students of color in Colorado.

What *Could* Education Look Like Instead?

Education reform efforts in Colorado have experienced limited success because they are working within the confines of the same system; and the system inherently values numbers and stats, not students. So, what does radical, student-centered reform look like, and will it really help address the education problems in the state? To answer this, I need to introduce another great thinker in pedagogical reform: Paulo Freire.

Freire was born in 1921 to middle class parents in Recife, Brazil. He was eight years old when the Great Depression ravaged the world economy and his father died just five years later, plunging the family into poverty. This made school difficult for Freire and he ended up falling behind several grades.²⁷ His early experiences with poverty and education solidified his later belief that the classroom cannot be disconnected from what happens outside of it. Education is shaped by the conditions under which it takes place. His experiences as a young adult working in education further led him to the conclusion that elitist institutions are ineffective in addressing the needs of the working class. Instead, he believed that educators needed to start from a place of humility and learn about the people they wish to teach. This meant understanding their language, their culture, their community, and the unique problems they faced. Only then, once the student's social context was considered, could real education take place.²⁸

²⁷ Leslie Bentley, "A Brief Biography of Paulo Freire | Pedagogy and Theatre ..." 1999. <https://ptoweb.org/aboutpto/a-brief-biography-of-paulo-freire/>.

²⁸ Giroux, Henry. Policy Futures in Education, *Rethinking Education as the Practice of Freedom: Paulo Freire and the Promise of Critical Pedagogy*.

His most influential text was titled *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. In this work, he pulled from his own catholic faith and several philosophers (such as Fanon's anti-colonialism, Hegel's master/slave dialectic, Marx's class consciousness, and Gramsci's notion of the organic intellectual).²⁹ **The main thesis of his writing is that teaching and learning are inherently political acts.** They can either be used to reinforce the status quo, or they can help people understand and critique the social and historical context in which they live (the first step of personal empowerment)³⁰ By recognizing the political nature of education, Freire identifies how oppressive structures are replicated in classrooms. He argues that in the traditional educational model, the teacher is the subject who acts upon the students, who are treated as objects. The teacher possesses knowledge, and the students are empty vessels to be filled. He deems this the "banking model" of education.³¹

As an alternative, Freire argues that true knowledge must arise from a process of inquiry that is co-created by both teacher and the student. For this to work, the relationship between the two must be reciprocal, not hierarchical. The teacher must acknowledge that there are things they do not know, and they must be willing to learn from and with the students. This creates an environment of mutual respect, trust, and ongoing dialogue (similar to those environments created among Zapatistas and Lakota).

Considering Freire's work, I believe education reform must stem from educators that are willing to participate in this model of education and are willing to observe their role continuously and critically. In my ideal world, I would give public school teachers

²⁹ Freire, Paulo, et al. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2020.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

the respect they deserve and the funding they need to properly run a classroom.

Remembering that money is a large limitation in American schooling reform is important because it emphasizes the intersectionality of the problem. Without policy and economic reform, teachers will not be able to contribute meaningfully to education. Without curricular reform and creativity among local leaders, schools and individuals are less likely to secure funding from the state or federal governments to implement changes to support educators. However, the scope of my project is focused on the curricular reform rather than exploring options of how to economically support education (but this is also a necessary area for future research).

Now we will turn to Escuela Tlatelolco, a Chicano centric school that applied the concepts of communal learning, mutual respect in education, and ongoing conversations for the betterment of the community. Beginning with an introduction of Corky Gonzales, then looking at student life at Escuela Tlatelolco, the next section will allow us to see an application of an alternative school that was made to serve an ethnic minority. Given the current state of education for students of color in Colorado, Escuela Tlatelolco serves as an example of a time and space when Chicanos were thriving because they were allowed to be their whole, political selves in the classroom.

Chapter 2: Popping Like a Cork

Who Was Leading Escuela Tlatelolco?

What did the leadership of Escuela Tlatelolco look like for it to radically change Chicano education in Denver and pique my interest in storytelling as a pedagogical tool? The primary person who led the ideologies present at the school was Rodolfo Gonzales; better known as Corky. To understand the school and the beliefs behind the school we must first examine Corky, as he was the ideological leader of the Crusade and the founder of Escuela Tlatelolco.

Corky Gonzales was born in Denver on June 18, 1928, to Federico and Indalesia Gonzales, where he was the youngest of five brothers and three sisters. Corky's mother died when he was two years old, and his father never remarried because he made keeping the Gonzales family together his priority.³² The Gonzales family grew up in the tough Eastside barrio of Denver and resided there during the Great Depression. Corky remarked that "though the Depression was devastating to so many, we, as children, were so poor that it was hardly noticed."³³

With the tremendous obstacles that Corky faced from an early age, it is truly astonishing that he persevered in the Denver educational system to earn his high school diploma at the age of 16. The accomplishment is magnified by the fact that from an early

³² "Rodolfo 'Corky' Gonzales," Escuela Tlatelolco, n.d. 2003.

³³ Ibid.

age, Corky worked in the beet fields and at various other jobs that left little time for study. He attended many schools including schools in New Mexico as well as schools in Denver, Gilpin, Whittier, Lake, Baker, West, and finally Manual High School from which he graduated in 1944.³⁴

During his final year in high school and the subsequent summer, Corky worked hard to save money for a college education. With a keen interest in engineering, Corky entered the University of Denver, but after the first quarter realized that the financial cost was insurmountable. He then pursued a career in Boxing followed by a career in Colorado politics.³⁵

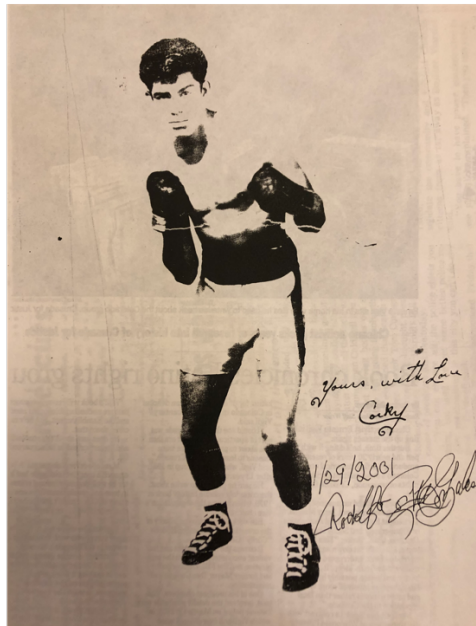


Figure 1: Autographed photo of Corky boxing

In the mid-1960's and after experiencing discrimination during his career in Colorado politics, Corky Gonzales founded an urban civil rights and cultural movement called the

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

Crusade for Justice that became important in the larger Chicano Movement. Soon he became one of the central leaders in the Chicano movement and a strong proponent of Chicano nationalism. In the late sixties and early seventies, Corky organized and supported high school walkouts, demonstrations against police brutality, and legal cases. He also organized mass demonstrations against the Vietnam War.

In 1970, The Crusade for Justice transformed into the Escuela Tlatelolco.³⁶ It was created to provide an alternative education for young Latinos; an education that would lead not only to academic proficiency, but would also instill cultural pride, confidence and would develop leadership among Latino youth. In its first year of operation, the school had 250 students K-12 and a staff of twenty. Over the span of twelve years the school expanded its program to include an Early Childhood Education program and a four-year college program on site accredited through Goddard College.³⁷

Corky's Personal Use of Stories

Chicano Nationalism was the larger theoretical background to his education model, but personal stories and art were the manifestation of this theory for Corky and the Escuela Tlatelolco. The underlying theme of the Chicano student movement was a statement of identity, or a search for roots. The poem *Yo Soy Joaquin*, written by Corky, caught the imaginations of Chicano students everywhere. Corky was a writer and a poet long before he founded Escuela Tlatelolco, but this poem caught national attention and further supported his belief that shared knowledge, education, and pride is important and is possible through

³⁶ "History of Escuela Tlatelolco," Escuela Tlatelolco, n.d. 2003.

³⁷ Ibid.

self-expression and vulnerability. The following is an excerpt from this epic poem:

*Yo soy Joaquín,
perdido en un mundo de confusión:
I am Joaquín, lost in a world of confusion,
caught up in the whirl of a gringo society,
confused by the rules, scorned by attitudes,
suppressed by manipulation, and destroyed by modern society.
My fathers have lost the economic battle
and won the struggle of cultural survival.
And now! I must choose between the paradox of
victory of the spirit, despite physical hunger,
or to exist in the grasp of American social neurosis,
sterilization of the soul and a full stomach.
Yes, I have come a long way to nowhere,
unwillingly dragged by that monstrous, technical,
industrial giant called Progress and Anglo success....
I look at myself.
I watch my brothers.
I shed tears of sorrow. I sow seeds of hate.
I withdraw to the safety within the circle of life --
MY OWN PEOPLE³⁸*

The scope of this paper does not include all Corky's poetry, but his words are some that inspired an entire movement. In March of 1969, only a year prior to the opening of Escuela Tlatelolco, the Crusade for Justice held a National Chicano Youth Liberation Conference in Denver.³⁹ Young Chicanos came from all over the country, with large numbers attending from the West Coast. It was at this conference that Corky presented *El Plan Espiritual De Aztlán* which was written by a committee whose ideology centered on indigenous philosophies. The conference, the first of its kind, was organized, sponsored,

³⁸ Rodolfo Gonzales, Copy of Epic Poem Yo Soy Joaquin, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver

³⁹ Gutiérrez, David G. "Sin Fronteras?": Chicanos, Mexican Americans, and the Emergence of the Contemporary Mexican Immigration Debate, 1968-1978." *Journal of American Ethnic History* 10, no. 4 (1991). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27500869>.

and held at the Crusade for Justice. It was at this conference that the philosophy of self-determination took shape.⁴⁰ It was also the first time that Aztlan was used to describe the spiritual and concrete homeland of Chicanos.

Aztlan is historically linked with the Mexica civilization of Mesoamerica as the place “from the North”, which they came from before settling in the Valley of Mexico. The Mexica were told by the Gods to wander south until they found an eagle sitting on a cactus with a serpent in its beak. Amazingly, the Mexica finally settled where they found their omen, on Lake Texcoco in the Valley of Mexico.⁴¹ Aztlan is considered the homeland the Mexica left from the north of Mexico, which is now the Southwest United States. This land was previously mentioned when I discussed the affinity between the American Indian Movement and the Crusade for Justice in the fight for self-determination.

The identification of Chicanos with Aztlan was part of the cultural and political affirmation that Chicanos are indigenous to this continent. This newfound pride in their indigenous roots was counter to what Chicanos as well as Mexicans had previously felt of their indigenous blood. Since Europeans dominated the societies and have historically looked down upon indigenous cultures in the Western hemisphere, Chicanos used to refer to themselves as Spanish or the like because of shame in their indigenous roots.⁴²

Thus, *El Plan Espiritual De Aztlan* was the manifestation of that cultural and genetic affirmation that Chicanos were undergoing during the Chicano Movement, turning the shame of their blood into a source of pride. The result was the creation of a

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

philosophy, joined with cultural and historical understanding of their people. The quest for identity present in *Yo Soy Joaquin* served as the main narrative in the plan and movement overall because it was a narrative that resonated with all Chicanos. *El Plan Espiritual De Aztlán* gave Chicanos something tangible to work from, just like the Mexican Revolution used Emiliano Zapata. Seeing Chicano youth unite from across the country at the National Chicano Youth Liberation Conference inspired Corky and made him want to center his attention on youth and education. In the early imagining and planning stages of Escuela Tlatelolco, which would have likely overlapped with the time Corky spent at the conference, he wrote the following regarding his beliefs about education:

“The fundamental survival of this progressive educational phenomenon is the foundation and implementation of a strong and enduring educational philosophy. Nothing can survive if it has no function other than mere existence. Using Nationalism as a base upon which to build our education, we create awareness, pride, a positive direction in our way of life, building a positive self-image to counter the psychological destruction of people. Escuela Tlatelolco is a private school dealing with Chicano education. Entirely autonomous from the traditional private school and the public school system, it is a school of liberation. This is not a money-making machine but a mind and conscience builder. It is not a school of the rich, but of the poor. This is a tool that will pave the road toward self determination/total liberation.”⁴³

What It Was Like to Learn with Corky

Corky was the founder and the most vocal leader behind the push for nationalist education through Escuela Tlatelolco, but he did not stop there. Once the school was in operation, Corky Gonzales took time to personally teach classes and directly interact with students. His classes and teaching style, from the point of view of his students, tell us a

⁴³ Rodolfo Gonzales, Handwritten Note on Scrap Paper, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver

great deal about the energy of the school and the type of leader Corky was. For instance, one course he taught was called Sociology of Chicano Education. One of Corky's students, on a course evaluation questionnaire from that class, reflected the following:

“I learned of the many different aspects of the life of a Chicano in the past and in the present. The irrelevant education; lack of economic, institutional, and political power; the robbery of our land; slave labor in the fields; direct and indirect racism such as TV, movies, history; reasons for lack of employment; the welfare system...the church's hypocrisy... The ideas were from a revolutionary Chicano point of view. The only way we can solve our problems is by controlling ourselves. By basing our struggle on nationalism, we can begin to unite and take control of our institutions and land.”⁴⁴

This student reflects that Corky's class taught her how to solve “*our*” problems and take control of “*our*” institutions, leading me to believe that Corky was doing much more than teaching from a book. Although it would be simplistic to say that identity and cultural literacy is the key to educational success, Corky truly believed that identity plays an important role in successfully educating minority children.

Prolonged contact with a society that does not value the difference inherent in its minority cultures traditionally leads to members of the minority feeling pressured to give up their own culture and embrace that of the majority or to fluctuate between cultures. Some can successfully straddle the cultural fence, but for others the stress of navigating two very distinct cultures can eventually lead to a loss of identity altogether.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Lily Martinez Topio, Student Evaluation Form for Course of Study, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver

⁴⁵ Aboud, F. *The Development of Ethnic Self-Identification and Attitudes*. Sage, Newbury Park, CA, 1987.

Previous studies have supported the idea that strong cultural knowledge and pride will allow a bi-cultural individual to overcome ambiguity caused by living in a society that does not acknowledge or honor one's minority culture.⁴⁶ Escuela Tlatelolco was founded on Corky's theoretical foundation around this concept, and his own thoughts around Mexican American students being deprived of their history in the public schools. His goal was to "provide Chicano children and the youth in the Denver area an opportunity to study their history and to reinforce pride in their language, culture, and identity as Chicanos."⁴⁷

Based on student feedback, Corky's approach was successful. At Escuela Tlatelolco, many graduates expressed enthusiasm for their connection to and memories of a Chicano centric school. Juan Gallegos, an alum of The Escuela, described his time there as a time when he felt surrounded by "love and nurturing and learning and the whole process..." He further explained that he "never wanted to be out of school. Corky Gonzales taught [him] a lot... You always have to keep your head up high and move forward... You always stay focused."⁴⁸

Another student, Bob Trujillo, also had the following to say about Corky:

"Corky Gonzales would tell you be what you want to be. Through Corky Gonzales I got to be a pilot and I've been in video productions...He would say if you want to do something you can do it. So then my goals expanded."⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Rodolfo Gonzales, Handwritten Note on Scrap Paper, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver

⁴⁸ Juan Gallegos, Student Evaluation Form for Course of Study, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver

⁴⁹ Bob Trujillo, Student Evaluation Form for Course of Study, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver

Speaking from personal experience, it is rare to see a school and school leadership, whether it be public, private, or charter, have this type of impact on children. As it is alluded to earlier, Corky heavily relied on Chicano Nationalism within the Escuela Tlatelolco on a macro and micro level. Student evaluations tell us that students were receptive to this approach on a micro level (within the classroom and in assignments), and archival writings from Corky give us an insight into the strategic ways that Nationalism was implemented in the larger picture to create the overall school culture that students loved.

Chapter 3: A Time Chicanos Thrived

Turning away from Corky as a leader and focusing on the school as an institution, the following section of writing includes a variety of primary sources about Escuela Tlatelolco found at the Denver Public Library (DPL) archives. These sources help us imagine life at this school (as not many researchers have written about it in depth) to understand the impact of stories and narrative selection in an academic setting that specializes in creating Chicano nationalism. By understanding the specific ideas and practices that made Escuela Tlatelolco unique and beneficial to Chicanos, we can then think about what has changed since then and what practices are necessary to create an academic environment that promotes student and ethnic pride.

To reiterate from the last section, Escuela Tlatelolco was the result of the Colorado Crusade for Justice under the leadership of Corky Gonzales. Stories were present throughout the Chicano Movement, including stories that were present in Escuela Tlatelolco, and these stories formed the foundation of all subject learning. What textbooks are used, where your teachers are from, who is part of school leadership, the identity of parents, etc. are all factors that serve to tell a story and thus create education. With every part of their school, Escuela Tlatelolco purposefully designed what knowledge is, what it should look like, and what it should feel like.

THE SCHOOL'S OVERALL PHILOSOPHY

Escuela Tlatelolco's messaging that inspired Chicanos across Colorado, and the nation, first began as a series of ideas and proposals from Chicano leaders that wanted to reimagine the type of education students needed and deserved. As the Denver Public Library holds many miscellaneous documents, hand written notes, and general proposals that were written by Corky, it was clear to me that creating Escuela Tlatelolco required a great amount of imagination and patience. A document titled, "FIRST DRAFT PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A VIABLE CHICANO STUDIES PROGRAM AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHOOL OF TLATELOLCO," clearly introduces the philosophy Escuela Tlatelolco represented within the larger movement.

Regarding the actual curriculum and educational experience at the school, the founders imagined Escuela Tlatelolco would be "providing a progressive and meaningful education for Chicano youth" and would also create a "definite political philosophy which is reflective of the Chicano Movement in general."⁵⁰ Although an intriguing idea, wanting to create a "progressive and meaningful education" that is specifically made and meant for Chicanos is very unclear. *What exactly about a Chicano centric school would make it more beneficial for the students pedagogically?*

The same document goes on to explain that the Escuela's "philosophical objectives go beyond affecting academic proficiency."⁵¹ Corky and the school leaders, from the initial ideation of the school, wanted to "perceive education not only as the intellectual development of the individual, but also to reinstall pride and confidence that

⁵⁰ Rodolfo Gonzales, First Draft Proposal to Establish a Viable Chicano Studies Program and the Development of the School of Tlatelolco, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver.

⁵¹ Ibid.

will motivate and encourage leadership in Chicano youth and their parents. These educational social and political processes will be responsible for social change which will benefit our people as a whole.”⁵² The combination of student growth *academically* and *culturally* is what makes Escuela Tlatelolco (and its pedagogy) unique and refreshing for Chicanos seeking reform in education.

Hinting at the type of content that would be present on the curriculum, this proposal explains that “The Escuela’s educational program exposes our people to the true reality of our social, economic, political, education, vocational, and environmental conditions in this society.”⁵³ Although there is no explanation about how these ideas fit into or change standard American curriculum (such as standardized ideas you learn about in math, US history, geography, etc), the school’s leadership team wanted to be clear about the desired political and social outcome of their school. Nothing was meant to be “standard” at The Escuela, instead they wanted to focus on forming Chicano youth that could “analyze conditions and apply [their] awareness, knowledge and energy collectively to achieve needed social change.”⁵⁴

Lots of care was put into creating the goals of Escuela Tlatelolco. It may seem that these ideas are too ambiguous to form a school with a quality education, but it is important to remember that Chicanos were working with very limited resources regarding minority education reform. All they knew was that the current system was not working for them at all, so they were tasked with creating a whole new philosophy and education

⁵² Rodolfo Gonzales, First Draft Proposal to Establish a Viable Chicano Studies Program and the Development of the School of Tlatelolco, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

system themselves. The main takeaway is that Chicano education was thought to only be successful if you allow educators to incorporate political education and cultural pride into the curriculum and school culture.

FAMILIA PARTICIPATION= TRUE EDUCATION

In thinking about the ways that culture can be incorporated into education for Chicanos, we must consider the values that this community holds because of its Mexican background that was forced to interact with American culture, thus creating the Chicano identity. Mexican culture values family and community very highly, making practices like caring for your parents in old age, helping your neighbors, and kids living at home until marriage very common. Most importantly, the ideology of family and community unity creates a culture of serving for the sake of helping and contributing, not serving for something in return.

In the United States, independence and self-sufficiency is at the core of the nation. Kids dream about the day they move out, nursing homes for the elderly are common, and family is valued in a very different way compared to Latin America. I am not here to argue that one lifestyle is better than the other, but I do want to highlight that there is an inevitable tension between ideologies for bicultural communities. Particularly for kids of diverse ethnic backgrounds growing up in America and existing in one culture at home, then a distinct culture outside of the home.

One of the great qualities of The Escuela is that it builds a bridge between cultures for Chicano students. American education is focused on individual students being responsible for their own learning, but Escuela Tlatelolco is built on the concept of

La Familia, the family. The same document I discussed above describes the school culture under the “La Familia Concept:”

“Since learners, instructors and parents are able to relate to one another as a familia, arising problems and obstacles can be overcome and the school is able to progress. In this way we learn to work together. It is through the family concept that our educational program is able to disseminate the knowledge of the Chicano’s historical, social, cultural and political contributions. There is no separation to block the road to education...Every learner then becomes an instructor who must share what he learns and continues to teach others.”⁵⁵

Personally, as a product of nearly 18 years of traditional American education, the concept of a school as a family amazes me. This passage made me reflect on my own internalized discomfort with my teachers and professors; I have never sought support from them because they were figures of authority in my life. I was taught that educators have the final say and will punish me if I don’t meet their expectations (then blame my parents for my faults).

The family concept at Escuela Tlatelolco approaches “problems” as opportunities for rehabilitation as a community. It supports knowledge being shared through community. It keeps the cycle of learning within the community, where students are expected to pass on what they learn. This concept is my favorite aspect of Escuela Tlatelolco and although it is not a model that can be duplicated at larger schools, it is something that can be applied at the classroom level.

The Familia Concept is applied by making student, parent, and educator expectations very clear. The school’s proposal addresses families by stating that “in order to create an atmosphere conducive for the student to learn, it is necessary that our

⁵⁵ Rodolfo Gonzales, First Draft Proposal to Establish a Viable Chicano Studies Program and the Development of the School of Tlatelolco, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver

students participate in all Escuela related activities and have 100% support/equal participation from their parents.” Students and parents were expected to interact with the school on important days/celebrations such as “September 16th, March 17th, Cinco de Mayo, Anniversary for Tlatelolco and the Anniversary of the Crusade for Justice.”⁵⁶ When able, the school also asked for parents to donate when possible, either monetarily or with their time, since the school had limited funds.

A WARM WELCOME

All that has been discussed thus far is important for the initial creation of the school, but now we will step into thinking about the ways parents and students *experienced* the philosophies behind Escuela Tlatelolco. The first step of education in the United States is applying and being admitted. In the DPL archives, there is an application for the school; the title reads “Application to Escuela Tlatelolco Centro de Estudios.” Although the document is not dated, Escuela Tlatelolco was incorporated March 12, 1971, and began admitting students soon after.⁵⁷ The application is mostly text below the title, but there is one important symbol on this document that makes this application unique; the following image is on the upper right side of the page, taking up a quarter of the space.

⁵⁶ Rodolfo Gonzales, First Draft Proposal to Establish a Viable Chicano Studies Program and the Development of the School of Tlatelolco, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver

⁵⁷ Editors at Escuela Tlatelolco. “*History of Escuela Tlatelolco*.” Escuela Tlatelolco, http://www.escuelatlatelolco.org/Escuela_2013/History.html.



Figure 2: Image Present on Escuela Tlatelolco's Application

This image is very powerful to include on the front of a school application. Several iconic Chicano images are present in this image, such as the Huelga fist, a large Aztec-style bird (which may represent the Aztec God Huitzilopochtli), and two indigenous warriors on the sides. Escuela Tlatelolco and its leadership did not want to leave any room for doubt regarding the type of school families were signing up for. This powerful image must have brought Chicano parents excitement, as well as some relief since the image is accompanied by Spanish text. Following the title and the image, the application opens with an introduction that reads,

“For many applicants and their parents the admission process in an independent school is a new experience. At Escuela we view this as an opportunity for the school and the family to become better acquainted and to share common goals for individual students. We are delighted that you are considering La Escuela and

assure you that your application will be reviewed with the greatest interest and care.”⁵⁸

The school application opens with a clear acknowledgement of the institutional barriers Chicano families face, not by *stating* that directly, but rather by sympathizing and saying that this process is likely new for them and the school understands. This introduction also clarifies the priorities of the school: individual students and the collaboration between them, educators, and family for their success. These goals mirror the principles present in Zapatismo and Corky’s personal beliefs discussed in previous pages.

TIME FOR CLASS: SOCIOLOGY OF CHICANO EDUCATION

The DPL archives had a brief selection of documents that were kept from Escuela Tlatelolco’s administration. Fortunately for my research, this included a course review about a class called “Sociology of Chicano Education,” taught by Corky himself. The review on file seems to have been written by Corky as a reflection on the effectiveness of his class, but lacks context like the year it was taught, student reviews, and any other forms of data beyond his own reflections. Although I cannot draw any conclusions about how this class directly impacted the quality of the education at Escuela, this document does give us a window into the types of classes students were able to take and the books/sources that led to the overall Chicano pride present in the student population.

Corky expressed that “the prime objectives when we started the course were to acquaint the students with the contemporary Chicano movement, and to point out the

⁵⁸ Unknown author, Application to Escuela Tlatelolco Centro de Estudios, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver

importance of relevant resources and teaching methods to the Chicano student.”⁵⁹ It seems he soon realized this was too much information to fit into class time, especially since he wanted students to take an active role in researching contemporary Chicano problems as they were taking the class. This resulted in the class being taught as a lecture where students “added their own individual experiences and their own analysis of what Chicano education should be.”⁶⁰

The area with the most academic freedom seemed to have been the class projects. Corky explained that “students selected work projects from the attached subject material...some of the students elected to do community organization... or oral/written reports.” Some of the subjects they could choose to write about were the Youth Movement, Barrios, Farm Workers, Land Struggle, The Church, Labor Movement, Politics, and much more that was outlined on the syllabus.⁶¹ Although his initial intention was to solely use his textbook, Corky ended up assigning readings such as: *Aztecs of Mexico* (G.C. Vaillant, Penguin, 1966), *World of the Maya* (Victor W. Von Hagen, Mentor Books, 1960), *Aztec Thought and Culture* (Leon Portilla, University of Oklahoma, 1958) and *The True History of the Conquest of Mexico* (Barnad Diaz del Castillo 1586, Irving Lgnard, 1956).

Corky’s education style was very aligned with his political views and movement goals. The school’s philosophy is seen in the classroom in a couple of interesting ways that I want to call attention to. First, the use of various books and textbooks that directly

⁵⁹ Rodolfo Gonzales, Copy of Course Review for Sociology of Chicano Education, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

correlated with the subject of the class and the identities of the students in the class.

Second, the classroom structure and the emphasis put on 2-way learning between the teacher and students. Lastly, Corky's flexibility as an educator to assess his curriculum and adjust to best meet his larger goals.

These are just a couple of strategies I observed in Corky's classroom, and I am sure many more strategies would emerge if all classrooms were studied at The Escuela. In the classroom, academic and cultural excellence is fostered through careful selection of course materials that address history relevant to students (something often missing in standardized education). Classrooms with student discussions and projects are not unique, however, The Escuela is unique in the intimacy involved in their classroom discussions about personal identity (intimacy that is only possible because of the Familia structure of the school).

EDUCATION, PRIDE, THEN ART

Spending time thinking about your own identity, your place in the world, and the injustices that have been committed toward your community is overwhelming. I do not want to glaze over how hard the work was for students at the school. Fortunately, Corky had experience with activist work and knew the importance of creative outlets. The Denver Archives contained several examples of student art, particularly poetry, that were the result of the radical education at Escuela Tlatelolco. Below are three poems from the collection that I selected for this project (one of which I will not be translating from Spanish in order to maintain the authenticity of the words, but will be discussing in English):

ESCUELA DE TLATELOLCO by Conrado Romero ⁶²

*ESCUELA DE TLATELOLCO
POR DOCE AÑOS DANDO EJEMPLO
A LA JUVENTUD DEL BARRIO
TE HONRARAN COMO SU TEMPLO*

*ENTRE CULTURA Y POLÍTICA
SE ENCUENTRA ESTUDIO CHICANO
SON CIUDADANOS DE AZTLÁN
DAN UNO AL OTRO LA MANO*

*LA MAYOR PARTE DE TUS MAESTROS
SIRVEN VOLUNTARIAMENTE
DANDO ENSEÑANZA Y APOYO
A LOS HIJOS DE TU GENTE*

*CON MÚSICA Y BALLET
DEMONSTRAN ENTRES Y FINES
TODO CUMPLIDO EN EL TEATRO
NOMBRADO POR LUIS MARTÍNEZ*

*ESCUELA DE TLATELOLCO
GUARDA BIEN NUESTRA CULTURA
PARA QUE TUS NINOS MANANA
NO PASEN VIDA TAN DURA*

(UNTITLED POEM) by Olivia ⁶³

*I'VE HEARD
BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL
BUT
I WANT
BROWN IS BEAUTIFUL*

*-
TO FEEL IS TO BE
TO LIVE
MY FEELINGS ARE BEAUTIFUL*

⁶² Conrado Romero, Written Student Poem, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver

⁶³ Olivia, Written Student Poem, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver

BECAUSE THEY'RE REAL
BECAUSE THEY'RE
ME

AND I'M BEING BRAVE ENOUGH,
LOVING ENOUGH
TO ALLOW MYSELF TO FEEL
TO BE MYSELF...TO GROW

BUT SHIT
WHO CAN/WILL UNDERSTAND
MY FRUSTRATION,
MY PAIN
WHO CAN I TURN TO
WHO WILL HELP ME UNTWIST MY STOMACH
MY BODY IS SCREWED WITH THIS
PAIN...MI GRITO
ES LOUD AND LONG

CAN'T YOU HEAR IT?
THAT I FEEL UNGLY...
TO DISCOVER AFTER ALL THESE YEARS...
THAT I DON'T LOVE MYSELF
THAT ALL THESE YEARS I'VE BEEN LOOK-
ING AT MYSELF THROUGH GAVACHO EYES...
JUDGING, CONDEMNING

DAMN! I WAS A RACIST
AGAINST MYSELF.
I HATED MYSELF BECAUSE I'M ME???
NO MORE, WHITE MAN, NO MORE
GAVACHO, GAVACHA...

I'M BROWN, I'M BEAUTIFUL
I'M A CHICANA
Y SABES QUE WHITE MAN, PIG, EDUCATOR,
NO CHINGAS CONMIGO MAS!!!

A SONG TO AMERIKA (excerpt) by Che Luera ⁶⁴

I sing about Amerika
the country with a birthday in mind
I sing about Amerika

⁶⁴ Che Luera, Written Student Poem, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver

with history as black as night
 I sing the hell with Amerika
 this fourth day of July.
 I scream with anger,
 why do you celebrate?
 and the people pacified
 how soon they forget.
 One Hundred Ninety Nine years
 Of horrified misery.
 Looking for Two Hundred years,
 and still you celebrate your own conquest.
 Sing about Amerika
 but remember it started with the slaughter
 of the Red Man.
 Celebrate in drunk stupidity
 with the wine bloody of the millions
 slaughtered.
 Hooray for Amerika!
 but not if your Black
 For the chains of slavery
 are unbreakable till death.
 Hooray for Amerika!

These poems are windows into the minds of students at Escuela Tlatelolco. How did their education shape the way they perceive themselves and the world around them? Each of these poems offers a distinct answer and demonstrates the various results of the Chicanocentric school.

The first poem, written by student Conrado Romero, discusses the meaning of The Escuela for the larger Chicano community. She writes that the school is an example for the youth; that they will honor it like a temple. She says that teachers serve voluntarily, so they teach and support their children by choice. My favorite line is in the second stanza, where she explains that between culture and politics lies *chicano studies*. Chicanos are the political result of Mexican-American culture in America, so in other words, Conrado believes that education is at the heart of the Chicano identity. Having this

understanding about your education is extremely impactful because it provides a sense of purpose for students and Chicano education provides a societal explanation for any hardships they have experienced as Chicanos. I believe this knowledge may even be the difference between a student dropping out of school and a student thriving in the classroom, so it is incredible that Escuela Tlatelolco exists to provide Chicanos with the education they need.

The second poem addresses the way that Chicano education can change a student's self-image and confidence. Olivia's poem is powerful. Through the length of the poem, she struggles to come to terms with her beauty because she does not fit eurocentric standards. She realizes that she has been *racist against herself* for all this time. She expresses that she is beautiful because she is strong, she allows herself to feel emotions, and because she is Chicana. She attributes her initial self-hatred to the white man, or the educator, that first taught her what beauty was. Escuela Tlatelolco allows students to view the world through a lens that directly reinforces Chicano culture, beliefs, and pride, even if they have been buried under years of colonialism. It is incredible to think that The Escuela, an educational institution, had a role in her new-found confidence as an individual. The poem does not directly state that the school had an impact on her self image, but considering the types of content that was taught and the people who taught at Escuela Tlatelolco (like Corky), I believe it is reasonable to conclude that her education played a role in her personal development.

The final poem that I included from the archive, written by Che, is one that I found slightly unexpected in the Crusade for Justice archive: a poem that condemns the United States for its maltreatment of Indigenous and Black Americans. In the first section

of this poem, there is no mention of Chicanos, the Chicano movement, or injustices toward Chicanos. The poem was written by a Chicano student at Escuela Tlatelolco, however, since it was found among the other student poems. Whether it was by the student's personal research or by lessons taught at school, Che understood that Chicano suffering did not come independently and injustice in "Amerika" touched every minority population. Considering the school's goal of creating active and knowledgeable Chicanos, Che serves as one example of a Chicano student that understood American race dynamics for both the benefit of the Chicano Movement and future coalition building between different communities.

GOOD THINGS COME TO AN END

I found ample evidence in the Denver archives supporting the education offered at Escuela Tlatelolco, particularly from student reviews and narratives present in student poetry. Even so, the school unfortunately shut its doors in the summer of 2017.⁶⁵ Escuela had a partnership with Denver Public Schools (DPS) for several years, but an advisory board recommended that DPS terminate the contract because of standardized academic performance issues. A member of the school board at Escuela Tlatelolco refuted by explaining that academic testing is "not always fair to certain communities."⁶⁶ The school board tried to argue that the stories of success outnumbered the perceptions that The Escuela was not providing an academic curriculum that was successful. It was a losing battle for Escuela, however, and they released the following news press to announce their closing:

⁶⁵ Unknown author, "La Escuela Tlatelolco, iconic private school born during Crusade for Justice, is closing June 1st." Denver 7 News, June 30th, 2017, Denver Public Library

⁶⁶ Ibid.

“For 46 years, Escuela Tlatelolco has been a model of education rooted in academic excellence and social justice. We have always been proud of our educational community; especially the success of our students. The Board of Trustees along with Principal Nita Gonzales, have embarked on the sale of the building. As we began this process, several “unforeseen financial circumstances” surfaced which have resulted in serious financial challenges. As a result, the Board of Trustees and Principal Gonzales have made the difficult decision to close the school effective July 1st, 2017.”⁶⁷

In the span of my research time, I was unable to locate any documents that further explained the closing of the school from the point of view of DPS. Student performance and budget problems seem to be at the core of the school closure. More specifically, it seems to be the misalignment of philosophies and goals between Escuela Tlatelolco and DPS. Perhaps the closure was inevitable taking that into consideration.

However, I do not believe that the school closing speaks to the quality of the education at Escuela Tlatelolco. After all, the school “has a history of helping troubled youths rediscover their potential.”⁶⁸ Of the 152 students at the school in 2005, 45 percent had dropped out of public schools and 15 percent had been expelled. And yet, the school boasted a 90 percent graduation rate. Since 1971, 61 percent have gone on to receive undergraduate degrees and 20 percent graduate degrees.⁶⁹

Students were successful, and based on my previous analysis, they were also happy. Why did the school really close then? I believe school politics came into play and there was no longer a fiery Chicano movement supporting the school after the 70s and 80s, giving the school district the upper hand. So, while a Chicano centric school may no

⁶⁷ Unknown author, "La Escuela Tlatelolco, iconic private school born during Crusade for Justice, is closing June 1st." Denver 7 News, June 30th, 2017, Denver Public Library

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Elizabeth Aguilera and Bianca Prieto, "Activist's Passion Lives On." The Denver Post, June 23rd, 2005, Denver Public Library

longer be possible, the actual structure, education philosophy, and classroom practices of Escuela Tlatelolco can be applicable in smaller ways to continue supporting ethnic pride in schools within the district.

Conclusion: Tell Your Story Projects

I came into this project with two main interests: Escuela Tlatelolco and storytelling. A couple of months ago I knew that I wanted to write something that included my dad's stories, but I was unsure where my research on The Escuela was going to lead me. Escuela Tlatelolco has taught me the following about education when you are working on inclusivity and holistic learning:

1. **Do your work with intentionality:** Corky Gonzales was clear of his beliefs from the start of his activist career. In his own written work, early planning documents, and classroom, he upheld his goal of educating Chicanos for their own liberation. He made the goals clear for everyone involved including educators, students, and families. Corky is the righteous leader of the Crusade for Justice, but he was supported by a community that shared his vision and put faith in his school because of the intentionality behind it.
2. **A student's identity NEEDS to be a pedagogical tool for a classroom:** Escuela Tlatelolco did not merely educate Chicanos. The school educated Chicanos on what it meant to be Chicano. Students learned about Chicano problems while self-reflecting and contributing their own thoughts and experiences to the larger discourse of the Chicano Movement. Not every school can be ethno-centric but

ignoring ethnicity in the classroom altogether will not benefit the growth of students of color.

3. **A school should be a family:** Opening lines of communication similar to a family is a great way for schools to model healthy communication, conflict resolution, and restorative “discipline.” It also acknowledges the different educators in the student’s life, such as their parents, and brings them into the conversation to best support the student.

In summary, I believe that schools and districts should provide educators the resources necessary to learn how to lead with intentionality, utilize and honor student identity in the classroom, and apply the Familia Concept in their community. Introducing educators to alternative ways of thinking, such as those offered by the Zapatistas, Paulo Freire, Bell Hooks, indigenous communities like the Lakotas, and many others is also important and the responsibility of school administrators. I unfortunately do not have the expertise to create a training manual for educators at this stage of my education, but I can share some final insights into my experience with this thesis and walk through one project idea that replicates my project on a much smaller scale.

I now discovered that my dad’s stories and the communal education I described in my introduction is the source of my personal pride in my own Chicano identity. I was unable to attend a Chicano centric school, but being in conversation with my father while writing this project gave me the sense of community that I was missing in the earlier years of my life. Moreover, the greatest gift my college is leaving me with was the opportunity to immerse myself in the Latinx and first-generation community on campus.

My identity had to develop in isolation from my academics unfortunately, but the final pedagogical takeaways I highlighted above prevent this and can be guidelines for future classrooms.

I only came into this understanding after going through the process of hearing, translating, writing, and analyzing my dad's stories in the context of my other research. This research idea was academically inspired by previous Latinx centered classes I enrolled in while at Claremont Mckenna College; spaces that likely emulated the classrooms at Escuela Tlatelolco in conversation and basic ideological beliefs. Not everyone has access to college courses or has the time to dedicate the time I put into this project. However, this project would be very digestible if it were a small, oral history project meant for intergenerational conversations.

The final section of this thesis will outline the way I envision an oral history project happening in an academic setting with students of all ages (you would just need to change the tone for different groups). This is just one example of ways to integrate intentional storytelling that involves families and educators to promote self-pride in the student's identity and background.

Model Project

Goal: The goal of this project is to promote conversation between students and their parents, or students and some other member of their community. Through an interview style process, participants will open lines of communication with a meaningful person in their lives. This will allow participants to include their parents or community in an academic project, so encourage them to be creative and seek stories that they would not hear in the classroom typically, but are meaningful to them, nonetheless.

Materials needed: Materials can vary based on the group. You can have participants record conversations with their phones or other recording devices, but they can also use handwritten notes. For this example, I used voice memos on the iPhone to record the stories.

Instructions:

1. Introduce the Project: This step requires the most time for the educator but is important for the success of the project. Educators can frame the project in a couple different ways (1) you can provide a community specific explanation for why this project is important, like if you were dealing with only Chicano students, or (2) you can provide general background, history, and philosophy about storytelling as a broader category.
2. Give students ample time and address any challenges: As with any school project, timing and proper support is very important. Make sure participants with family

challenges or other limiting factors have someone to talk to or some alternative to the project, such as independent research to find their own collection of stories.

3. Have students write out stories: Once interviews have been conducted, have students write down what they heard. It is up to the educator but make it clear whether participants should merely transcribe or if they should interpret the story as they write (in my example, I tried to exactly translate what was said to keep the tone).
4. Have students analyze stories: Participants can write their personal connection to the story, what they learned from the story, their favorite part, or what things the story reminds them of. There are many ways to analyze the stories to address multiple goals.
5. Allow students to share: Have participants share their stories. Consider writing them out in a communal book, put them up in the room, create an online archive, or anything else to make the final project a group effort in the end.
6. Create a community event: Invite participants and those they interviewed to celebrate! The people interviewed can have an opportunity to see the result of their story and be in community.

The stories below are the stories I received from my dad at the start of my thesis research. These can serve as examples of stories that your participants may receive. Or, in an alternate plan, educators may choose to give participants a collection of stories like these and write their reflections about them.

STORY TRANSCRIPTIONS

#1:

“Many years ago, three friends were working on a house together. When they were digging in one of the bedrooms, they knocked down a section of the wall, exposing a *cantaro* (a jug). The three friends excitedly reached for it at the same time: “It’s mine!” “No, I saw it first!” “I want it, it’s mine!” They couldn’t decide who would keep it, so one of them just snatched it up and looked inside. He looked inside and saw coal, many small pieces of coal. He was disappointed, “I thought it would have money or gold, but it doesn’t have anything.” The second friend agreed with the first and lost interest in the *cantaro*. The third friend, however, decided to keep it. He grabbed it and took it to the Father at the local church. He told the Father that they found this antique *cantaro* and he offered it to him to use in the church. The father found it strange that there were pieces of coal inside the *cantaro*. He took one of the pieces of coal, put it in a bottle, and hung it there in the church.

Days, weeks, months, and eventually years would pass. One day, a foreigner arrived at their town and visited the church. He was intrigued by the bottle with coal in it. The Father saw him staring at the bottle and finally asked what was catching his attention. The outsider said, “I just don’t understand how they were able to fit that gold coin in that bottle, Father.” The Father looked and confirmed what the man was looking at. Where everyone had only seen coal, this foreigner was able to see gold. The Father finally spoke and told the man that he had something for him. He gave the man the *cantaro* full of coal and explained to him that the gold must have become coal through years of envy, fighting and other negative things excess money brings to the average

man. “But you,” the Father said, “you saw the gold. You must be a good man worthy of it.”

#2:

“A long time ago, there was an epidemic in Mexico (like COVID now) and the virus was called *La Viruela Negra*. My grandfather would tell me about his great-grandfather who lived through those times. He was a very strong, hardworking man. When the epidemic hit, lots of people were passing away. Every house either lost someone or had been infected. People were very poor back then; all they were able to do was make *Atole* from their maize harvests. When someone caught the virus, they would be debilitated, and they couldn’t get medicine; all they were able to drink was the *Atole*.

It was so common that as the sick got sicker and weaker, all they would say was, “Tole...tole...” Oftentimes this was their last drink before passing away. Our family that lived through that time, since they were a physically strong family, offered to help collect bodies and bury them. They would push their wagon through the streets and stop at houses that waved them down. The problem was, my grandfather would tell me, that some of the people they were collecting were not actually dead. There were times they would hear a faint, “tole...” come from the wagon. It was not a time of compassion, however. Even though those helping bury bodies knew that some were still alive, they would still bury them. Lots of people died due to the illness just like COVID today, but many also died from human cruelty. As kids, we would have nightmares about this story. We would hear, “tole... tole...” in our dreams and it would scare us *un chingo*.”

#3

“Years ago, in the desert region of Durango, Mexico, there was a man who was related to my grandfather. He enjoyed being in the *cerros*; the mountains. He looked for rocks, fossils or remains from indigenous people, or anything that had any sort of value. On one of his walks through the cerro, he saw a strange cave. He entered it, lit something to see, and kept walking until he reached the end. The cave was full of money, bars of gold, precious stones, and much more. “I’m rich!” he thought to himself. He started looking for something to carry at least a couple of things out of the cave. All he had with him was a little satchel, so he decided to use that. He filled his satchel, his pockets, and even his hat.

As he began walking out, he heard a voice say, “*Todo o nada*,” all or nothing. He got annoyed but ignored the voice. As he continued walking, he heard it again: all or nothing. “I’ll come back late for the rest of it I promise,” he tried to explain, but the cave began closing. “Fine!” he said while he put down his things to make the cave open again. He cursed the cave as he walked out, but he had a plan in mind. He returned to his town and borrowed wagons, donkeys, and even cars from those that had some. With all his equipment, he returned to the cave using the exact same path he used the first time. When he finally arrived, the cave was gone. He lost his opportunity to collect the treasure. To this day, our family still believes that he was the reason the family was not extremely wealthy.”

And as my dad would end a story...

Colorin Colorado, este cuento se ha acabado

El que se quede sentado se queda pegado

Y el que se paró se va al escusado

Acknowledgments

Thank you for taking the time to read my project. I would like to take a moment to thank those that helped me throughout this process. Firstly, thank you to Professors Kyla Tompkins and Diana Selig for giving me direction in this project, while still giving me the space to explore a topic that was very personal to me. I want to extend that thank you to all the professors at the Claremont Colleges that do the work to create spaces for students of color to exist wholly and have thus given me the confidence to pursue this project. That includes professors Gastón Espinosa, Tomás F. Summers Sandoval, Dionne Benson-Smith, Tessa Hicks Peterson, Gilda Ochoa, and Robin Garcia.

Gracias to my family for all your endless love and support throughout my time in college. Thank you to my brother who would proofread anything I sent to him at any hour of the day and my sister who would distract me from my work and remind me that life shouldn't be that serious sometimes. Para mis papás, los quiero mucho y gracias por enseñarme todo lo que se. Hago todo en la vida con ustedes en mi corazón.

Bibliography

- About, F. *The Development of Ethnic Self-Identification and Attitudes*. Sage, Newbury Park, CA, 1987.
- Anderson, J. K., & Springer, N. J. (2018). Zapatismo as a Resonant Public Pedagogy. *Latin American Perspectives*, 45(3), 151–170
- “Aztecs.” Edited by History.com Editors, *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 27 Oct. 2009, <https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-americas/aztecs>.
- Bob Trujillo, Student Evaluation Form for Course of Study, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver.
- Che Luera, Written Student Poem, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver.
- Conrado Romero, Written Student Poem, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver.
- Eisenberg, Daniel, et al. 2021 Winter/Spring ed., Healthy Minds Network, Ann Arbor , MI, 2021, pp. 1–25, *The Healthy Minds Study*.
- Elizabeth Aguilera and Bianca Prieto, "Activist's Passion Lives On." The Denver Post, June 23rd, 2005, Denver Public Library.
- Gutiérrez, David G. “‘Sin Fronteras?’: Chicanos, Mexican Americans, and the Emergence of the Contemporary Mexican Immigration Debate, 1968-1978.” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 10, no. 4 (1991). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27500869>.
- Giroux, Henry. Policy Futures in Education, *Rethinking Education as the Practice of Freedom: Paulo Freire and the Promise of Critical Pedagogy*.
- “History of Escuela Tlatelolco,” Escuela Tlatelolco, n.d. 2003.
- Juan Gallegos, Student Evaluation Form for Course of Study, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver.
- Latino Data Project. Latino Leadership Institute, Littleton, CO, *LATINO COLORADO*. Leslie Bentley, “A Brief Biography of Paulo Freire | Pedagogy and Theatre ...” 1999. <https://ptoweb.org/aboutpto/a-brief-biography-of-paulo-freire/>.
- Lily Martinez Topio, Student Evaluation Form for Course of Study, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver.

Olivia, Written Student Poem, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver.

Padgett, Heather Clapp. Cross & Joftus, LLC, Denver, CO, 2009, pp. 1–30, *High School Reform in Colorado: A History of Efforts and Lessons for the Future*.

Sadler, Christa. "The Original Coloradans." *Uncover Colorado*, 25 Apr. 2020.
Marshall, Joseph. *The Lakota Way: Stories and Lessons for Living*. Penguin Compass, 2002.

"Rodolfo 'Corky' Gonzales," Escuela Tlatelolco, n.d. 2003.

Rodolfo Gonzales, Copy of Epic Poem Yo Soy Joaquin, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver.

Rodolfo Gonzales, Handwritten Note on Scrap Paper, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver.

Rodolfo Gonzales, Handwritten Note on Scrap Paper, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver.

Rodolfo Gonzales, First Draft Proposal to Establish a Viable Chicano Studies Program and the Development of the School of Tlatelolco, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver.

Rodolfo Gonzales, Copy of Course Review for Sociology of Chicano Education, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver.

Unknown author, "La Escuela Tlatelolco, iconic private school born during Crusade for Justice, is closing June 1st." *Denver 7 News*, June 30th, 2017, Denver Public Library.

Unknown author, Application to Escuela Tlatelolco Centro de Estudios, Crusade for Justice Collection, Denver Public Library Archives, Denver.

Valenzuela, Angela. *Subtractive Schooling: U.S.-Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring*. State University of New York Press, 1999.

Vigil, Ernesto B. *The Crusade for Justice: Chicano Militancy and the Government's War on Dissent*. University of Wisconsin Press, 1999.