

My lived experience as a white female, one of many in teaching and teacher education, informs my approach to Critically Informed Dialogic Pedagogy, and that matters.

I grew up with many privileges because of my whiteness. I also grew up below the poverty line. I was the first in my family to go to college, and many people would be surprised to learn that most of my family is Filipino. I grew up eating lumpia and using sign language. My brother, who I am both a sister to and the primary caretaker of, has a rare genetic condition, which simply means that he shows his brilliance through his hands and his smile. I had only ever lived and worked in small agricultural communities before moving to Boulder for my PhD. It has been emotionally, mentally, and physically hard to live in an area so affluent and so far from the river valley I call home. As I move through this degree, I continue to learn about myself and how my whiteness impacts the rooms I enter, the conversations I have, and the systems that enabled me to come this far in education. These experiences have taught me that my understanding of equitable education is partial and constantly evolving.

They have also taught me that identities are layered and complex. Building equitable classrooms requires strong relationships and a commitment to seeing the brilliance in students. I have come to believe that critically informed dialogic practices are essential for transforming how students experience school. Listening and following through are not just techniques; they are the foundation of meaningful student-student and teacher-student relationships. I believe this is at the heart of teaching, whether or not I share lived experiences with my students. Choosing to focus on who my students are and what they care about has shown me that there is hope for our world, and that the future is brighter than we may think during challenging times.

For me, Critically Informed Dialogic Pedagogy means creating opportunities for students to listen to and share diverse perspectives and personal stories that deepen and enrich all of our learning. Dialogue allows us to honor others' lived experiences as a source of learning that is real, relevant, and relational. This commitment shapes how I try to build classrooms that are loud and warm, rather than silent and cold. Grounded in the idea that we each carry only partial knowledge, I believe the classroom is a place to learn alongside and through others by bringing in knowledge and experiences from beyond the classroom and far beyond myself as the teacher. Collaboration matters, and the people in the room are always more important than the content itself.

As an aspiring teacher educator, I recognize that academia is shaped by whiteness, the main tool for systemic oppression. My whiteness has brought me privileges, and it has helped open doors that the intersection of poverty and race might have kept closed. Every aspect of my identity, both named and unnamed, influences how I approach and enact Critically Informed Dialogic Pedagogy. My experience navigating both academia and the broader world shapes how I use dialogue to create a warmer classroom environment. I am committed to

continuing my growth in order to support students and to help build a culture where they genuinely look forward to coming to class, knowing their contributions are what make the learning worthwhile for all of us.