

My lived experience as a queer, gender-questioning, first-generation, Latina master's student informs my approach to Critical Dialogic Pedagogy—and that matters. My lived experience as a “white passing” Latina has taught me that my varying levels of both oppression and privilege impacts my perspective of what equitable education means in the classroom. My lived experiences as an individual entering arts academia in a society that prefers STEM education and corporations has taught me that cultivating equitable education in the classroom is a commitment to uplifting all oppressed and overlooked identities and career paths in education and the world. Sympathy and kindness is key to positive futures. My choice of combating inequities in the arts and educational spheres has taught me so much about how creating spaces for all voices is important, and new eras of creativity can be fostered if we open doors for all. All of my lived experiences have taught me that living through critically informed initiatives and dialogic practices is something that can evolve and change, continuing the ongoing effort for inclusivity—one that involves constant self-reflection and empathy.

For me, Critical Dialogic Pedagogy means that everyone no matter the positionality, matters as I work towards developing a classroom environment that fosters both safe and brave spaces. My perspective of the classroom as a place to belong and educate a community is informed by both negative, exclusionary classroom settings and positive, welcoming windows for more inclusive degree tracks. My perspective of the classroom being a site to foster welcoming reveals how empathy and inclusivity are important elements of the class. Dialogic Pedagogy is one way I am able to confront the harmful ideologies set up in systems of academia when it comes to providing inclusive and safe spaces for students and for all who enter the room.

In essence, as first generation low-income student, an educator, a lover of the arts and performance, and a person who's cultural identity is important to her craft, my lived experience has taught me that academia is a place where i have an outlet to challenge the pillars of exclusivity in the world and open doors for others that were previously shut for me. In order to continue to expand the vastness of academia, I am speaking about my positionality as a site of openness, inclusivity, and fostering joy. It is important to recognize how every part of my identity that I have named, and those that I have not, impacts my approach and implementation of Critical Dialogic Pedagogy. My personal experience of existing in the world of academia and beyond impacts my engagement with dialogue in the classroom in order to create inclusive spaces and learning and challenge the existing harmful pillars of academia. As a queer, disabled, FGLI Latina, I will continue to humble myself and be open to learning and involving myself in current and future inclusive practices in order to support students towards their goals no matter what they are.