DECOLONIZING TEACHER EDUCATION: 
EXPLORATIONS OF EXPANSIVE LEARNING AND CULTURALLY SUSTAINING 
PEDAGOGY IN A SOCIAL DESIGN EXPERIMENT

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Domínguez, Michael C. (Ph.D., School of Education)

Decolonizing Teacher Education: Explorations of Expansive Learning and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy in a Social Design Experiment

Thesis directed by Professor Kris Gutiérrez

This dissertation is an exploration of two pressing challenges in education: first, the preparation of novice educators who are well positioned to support consequential learning with historically marginalized youth and in underserved schools and communities, and second, the related need for historically marginalized youth to have access to compelling, culturally nurturing learning opportunities. Aquetza, a social design experiment, is a grassroots summer enrichment program for historically marginalized youth and novice educators from across the state of Colorado, designed to attend to these interrelated challenges of youth and teacher learning. Drawing on Vygotskian and Freirean perspectives on learning and pedagogy, as well as decolonial and poststructural theory, the program provided a series of pedagogical interventions to help both youth and teachers engage in expansive learning, shifting their participation and identities in relation to school and community environments.

This research focuses specifically on teacher education and the developmental trajectories of novice educators who, as co-participants in the design, generated new pedagogical practices and identities for enacting culturally sustaining, decolonial praxis. In three distinct, yet interrelated manuscripts, I turn my attention to (a) exploring the theories necessary to support robust, decolonial pedagogical practice, (b) examining the ways in which practice-based approaches might serve to cultivate decolonial dispositions in novice educators, and (c)
exploring case studies of the learning for individual participants working to become decolonial, culturally sustaining teachers.

Taken together, these manuscripts and design reflections argue for a radical reorientation of our energies in teacher education. I suggest that in order to better serve historically marginalized communities and youth, our novice educators need richly conceived spaces in which to consider the complex, affective dimensions of the schools in which they may teach. Further, their trajectories of learning must include destabilizing *travesias*, crossings, which productively disrupt the ways in which they see and live teaching and schooling. This study argues for a re-centering of our efforts onto the cultivation of *culturally nurturing educators* who can engage in the often ignored, but vital task of navigating the *affective geographies* of underserved classrooms, leveraging youth assets and pedagogical imagination towards consequential learning for all involved.
Dedication

For Alice and my family, whose love and support made this possible.

And for my students in North Las Vegas, NV, and J.D.Smith Middle School. You inspired this journey, and are always in my thoughts.
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across profound ontological distances. That’s rarely an easy task for novices, but you have done so eagerly, and always with your students in mind. I am proud to have had the pleasure of working with you, and seeing you step into your classroom in such an impactful and important way.

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Chapter I: 
Introduction & Theoretical Background

Prelude

On the morning that we would return to our respective homes and communities spread across Colorado, a smoldering sage stick was passed to one of the Aquetza program instructors towards the end of our closing ceremony, inviting him to take his turn to speak and share. The sage, which had burned throughout the week during moments of reflection, sharing, and connection, and now almost fully consumed, had made its way around our circle, a group of youth and undergraduates, students and novice educators, who had each taken a turn to briefly reflect on what the experience had meant to them, what they had learned, and what they were carrying back to their communities with them. Luis, a Chicano novice educator, who had grown in pedagogical stature and confidence during the week, shared the following reflection, seeking to capture and synthesize his thoughts at the conclusion of an emotional session, and powerful week:

So when this program first started I felt as though there would be a difficulty crossing bridges between a lot of us and we’d be coming from a lot of different poles and societies communities but y’know what guys, ya’ll connected really quickly, and those bridges were crossed like that [snaps fingers] and all of a sudden we found ourselves loving each other, we found a family out of something people don’t expect us to do, and uh, I appreciate that you guys helped me grow so much. I haven’t had an opportunity to do anything like this, and I’ve grown with you guys, and I’ve helped you and foremost important of all, everyone that was in my calpulli, everyone that was in this program, were all better leaders now – where we were, where we are now, and where we’re going, and at this point, were going forth, and I feel that, I feel that energy as I’m coming out of this, so I want to say thank you to you all.

While this reflection joined the brief thoughts of 30 youth and 14 other staff members, I share Luis’ words, in particular, because they speak to what that the Aquetza experience came to represent for its participants; capturing something co-constituted over the course of the week. Luis speaks of crossing bridges, building from and invoking Anzaldúa’s words, “Caminante, no hay puentes, hace puentes al andar,” shared on the first night of the program—words that had animated our work throughout the week. His narrative spoke of growth, opportunity, and connection across difference; about participants who were emerging as new people, stronger leaders, going forth, carrying a different energy and purpose, and mapping new directions of existence and identity.

Understood in the context of this emotionally and politically powerful closing ceremony event and the larger ecology of the space, Luis’ voice captured the core issue of the entire experience; a decolonial, expansive process of learning as becoming. From its inception, this is what Aquetza had been intended to offer its participants – youth and staff alike – as they moved forward from this emotional week, and out into Colorado’s Chican@ and Latin@ communities. Here, two years on from that point of inception, Luis’ words spoke to that experience, co-constructed, exciting, expansive, and meaningful, having come to some kind of fruition.
Introduction

This dissertation, occurring in Aquetza, a week-long social design experiment for historically marginalized youth and novice educators, is largely concerned with learning as becoming, or expansive learning (a concept more richly explained in a later chapter). Specifically, it will focus on the learning that occurred in this space for the novice educators; exploring expansive learning for teachers and teacher education in the context of the decolonial, critical project in education. In other terms, my central task is to examine what it might mean, look like, and entail, for a novice educator to grow into a new pedagogical self, to engage in a learning process that goes beyond just picking up a new professional skillset, but an expansive process of learning as becoming; to instead engage in what Anzaldúa calls travesías; crossings, making bridges as they walk.

My inquiry process around these topics entails exploring questions of theory, of method, and of practice. It is intended to be conversant with the field, particularly the emerging idea of culturally sustaining pedagogy; examining what it might look like for educators to grow into, and do this kind of pedagogical work such that their participation in schools and schooling shifts. Across the framing sections and three manuscripts that follow, my intention is to make an argument for a theory and orientation to teacher learning that is itself decolonial and culturally sustaining, while remaining grounded and pragmatic, conscious of the evolving, flexible ways in which identity – racial, cultural, communal – including teaching, or pedagogical identity, are constructed as assemblages of experience, context, history, affect. While more specific research questions that guide the individual manuscripts will be drawn out shortly, the following overarching research question drives the empirical study of the dissertation is:

In what ways might we cultivate novice educators as cultural-historical actors, with decolonial dispositions and pedagogical identities?
In this dissertation I argue that to adequately respond to this question involves engagement with theory, method, practice, but also questions of my own identity and positionality in relation to this work, to *Aquetza*, to the participants, and to the theories involved. Indeed, the way I conceptualize learning, think of teaching, and construct theory are reflections of my own experiences and framings of the world, learning, and education. These impressions and experiences shape this research question and those that follow, as well as the direction and purposes of this work.

In what follows next, I hope to explicate my theoretical framework\(^1\), defining some key theoretical vocabulary that I will draw on throughout, as well as laying out the influences that shape the decolonial *plane of consistency* from which I work. Before turning to this explication of theory, however, I briefly explore my own intellectual autobiography and positionality, noting that these tasks are, of course, profoundly interrelated; as Anzaldúa says, the work of *autohistoria-teoria*.

**Multiplicities of Identity: A Brief Biography to Situate this Work**

One of the longest lasting memories I have of my schooling experience was the intense ontological and emotional conundrum/crisis I faced each time a demographic form was placed in front of my younger self, and I was presented with the choice (select ONE), of the following:

- ☐ White (Non-Hispanic)
- ☐ Hispanic/Latino

My father is *Tejano*, and my mother White. While I can follow my roots for generations, and across centuries, through the *valle* of South Texas, to the town where my *familia* still, in large part, lives, I am also *güerro*, and just as much a part of another heritage as well. Growing up in

\(^{1}\) Following from Ravitch and Riggan (2012), I understand theoretical frameworks to inform and contribute to conceptual frameworks, yet distinct. My complete conceptual framework, as it coalesces theory, topical interest, and design, and applies to research practice, will be explicated in chapter 4.
the D.C. metro area well before the more recent influx of (primarily) Honduran and Salvadorian immigrant communities, meant that being and owning this multi-ethnic heritage of Domínguez was a challenging and largely individual task. I was far from my ‘roots’ in South Texas, and Spanish surnames were rare in our Virginia community. Unsurprisingly, my teachers had little to offer in the way of support for any exploration of identity; I still feel pangs of bitterness in regards to one of my earliest school memories, of arriving for history day, proudly dressed as César Chávez, only to be told by my teacher, unsure herself of who Chavez was, that he was not, in her estimation, important enough to be focal subject for this project on important figures in U.S. History. While it was not the case with all my instructors, more often than not, from my earliest memories through college, I was DomingQuez, and I, with constant reinforcement to do so, consented to this bastardization of my name and heritage. Being güerro, I was able to ‘pass,’ and multiple times each school year, curious teachers asked about my ethnic background. Yet, when the complexities of the my heritage and the tejano experience, my attempts to resist passing, proved overwhelming for them to comprehend – shocking to think that anyone, let alone non-Anglos, had occupied Tejas prior to the battle of the Alamo – I was told unequivocally that I was Spanish, and it was left at that; a discursive move to render away any vestige of undesirable ethnicity, any chance I might be somehow Mexican. While the assault on Chávez (and through him Latino/Chican@ history) was the more blatant offense, this interpellation and forced passing, happening regularly, and often used as a segue for individuals to make xenophobic statements about Mexicans and more ‘undesirable’ Latino groups in my presence, was an offense felt just as acutely; offering privilege for the price of disavowal.

Over the years, I checked various boxes, and sometimes ‘Other’ (an interesting and ironic discursive category for the historically marginalized), but none ever fit. Perhaps all this was
reading too much into a semantic question; but it felt in my youth, and indeed still feels, a substantial and important question of representation and responsibility. To check either of those boxes, to claim either one in totalizing, binary fashion, was to deny, beyond just family, something important; either to neglect the reality of my phenotypal heritage, and the responsibility of privilege which comes with that, or to disavow an affect and my own experiences of marginalization, interpellation, and my cultural sense of belonging as a Latino. While I now identify proudly as a Chicano-tejano, what this means across contexts is fluid, my identity multiplicitous; a variety of selves, existing and living in different communities and contexts in different ways.

As a teacher in North Las Vegas, NV, I found my own struggles with identity and marginalization in the classroom to be present for my students as well. From a staff of 65 or so, in a nearly 100% Mexican@/Latin@ community, I was one of 5 Latin@ teachers. My students endured the same sort of micro-aggressions I had, on a daily basis, and in a city largely hostile to them. In my first week of teaching, I was told to “get” a student, to scare my classes into submission, and assert my authority. Our counselor regularly noted that most of these Mexican kids would drop out by 10th grade – admittedly, and sadly, a true statistic – so making any effort to support them was, in his mind, useless. Teachers regularly banned the use of Spanish in their classrooms, and for the majority of my colleagues in the ELA/ESL department, spelling tests and practice standardized tests were the core of curriculum. Across the hall, the social studies teacher I shared my students with referred to them as “burros.” At the same time, these youth, ever-resilient, were experiencing and understanding their world in ways much different from that of their familias, most of whom still firmly identified as Mexican@. These youth weren’t not-Mexican@, but their experience of this, in light of these micro (and macro) aggressions in the
U.S., neocolonial context, was different. Yet, disconnected from broader socio-political histories and movements, and with access only to a reductive, NCLB-era curriculum that was absent of any connections to Latinidad, and devoid of any chance to explore identities beyond those of academic, colonial *mimicry* (Bhabha, 1984), my students struggled to articulate meaningful identities of resistance, their exciting multiplicities left to stagnate, interpellated as pathologically Mexican; or disavowed in more admirable mimicry.

As a young educator still struggling with the multiplicities of my own Chicano identity, I stumbled about pedagogically; frustrated, increasingly resentful of seeing youth and community culture forcibly marginalized, colonized on a grand scale. But this was not just a function of accessing funds of knowledge, or being responsive to cultural texts. Some of this indeed began to appear, as new teachers arrived, well-versed in culturally responsive buzzwords. Yet these individuals had no awareness, preparation, or interest in engaging with the subjectivities and affective lives of the students that would make culturally-relevant content meaningful, of *witnessing* their experiences, and *nurturing* their emerging subjectivities. Even the most well intentioned arrived to this school in this Mexican@ half of the Las Vegas valley certain that their work was to ‘save’ these students from this depressing, pathological barrio. I was left wondering whether there weren’t better ways to approach learning, and to prepare teachers, not to convey just content, but to engage with the process of becoming that robust, consequential learning should be.

I share this brief personal background to locate myself in this work, both personally and as a teacher. In both cases, identity and subjectivity were complicated, multiplicitous, and far from straightforward. Occupying different selves across different communities, I have never been able to comfortably or easily locate myself in some singular definition of Tejano, Chicano,
or Latino; these identities were constantly contested, from both outside marginalization, and internal negotiation. For my students, the situation was the same; they were at once interpellated as Mexican, and largely denied the opportunity to access and explore what their identities as Latin@s/Mexican@s/Chican@s meant to them in and across contexts. Yet my point here is not to lament this complexity, desiring some easy solution to what Chicanism@ means. Indeed, that complexity, the multiplicity of Chicanism@ is what makes it powerful, wonderful. Rather, I raise these points to suggest that the invitations to learning that largely exist for Chican@ youth, and really all youth in schools, are limited, stagnant, and offer no space for learning as becoming, for exploring identity, so closely related to learning and literacy, as an immanent function of imagination and decolonization. This must change.

_Anzaldúa, Deleuze & Guattari, and the Decolonial_

Now, as a Chicano teacher-educator, I am interested in what it might mean to prepare educators with dispositions that welcome the challenge of creating pedagogic opportunities that invite youth to engage with questions of cultural identity and subjectivity, not as an extracurricular indulgence, but as something central to learning in all the dimensions in which it occurs in schools – academic, personal, and affective. My own history as a Chican@ and a teacher draws me towards perspectives on learning in which the immanent is possible, so that decolonization – the reclaiming of coevalness – are functions of youth imagination, and invitations to grow rich with possibility and creative potential. With this in mind, my empirical work, my deeper thinking about teacher education and learning, is driven by a theoretical framework that blends decolonial and poststructural thinking – notably Anzaldúa and Deleuze and Guattari – employing these concepts as ways to understand the functioning of schools, the process of learning, the relationship between student and teacher, and the work of teaching. Both
Anzaldúa and Deleuze and Guattari offer lenses and vocabularies for understanding these dynamics; Anzaldúa, a Chicana tejana, speaks in language and metaphors that are significant, and personal to me, while Deleuze and Guattari offer perhaps more refined tools with which to approach social science. In what follows, my intent is to explore the theoretical terrain and vocabulary that I will use throughout this dissertation, connecting across the work of Anzaldúa, Deleuze and Guattari, and other scholars, to craft a plane of consistency from which this scholarship and consideration of teacher education begins, seeking the exploration of decolonial possibility. On that note, a reasonable point of departure, theoretically, is to define what I understand the decolonial to be, based on my own context and history, and moving forward into Aquetza and my empirical work.

To theorize the construct of the decolonial requires that we place it as a concept in the context of its construction, a lengthy history of conquest and subjugation. I draw heavily on Mignolo (2003) in making sense of this term, who suggests that the root of colonization is the denial of coevalness, and the widespread racial, ethnic, linguistic, epistemic, and spiritual marginalization of peoples of the global south. Thus, the work of decolonization is the denial of that same denial of coevalness; in other terms, it involves reclaiming agency and subjectivity from external interpellation (Althusser, 1971). This definition aligns with Bhabha’s theorization (1994), in which he suggests that, “…to reconstitute the discourse of cultural difference, demands not simply a change of cultural contents and symbols…It requires a radical revision of the social temporality in which emergent histories may be written,” (p. 246) and the production of, “a subversive strategy of subaltern agency that negotiates its own authority through a process of…insurgent relinking,” (p. 265). Ultimately, the task of this insurgent relinking would be to
produce a new, decolonial subject who has claimed coevalness. In this, I follow Anzaldúa, in her desire for that subject to move beyond any interpellation or binary, representing:

>a different sense of self (la nepantlera) that does not rest on external forms of identification (of family, race, gender, sexuality, class, and nationality), or attachments to power, privilege, and control, or romanticized self-images. (2004, p. 302)

This is the theory of the decolonial task with which I proceed with; a denial of denied coevalness through insurgent relinking and the fundamental re-writing of social, community, linguistic, political, epistemic, and ontological relationships, and the radical revision of what counts as consequential knowledge and subjectivity.

This task is, of course, deeply complicated in the post-colonial world. Society generally, and schools particularly, produce and reproduce the relations of colonization. Neoliberal and neocolonial Discourses operate through what Deleuze and Guattari (2011) call planes of organization. In these constructs, power and affect, which Massumi (2011) describes as “a pre-personal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another implying an augmentation or diminution in that body’s capacity to act,” (p. xvi) are deployed to interpellate bodies (Althusser, 1971), validating the subjectivity of some, while rendering others abject. An affective economy (Ahmed, 2004) emerges, distributing agency in differential fashion according to these interpellations, and inviting a process of territorialization (colonization) and reterritorialization (re-colonization) which subdues subjectivity and identity, and holds all subjects stagnant, in stasis, removed from one another, and their fullest potential. Out of this organization and affective economy an affective geography (McCormack, 2003) is created in sites of interaction, erecting psychic and ontological borders in this new terrain, which trap and limit movement of the colonized subject, who becomes beholden to the logic and parameters of its nomos (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Bourdieu, 2000), patterns of action traced over and over again towards the same result, further solidifying stasis, and inviting (ontological) death.
Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari, and my own experiences in school, these are the conceptual tools I employ to understand the operation of schools and schooling; framing them as *planes of organization*, dominated and controlled by a *nomos* and *affective economy* of neoliberalism and neocolonialism. Classrooms in turn become *affective geographies*, sites of learning that should invite connection and becoming through the intensity of *affect*, but are instead marked by teachers and students enacting and receiving a *pedagogy of tracings*; the same, worn, habitual paths that lead to inevitable and expected outcomes, endlessly repeating motions, practices, strategies, reforms that limit the agency of all involved, and constrain imagination and ingenuity. Reductive *pedagogies of tracings* plug potential *lines of flight* (Deleuze & Guattari, p. 270) away from the *plane of organization* by constantly *reterritorializing* the space, securing ontological borders, which keep the student (colonized) distant from the teacher (colonizer). Indeed the subjectivities and identities of all involved remain in *stasis* by the constant *reterritorialization* of the *tracings*; historically marginalized youth denied coevalness, and teachers kept at an *ontological distance* from the affective experiences of youth. In the context of schools particularly, I understand this *ontological distance* to be at the heart of colonization, as Bhabha (1994) says, it is, “not the colonialist self or the colonized Other, but the disturbing distance in-between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness,” (p. 45). In the context of theorizing decolonial education, in the context of this dissertation, focused so intently on inviting teachers to engage with historically marginalized communities, it is crucial that this *ontological distance* is understood, theorized, seen for what it is: a product of *affective geography*. Essentially, in the presence of these *planes of organization*, and *affective geographies*, *detrimentalizing* this colonial terrain of schooling becomes a function of closing these *ontological distances* that prevent *witnessing*, limit coevalness, and blind both
colonized (youth) and colonizer (teacher) to the insidious nature of tracings and stasis that live and persist in the nomos of schooling.

Broadly, this is the theoretical challenge at the core of my work: finding ways to encourage this risky, difficult, and destabilizing process of deterritorialization in novice educators; to encourage them to bridge ontological distances. As such, I employ theoretical tools not just to conceptualize the way schools function now, but also how we might engage in this process of deterritorialization. Deleuze and Guattari (2011) are once again helpful in this regard. Deterritorialization, they suggest, requires one to become a Nomad, or War Machine, an identity that resists organization, that crosses borders, ruptures and deterritorializes affective geographies. Most significantly, the Nomad breaks away from the stasis of tracings, engaging in insurgent relinking by mapping new lines of flight, which invite new realities and identities into existence. Whereas the tracing is a technology of stasis, a map is the way in which we, in which teachers and youth as Nomads, might navigate their way out of planes of organization, and towards decolonial possibility. As such, this distinction – between the map and the tracing – is a critical one, as Deleuze and Guattari explain:

What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real. The map does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself; it constructs the unconscious. It fosters connections between fields, the removal of blockages…The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group or social formation. It can be drawn on a wall, conceived as a work of art, constructed as a political action or as a meditation….The map has to do with performance, whereas the tracing always involves an alleged “competence.” (2011, p. 12-13)

Constructing a map, rather than following a tracing, is to engage in the very core of decolonial work. While pedagogies of tracings disallow witnessing, and reinforce ontological distance, maps open these possibilities in promising and powerful ways. The map, as theoretical tool, can aid us in understanding the sort of learning we desire; moving beyond the tracings that rely and focus on “an alleged ‘competence’” beholden to some colonized subjectivity locked in stasis,
orienting ourselves towards the learning and potential that exists in a dynamic process of expansion, of becoming, and performance. Anzaldúa adds richness to this theorizing of learning, recognizing this process of following a map as *conocimiento*, or learning as transformation, which urges us to engage, “the spirit in confronting our social sickness with new tools and practices whose goal is to effect a shift,” (p. 311). In this sense, constructing a map represents a process of *insurgent relinking* around our understanding of and participation in learning; it becomes a decolonial tool that can guide us to think in new ways, to act in new ways, to take up new tools and practices that move us in expansive directions. Moreover, the map, in the hands of the *Nomad*, permits the exploration and participation in what Anzaldúa calls *travesías*, crossings. Untethered from *stasis*, the teacher as *Nomad* becomes a map-maker, as Guattari (1995) notes, as *schizoanalytic cartographer*. Pedagogy and design become the construction of a *map*, rather than the following of a *tracing*, and that *map*, dynamic, immanent, conscious of *affect*, can plot a course across borders, *determinitorializaing* the *affective geography* of the classroom, *witnessing* the experiences and affective truth of students, and thereby closing the *ontological distance* between the colonizer (teacher) and colonized (youth), that reinforces and constructs colonial otherness. Thus, for my purposes, the *map*, *Nomad/schizoanalytic cartographer*, and *travesia*, are powerful theoretical tools for envisioning how to understand the process and dynamics with which we might close the *ontological distances* that lie at the heart of neocolonial relations in schools, and thereby engage teacher-*Nomads* as decolonial actors.

Significant as well to this framework is the recognition that *determinitorialzation* and *decolonization* is not merely about shifts and changes in practices. Indeed, becoming a *Nomad*, constructing a *map*, engaging in *travesías*, requires that subjectivity itself comes untethered from colonial *planes of organization*, broken from *stasis*, and redefined. Now liberated, traveling
along new lines of flight – various interests, influences, desires, beliefs, commitments, communities – the Nomadic subject enters the liminal space of nepantla, the “uncertain terrain one crosses when moving from one place to another, when traveling from the present identity into a new identity,” (Anzaldúa, 1993, p. 180), a framework that aligns in many ways with Deleuze and Guattari’s (2011) planes of consistency, dynamic, fluid, cohesive terrain that resists stasis, and is pregnant with potential for new subjectivities to form and engage. This, theoretically, is a critical move, for as we consider the Nomad/cartographer, map, and travesía as theoretical tools useful to think about learning in expansive terms, to close ontological distances and to deterritorialize the affective geographies of classrooms, we are reminded to note that ultimately, deterritorialization requires the formation of fundamentally new subjectivities – a subject in stasis can neither chart a new map, nor follow the lines of flight opened by this map.

What I mean by this is that in striving to move from the stasis and colonial aspects of planes of organization towards the immanence and liberation of nepantla and planes of consistency, both teacher and student must necessarily destabilize extant, colonial subjectivities that are rooted in stasis, and are not viable as decolonial subjectivities. This requires theorizing what such subjectivities might entail, and Deleuze and Guattari (2011) suggest that this deterritorializing subjectivity, that of the Nomad and schizoanalytic cartographer, resisting binaries and following new lines of flight, can alternatively be understood as the assemblage, a:

... constellation of singularities and traits deducted from the flow – selected, organized, stratified – in such a way as to converge (consistency) artificially and naturally; an assemblage, in this sense, is a veritable invention. Assemblages may group themselves into extremely vast constellations constituting “cultures” or even “ages” (1987, p. 406)

Like Anzaldúa’s clustering of selves, the assemblage exists as rhizome, a subjectivity without defined beginning or end, not resting on external definition, but forming at the confluence of multiple, salient lines of flight, bound only by the imagination. It is not permanent, but marked
by *immanence*; something that is occurring, unfolding, *becoming*, in the moment, and on into the future. *Assemblages* form, come apart, form in new ways; the self becoming a *threshold to multiplicities* (Deleuze & Guattari, p. 249), rather than a fixed object tethered to some static relationship with the past. This in many ways raises a tension between Deleuzian theory, and decolonial work. Namely, because of the apparent dismissal of history and heritage that emerge in conceptualizations of the rhizome, as Deleuze and Guattari note, suggest, “we should stop believing in trees, roots, radicles. They’ve made us suffer too much,” (2011, p. 15). In many ways this seems antithetical to decolonization, and the reclaiming of coevalness by peoples who have been actively distanced from knowledge of self, of their roots. Yet my positionality, my own complex, rhizomatic, multiplicitous identity, and those I saw in my students in Las Vegas, and in Colorado, pushes me to seek ways in which the rhizome can become a tool of the decolonial. Again, I turn to Anzaldúa, who notes that indeed, this process of finding new subjectivities is not easy, and akin to being caught in *remolinos*, vortexes:

> We’re caught in remolinos (vortexes), each with different, often contradictory, forms of cognition, perspectives, worldviews, belief systems – all occupying the transitional nepantla space. Torn between ways, we seek to find some sort of harmony amidst the remolinos of multiple and conflictive worldviews; we must learn to integrate all these perspectives. Transitions are a form of crisis, an emotionally significant event or radical change in status….In nepantla we undergo the anguish of changing our perspectives and crossing a series of cruz calles, junctures, and thresholds, some leading to a different way of relating to people, others to the creation of a new world. (2002, p. 310)

*Assemblage*, as a function of *nepantla*, being in liminal, untethered space, is indeed immanent, and wading into the complexity of the threshold of multiple selves can be destabilizing. But this destabilization is generative and powerful, a process of *insurgent relinking*, that breaks us from the stasis of some pre-colonial imagined subjectivity which Anzaldúa describes as “romanticized self images,” which will ultimately remain colonial in origin, “inadvertently enforce[ing] our own subordination,” (2004, p. 302). Rather, for Anzaldúa, navigating this tension, involves nurturing our heritage not as static, but as dynamic. *Mestizaje* becomes *rhizomatic*, rather than
arboreal, immanent, rather than fixed, and built for a decolonial future, rather than a colonized past. Our roots, raíces, our connections to a pre-conquista inheritance, are not abandoned, rather, they become lines of flight, tendrils or filaments of the rhizome, valuable, important, immanent, but not deterministic; we construct a mestizo@ assemblage-subjectivity built as, “an arrangement or series of clusters, a kind of stacking or layering of selves, horizontal and vertical layers, the geography of selves made up of the different communities you inhabit,” (Anzaldúa/Keating, 2000, p. 238). Theoretically, this matches the decolonial “different self” suggested earlier as the telos of decolonization, and allows us to see how our inheritance can inform our future, aiding our relinking, without shackling us to the stasis of a subjugated past. This is crucial theorizing for both youth and teachers; understanding that the work of decolonization, of mestizaje and cultural nourishment must be an assemblage – allowing youth to dynamically construct their subjectivity with both the lines of flight of heritage, and those of their immanence and futures.

In the context of this project, both of these frameworks around subjectivity – Anzaldúa’s clustering, Deleuzian assemblage - provide a means to theorize and make sense of the complicated, immanent identities and subjectivities that exist for historically marginalized youth and novice teachers; the types of multiplicitous, evolving, immanent identities that, from my time both as teacher and student, I recognize as significant realities of the affective geographies of schooling. Moreover, the assemblage, the rhizome, theorized as mestizo@ identity allow us to mange the tension in decolonial work of at once reclaiming and nurturing the salience of heritage, the line of flight of our raíces, and following new lines of flight towards planes of consistency in which the past and the present coexist in dynamic and generative ways.

Connecting backwards, a significant aspect of the deterritorializing task of the Nomad thus becomes purposeful exploration of new lines of flight that lead to new assemblages and new
planes of consistency forming, allowing imagination and ingenuity to flourish, coevalness to be reclaimed, and new assemblages to come together reflecting the exciting multiplicity of identities that youth and teachers carry.

As I move forward into discussions of methods, the collection and analysis of empirical data, and Aquetza itself, this fusion of Anzaldúan and Deleuzian theory, admittedly twisting and complex, animates my thinking, and my work; a function both of its theoretical applicability, and its relation to my own experience of identity – both personally and in the classroom – as capturing the immanent, rhizomatic nature of subjectivity and learning. With this in mind, these theoretical constructs guide the lenses and the conceptual tools I employ. I begin this work understanding Chicanism@ as not some static thing, but alive, vibrant, a clustering of selves that is at once informed by the past, and driven by the future, an assemblage composed of multiple lines of flight, and membership in and across different communities. As such, I am drawn to perspectives that understand learning as a process of becoming, a series of travesías, guided by a map that deterritorializes space and encourages the pursuit of new lines of flight, while nurturing extant ones. Following from this, my interest in is finding spaces, conceptual tools, perspectives, that will allow teachers to operate as Nomads, War Machines, deterritorializing the colonizing tracings of school by becoming schizoanalytic cartographers with their pedagogy, crafting pedagogies of maps that guide teacher and student towards one another, closing the ontological distances that exist in the affective geographies of classrooms, allowing them to “become nos/otras without the slash,” (Anzaldúa/Keating, p. 255). With this in mind, this framework is itself immanent, an assemblage of various perspectives and theories, non-linear. As I hope the reader will see, this framework, representing the plane of consistency in with the Aquetza research took place, serves as a map, guiding me to build this study around the ideas of
expansive learning, and culturally sustaining pedagogy, as conceptual tools with which this deterritorializing process of learning, for both youth and teachers, becomes possible.

A Brief Note on Literacy in the Dissertation

Before moving on to more deeply explore the problem-set and review the literature that undergirds this work, I want to touch on one idiosyncratic quirk of this dissertation in regards to my particular interests and skillset. I arrived at CU an English and ESL teacher, intent on studying literacy and literacy education. While focused on teacher education, literacy, remains present in the empirical studies, broadly conceptualized in critical and post structural terms: as a function of identity, as much as it is language (Luke, 1995), and as a fundamental tool of both colonial power, and the exploration of decolonial lines of flight (Mignolo, 2003).

To contextualize this view of literacy, my interest as a teacher educator and academic is most specifically in leading teachers to more profoundly understand the ingenuity of youth, particularly around literacy. In historically marginalized communities, tracings around literacy pedagogy have constructed literacy in reductive and narrow conceptions of reading and writing, as skills alone. I am interested in supporting educators to see beyond this, to explore the mapping of new possibilities and how they might come to leverage their praxis as a means of deterritorializing these narrow constructions. With this more expansive literacy goal in mind, throughout the Aquetza week, we were able to read and see profound, decolonial literacy events occurring in the ecology of the space that were not limited to 5-paragraph personal narratives, or even text at all: in the words, actions, embodied performances, and connections among participants. Similar literacy events occur regularly in the affective geographies of classrooms, yet often go ignored through traditional lenses on what it means to use literacy to express one’s self. As this dissertation will show, the witnessing of these events, and of literacy functioning as
an expression of identity, subjectivity, and affective truth, had profound, corresponding effects on the identities of our staff, particularly the pre-service teacher participants. As such, while my focus throughout will bend towards teacher education, it remains a study of literacy learning; how novices are arriving at more expansive notions of literacy, and how sociocritical literacies (Gutiérrez, 2008) might be encouraged and cultivated, mapped, into novice educator’s dispositions.
Chapter II:
Research Problem & Review of Literature

Statement of Problem

For decades, historically marginalized youth have been consistently and regularly underserved and further marginalized by their experiences in schools. There are volumes devoted to the examination of the ways in which youth, positioned by neocolonialism and neoliberal reform policies, seem endlessly stuck in persistent opportunity gaps, under-performing on academic measures (DeShando da Silva, et al. 2007), and engaged in patterns of disengagement from schooling brought on by culturally-hostile policies and cultural dissonance (Giroux, 2012a, 2012b, 2009, 2004; Kozol, 2001; McLaren, 1999, 1989). Such outcomes are exacerbated by curriculum built on narrow conceptions of learning, and reductive, ‘banking’ forms of pedagogy (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1988, 2012a; Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991) that fail to acknowledge the assets of historically marginalized youth as producers and holders of knowledge (Delgado-Bernal, 2002; Darder, 1991). While these achievement gaps and the underperformance of historically marginalized and youth of color have become an obsession in the United States, the problem itself is not localized; it is well documented that historically marginalized youth of the global south experience similar struggles worldwide (Hook, 2007; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Hughes, 1988).

These schooling problems do not, of course, occur in a vacuum, and intersect with other socio-economic and socio-political issues. For youth, the network of conditions present in their schools and communities is often so emotionally and psychologically trying that a growing body of literature has documented the ways in which daily trauma and marginalization limit learning possibility in profound and multilayered ways (Duncan-Andrade, 2009, 2005; Geronimus et al.

Yet in the face of these socio-political, psychological, and emotional issues of cultural marginalization, school reform policies – NCLB, Race to the Top, Common Core – meant to correct inequities have served only to enhance them. Historically marginalized communities find their personhood dependent on mastery of ostensibly ‘culture-free’ knowledge (Grant & Sleeter, 1996), a majoritarian move which serves to employ differential cultural and social capital to position historically marginalized youth and communities as inferior, affirming latent colonial attitudes of resentment and disgust towards the racialized Other (Matias & Zembylas, 2013; McCarthy & Dimitriadis, 2005). What this network of history and current policy and social conditions amounts to, essentially, is schooling as an act of neocolonialism; an attempt, as Walter Mignolo (2003) says, to deny the coevalness of the colonized subject, rendering them continually abject, and maintaining the affective economy (Ahmed, 2004) of power that shapes and constrains the cultural, psychological, and emotional agency of the historically marginalized.

Despite the pressing urgency of these conditions, and my commitments to Latin@/Chican@, and other historically marginalized, communities and youth, the focus of this dissertation is not on the inequities of schooling experiences for historically marginalized youth, per se. Rather, I am interested in hope and possibility – in the prospect of decolonial action and futures the exist in the face of these conditions – particularly as they emerge in the work of teaching.

**Teacher Education and Social Justice**

While these conditions are admittedly frustrating and depressing, we have substantial evidence that thoughtful pedagogy – a culturally responsive pedagogical paradigm – based on
authentic care (Valenzuela, 1999), deployed by high quality teachers, and leveraging funds of knowledge, and rich learning environments, can improve student outcomes in consequential ways (e.g. Darling-Hammond, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 1997; Cammarota, 2008; Lee, 2007; Darder, 1991). In response to this culturally responsive paradigm, a vast literature and focus on translating this curricular knowledge to novice teachers, in the interest of preparing educators with multicultural awareness and to be agents of social-justice, has emerged over several decades, profoundly influencing the terrain of teacher education. As such, it is rare to find educators, or preparation programs, in which the phrases social-justice and culturally responsive are not commonly used to describe their purpose. Indeed, teacher educators have widely approached their work from this culturally responsive paradigm, operating under the assumption that youth will excel when multicultural content is present, and educators have substantial multicultural awareness (e.g. Ladson-Billings, 2000, 1999; Gay, 2002; Banks, 2001). Yet schooling outcomes for historically marginalized youth, and indeed the teaching practices and pedagogies they are exposed to, remain much as they always have (Grossman et al., 2009).

The reasons for this are complicated and wide-ranging, and exploring these extensive dimensions is beyond my scope here, but I will suffice to say that even as ‘social justice,’ ‘equity,’ and ‘cultural responsiveness’ have become ubiquitous terms, they have remained ideologically contested. Consequently, contrary to its intentions, this culturally responsive pedagogical paradigm has been subsumed by widespread neoliberal approaches to education that dominate education reform and policy (Giroux, 2012a, 2012b, 2009). In this ideological approach, academic achievement and equity for historically marginalized youth is constructed as success on standardized achievement tests, measuring assimilation to the norms, practices, and cultural and social capital of majoritarian White culture as the aims of social justice (Paris, 2012;
Pedagogy in this model becomes the work of technicians and social entrepreneurs, working to rapidly prepare (assimilate) historically marginalized youth into the majoritarian norms of participation required to succeed on standardized tests and in the *nomos* of schools (Mirra & Morrell, 2011). Despite evidence that such approaches fundamentally fail at the ‘reform’ and equity tasks they claim to undertake (Rose, 2014), they have proliferated. For teacher educators, this has meant that what it means for an educator to be ‘well-prepared’ has been, and continues to be, highly contested (Frazer, 2007). Even as teacher educators argue for the complexity and importance of robust understandings of the work of teaching in a multicultural world (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Ball & Forzani, 2009), tests become the measure of an educators worth, and considerable pressure and accountability fall onto the shoulders of teachers who can themselves, even in the best of cases, account for only small variances in student outcomes on these measures (American Statistical Association, 2014; Haertel, 2013; Coleman, 1966). In the face of such pressures, visions for social justice, the culturally responsive paradigm, gradually loses meaning, “washed out” by the neoliberal *nomos* of schooling. As such, the process of *becoming* a teacher, of acquiring a *pedagogical identity* that is substantial and robust enough to contest the inequitable reality of schooling continues to be a challenging, complicated task to which there are no easy solutions or answers (Richert, 2012; Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005).

Recently, however, an emerging literature has begun to push on the culturally responsive paradigm, and the ways in which it was subsumed, detailing the ways in which pedagogy and instruction that are *culturally sustaining* (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014), and *revitalizing* (McCarty & Lee, 2014), going beyond the mere addition of multicultural awareness and relevance to content and teaching, can profoundly impact the schooling experiences of
historically marginalized youth, regardless of the measures of academic success employed (e.g. Cabrera, et al., 2014). This is a fundamental paradigm shift in Discourse and intent towards the decolonial, and such work provides considerable hope that despite the prevalence of neoliberalism in schooling and policy, this is a conceptually exciting moment to be engaged in teacher education. As a Chicano teacher educator committed to ensuring historically marginalized communities have access to meaningful curriculum and consequential learning opportunities and decolonial outcomes, I am drawn to this new paradigm of culturally sustaining pedagogy, both for its implications for youth, but also for what it might mean for teachers. In this new paradigm, I see possibility in exploring this question of what it means to become a teacher, and acquire pedagogical identity, shifting and expanding the definition of ‘well-prepared’ novice to come into conversation with the affective geographies of classrooms, and the pragmatic work of decolonization.

Put in other terms, I believe we have yet to articulate, or fully explore, what might be involved in nurturing, developing, and fostering culturally sustaining, decolonizing skillsets in novice teachers, in and through teacher education settings. Indeed, generative work around pragmatic preparation of teachers on one hand, and conceptualizing consequential, decolonial pedagogy on the other, are, I believe, far too rarely involved in meaningful conversation, and as such, a divide opens, and opportunities in novice educator’s nascent sense-making and pedagogical identity-development to locate the work of decolonization as pragmatic praxis, are lost. This is a critical task, for while we must recognize that teaching alone cannot in some way reverse or erase the material and psychological effects of a centuries-long legacy of colonization and racism, undoing vast systemic practices of oppression, teachers do remain the single most significant school-based factor in student success (Kane & Staiger, 2008), and are profoundly
cabale of positively impacting students’ relationships with, and navigation of, the colonial affective geographies in which both teachers and youth exist (Dutro, 2012, 2008; Valenzuela, 1999). In short, we know that culturally sustaining pedagogical practice can be powerful and generative for youth, and that despite the difficulty of the affective economies and conditions that exist in schools, teachers can themselves become a powerful force of deterritorialization; not erasing legacies of colonization, but inviting learning that engages in the fundamental task of decolonization of “denying the denial of coevalness,” (Mignolo, 2003).

With all this said, I arrive at the core problem driving this dissertation: that there is a need for exploring questions of becoming around this deterritorializing, decolonial pedagogical identity. Essentially, to move the paradigm forward requires work articulating what it looks like and involves to cultivate culturally sustaining, decolonial novice educators. Not just educators who have multicultural awareness, or inclinations towards social justice, but decolonial educators who are actively prepared and eager to find ways in which to disrupt the systems and structures of colonization through participating in the activity of teaching and learning in new ways. This is a multifaceted problem, involving questions of how we conceptualize the telos of this project, of what methods and pedagogies might be employed, in what ways we theorize learning and construct novice’s learning trajectories, and how we engage novices to navigate constraining school contexts. These are, in my mind, questions that relate directly both to the pragmatic work of teacher education, but also to the decolonial project. As the reader will find, while the Aquetza social design experiment setting of this dissertation involves both historically marginalized youth and novice educators, I have chosen to focus on the latter, believing the work of cultivating culturally sustaining and revitalizing teachers, who can deterritorialize the affective geographies and planes of organization, the nomos, of schools and classrooms in which
they work, to be a vital and worthy decolonial task (this reasoning is more fully explained in chapter 3). Thus, building from the overarching research question and theoretical and personal background already established, the aim for this three study dissertation is to gain rich insights into how design for expansive learning outcomes in teacher education might lead to the formation of culturally sustaining, decolonial dispositions and pedagogical identities in novice educators. My hope is to contribute to this underdeveloped gap in the field between the pragmatic preparation of educators, and decolonial pedagogical theorization. With this problem set, and general over-arching research question previously discussed in mind, I will turn now to a brief review of the literature to situate this research in a broader, ongoing conversation.

**Literature Review**

The multifaceted literature review that follows is intentionally composed to work in conjunction with the three manuscripts, each of which include their own, more specific, literature reviews, and thus the reader may notice some overlap. Additionally, my intent here will be, rather than comprehensive documentation, to signal significant and important directions in the field that are relevant to this work, and, building from my theoretical framework, craft a map of the extant research terrain that is central to understanding the trajectory and context of the manuscripts’ arguments. With this in mind, a logical place to begin is with the broader critical project in education, and its relationship to a key idea in this work, culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012).

*Critical Education and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy*

Throughout this work, I will speak of the critical project in education. I do so to signal a history and legacy of varied, critical work in the practice of education – teaching and learning – that stretches back decades. This is not to say that there is some singular, ideological principle
holding all of the various iterations of counter-hegemonic education together. Indeed, we can place the work of Dewey (1938; 1916) in this general project, but also note that his ideology and approach to the work of education were considerably different than that of Gramsci (1971), or Freire (1970). Nor do Giroux (1988) and McLaren (1989) carry with them the same precise ideological grounding, stance, or commitments of Freire before them, or as Darder (1991) or Ladson-Billings (1995), contemporaries who are themselves not equivalent in approach, interests, or positionality. This is not to discount any of the work these individuals have produced, or put it in opposition, but rather to situate this work in a history of scholarship and practice that has been thoughtfully devoted to extending education to historically marginalized populations (a broadly conceived and variously defined term, over the course of this history), and generating educational theory and opportunity that contests what we might identify as majoritarian, colonial planes of organization around schooling and knowledge, the nomos of schools. Again, what this has meant in practice, and whom these critical efforts were available to and for what purposes, varies widely across this project. My point, however, is that this research, the Aquetza program, is not novel in its critical, decolonial, or counter-hegemonic efforts. It builds on a legacy and history of similar educative work, both contemporary and historical, with youth and adults, borrowing from the long and still-unfolding map this project has crafted. This work joins this broader project at the point of conversation around culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012), which is both an update of Gloria Ladson-Billings’ (1995) touchstone argument for culturally relevant pedagogy, as well as a critique on the ways in which cultural relevance or responsiveness has been taken up in practice.

According to Paris: “culturally sustaining requires that our pedagogies be more than responsive ... – it requires that they support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic
competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence,” (Paris, p. 95). Paris’ essential argument is that the paradigm of cultural relevance, the most widely accepted and employed effort at engaging some degree of critical multiculturalism in classrooms, has failed, subsumed by a “White Gaze” (Morrison, 1998), and been co-opted by policies that mask maintenance of the nomos, of colonial relationships to teaching, learning, and schooling, in relevance, which ultimately asks only for superficial ‘awareness’ of cultural difference, rather than more authentic engagement, and any truly critical, counter-hegemonic outcomes. Such subtly and overtly assimilationist work has resulted in the proliferation of “current policies [which] are not interested in sustaining the languages and cultures of longstanding and newcomer communities of color” (Paris, 2012, p. 95), a trend epitomized and reinforced by the “explicit assimilationist and antidemocratic monolingual/monocultural educational policies emerging across the nation” (Paris & Alim, 2014, p. 88). Relevance, Paris noted, has simply become insufficient for the present historical moment:

> Relevance and responsiveness do not guarantee in stance or meaning that one goal of an educational program is to maintain heritage ways and to value cultural and linguistic sharing across difference, ... They do not explicitly enough support the linguistic and cultural dexterity and plurality (Paris, 2009, 2011) necessary for success and access in our demographically changing U.S. and global schools and communities. (Paris, 2012, p. 94)

Paris’ work is an important call within the critical project of education for more activist pedagogies, and essentially, a wholly new paradigm with which to approach the education of historically marginalized youth. Notable aspects of ideological and teleological departure from the relevance paradigm include, 1) an explicit focus on the plural and the evolving nature of youth cultural activity, and 2) a commitment to youth culture as holding counter-hegemonic potential, though always in need of critical introspection (Paris & Alim, 2014). McCarty and Lee (2014) have further pushed on the paradigm of ‘sustaining,’ adding that for some communities, the decolonial and counter-hegemonic project first must be revitalizing, to inwardly address
colonizing issues and reclaim culture before it can be sustained. This being said, the paradigm is
still in its infancy, and Paris and Alim have pointed to their own work, and those of other critical
and decolonial scholars, as evidence of what culturally sustaining pedagogy might look like.

Turning briefly to this body of literature, we can note that one such example, Gutiérrez’
(2008) Migrant Student Leadership Institute, is a significant precursor to the work of Aquetza. In
the MSLI program, youth were provided, within the framework of a designed learning ecology,
the meditational tools, and skillsets necessary to develop socio-critical literacies, fusing their
personal stories with academic formats, content, and ends or what Gutiérrez terms syncretic texts
– strategically transdisciplinary work that brings the academic and personal/cultural together in
principled, hybrid ways, which produce new subjectivities and identities for youth as historical
actors (Gutiérrez & Stone, 2002; Gutiérrez, Bien, & Selland, 2011). Similarly, Cruz (2012) has
leveraged testimonio, a literacy format deeply significant to and rooted in Latin@ communities
and culture, to give students a means to access and voice traumatic experiences in powerful and
agential ways. By the anchoring of their work in a tool imbued with important cultural meaning
for the marginalized youth with whom Cruz worked, she was able to engage an agency that
actively worked against oppression, allowing students to articulate newly empowered, agential
voices in new ways. Also working in this hybrid, syncretic and culturally sustaining vein,
Camangian (2010) engaged in similar work with youth, presenting students with the opportunity
to create auto-ethnographies, which, while formal and rigorous in their format, presented youth
with an opportunity to give voice to anger and frustrations resulting from youths’ experience of
marginalization, hybridizing an academic format to voice deeply personal, cultural concerns.
Similarly, a precursor to, Camangian’s work is that of Morrell (2008), who chronicles the way
that youth, presented with a learning ecology in which they are encouraged to engage in critical
literacy practices, craft new, counter-narratives to those they were able to access in formal schooling environments. Further scholarship and critical work with youth encouraging decolonial interpretations of classical and Western-canon content and the inclusion of youth pop-cultural production and Ethnic studies content to academic projects also falls into the category of work that is emblematic of culturally sustaining, or revitalizing, pedagogy (Paris, 2011, 2009; Cammarota, 2008; Acosta, 2007; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2005, 2002; Duncan-Andrade, 2004). While there serious critiques that might be raised about culturally sustaining pedagogy, notably its under-theorization around telos of culture and learning theory (addressed in chapter 6), my purpose for raising these examples is to both situate Aquetza in a broader body of work, and to point out that while culturally sustaining pedagogy is that a compelling feature of culturally sustaining is that it represents a paradigm shift from being merely responsive. The work highlighted here, and identified by Paris and Alim as representative of culturally sustaining, is not about providing relevant content while working towards established goals, but opening space for youth knowledge production and growth; an ideological shift that welcomes the evolving decolonial, and the generative use of poststructural theories of identity, culture, and subjectivity.

With all this said, thus far the focus has been on what this paradigm looks like in practice for youth. This is not, of course a bad thing; the aforementioned work is important, and powerful, contributing incredibly to the field and what we know of serving historically marginalized youth. It is simply that the paradigm is incomplete, not yet exploring what it looks like to cultivate novice educators – not veterans and experienced pedagogues who have made this their focus – but new educators, learning the craft of teaching, to engage in culturally sustaining praxis. There is, of course, already a broad body of literature around cultivating social justice and culturally
responsive novice educators (Galman et al. 2010; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Irvine, 2003; Zeichner, 2009; McDonald & Zeichner, 2009; Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2001, 2000, 1999; Banks, 2003, 2001; Grant & Secada, 1990; Giroux, 1988). Much of this work is important, and oriented towards the liberatory outcomes we desire. Yet if we hold to Paris’ argument, in practice, even masterfully done, this work will fail to result in sustaining, revitalizing outcomes. While this extant work is valuable, it still orients itself to being relevant to externally defined goals. Its work is the creation of novices who are aware of multiculturalism, and responsive to it, but not accountable for the decolonial task of creating space for youth to sustain themselves, moving forward, following new lines of flight, and rupturing the stasis of the nomos. If we need a new, different paradigm for pedagogy and curricular development, we need a new, different paradigm and pedagogy for cultivating culturally sustaining educators as well; a novice who is coming to understand their work to be ‘responsive,’ is engaged in a wholly different task than a novice who is coming to see their work as an act of sustaining and revitalizing culture. The object of learning is shifted, and the pedagogical identity and framework for participation in schooling that is required is profoundly, fundamentally different.

Considering this, I believe a gap exists in the field of envisioning what is involved in cultivating culturally sustaining novices, which thus leaves the paradigm itself open to the same diluting of vision and co-optation of purpose that culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy succumbed to. By this I mean that even the most wonderful decolonial idea, if taken up in ways that miss the counter-hegemonic point, and choose to cast aside the fundamental need to rupture and re-mediate dominant ways of being in and doing schooling and learning, will ever so gradually (or rapidly) see all the community and cultural knowledge bases they desire to sustain, and grow, be subsumed by dominant, privileged ones. For culturally responsive pedagogy, this
has resulted in reductive, canned curriculum intentionally mislabeled as culturally responsive. Alternatively, a different iteration of this same dilution of vision is that without rich pedagogical understanding, it becomes easy for culturally sustaining, ostensibly youth-centered content to stagnate, and learning to become equated with acquisition of this new ‘canon.’ While this can be more culturally representative, it is just as limiting and problematic, for when learning becomes mere acquisition of a canon (no matter what that canon is), it ceases to be consequential and expansive, and presents the possibility of falling into stasis, and a colonial plane of organization. Neither of these are intentions or qualities of culturally sustaining pedagogy. They are, however, concerns, for if we do not think deeply about what it means to educate and cultivate novice educators to engage with and theorize how their work and practice might be culturally sustaining, the result will be a misappropriation of the paradigm, and ‘culturally sustaining’ work that is anything but. With this in mind, I turn to examine the extent literature that does exist around teacher learning, to further draw out the salience of these concerns, and the importance of this point.

_Teacher Learning and Teacher Education Pedagogy for a Multicultural World_

As noted in the statement of purpose that introduced this literature review, the need for well prepared novice educators to be in positions of closing the academic achievement or opportunity gaps among historically marginalized youth has been a widely discussed issue in recent years. Particularly over the last decade, this had led to an increasing focus on anchoring the work of teacher education and teacher learning in the practice of teaching (Ball & Forzani, 2009; National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2010; Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009; Korthagen, 2001; Ball & Cohen, 1999). The core premise of this approach (or approaches, as practice-based teacher education is not a unitary construct), founded in what
are described as socio-cultural theories of teacher learning in which different tools and experiences build across a continuum towards master teaching praxis (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999), is that teaching is complex, intricate, and unnatural work (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Ball & Cohen, 1999), and thus effective preparation requires that novice educators are able to appreciate and see this complexity. This requires that novices participate in representations, deconstructions, and approximations of the discrete practices of teaching (Grossman, et al., 2009; Lampert, 2009; Forzani, 2014), learning how to engage in these practices, and also honing professional vision (Hammerness, 2003). The goal, ultimately, is for novices to deploy “knowledge in action,” (Ball & Forzani, 2009, Cook & Brown, 1999; Orlikowski, 2002; Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009; Lampert, et al. 2010; Zeichner, 2012), or the actual implementation of core, high leverage practices (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Windshitl, et al. 2012) that flow from what is intended to be a robust vision of culturally relevant, student centered pedagogy. This field of teacher education also includes intensive, immersive, or laboratory, field experiences, where novices can more effectively experience and practice the real work of teaching (Frazer, 2007; Ogren, 2005).

Some explication of practice-based teacher education is worthwhile here, as this movement figures centrally in how I am approaching teacher education, learning, and cultivation. To use the ‘representations-deconstructions-approximations’ frame as a guide, we might look, briefly, at exemplary literature that does each of these tasks. Blomberg et al. (2014), following on a history of video-based teacher education pedagogy, used video in two different pedagogical settings with novice educators, finding that engaging novices in representations of practice was a valuable, practice-based task, shaping their practice and pedagogical vision based on how they engaged with video representations of practice. In the decompositions of practice
vein, Windschitl, et al. (2012) found that the enunciation and construction of a “candidate core” of practices, and then allowing science candidates to engage with these, was generative to their pedagogy, and the toolkits they eventually constructed for independent use. Similarly, Ghousseni and Sleep (2011) found that in work with math teachers, drawing out and articulating the concrete practices of the disciplinary work, what it meant to share key mathematical ideas, was crucial to novices’ development – practice had to be made “studyable.” Finally, Lampert et al.’s (2013) exploration of rehearsal, is exemplary of approximations of practice in action. Rehearsal is constructed as a pedagogical strategy intended to provide dynamic opportunities for novice educators to try out the enactment of the core practices of teaching that have been learned, while dynamically incorporating the lessons gleaned from other settings, and receiving feedback on what is, and is not, working. Rehearsal, Lampert et al. suggest, is:

Deliberate practice in the company of others (peers, more experienced teachers, and TE) [which] helps the learner develop an organized system for knowing when, why, and how aspects of their competency are relevant to any particular situation. This organized system becomes the conceptual framework that guides adaptation and innovation in situations of uncertainty. (2013, p.228)

From this definition, they proceed to examine how the use and engagement of pedagogical rehearsal strategies allowed novice mathematics teachers to better refine the core, high leverage practices necessary to successfully lead youth towards consequential instruction, providing an opportunity for novices to “try on” aspects of a “particular kind of practitioner” identity, ultimately “building novices’ commitment to teach ambitiously.”

These are of course, just three examples of a broader literature by various practitioners across disciplines who have used practice based strategies to support novice teacher learning (e.g. Matsko & Hammerness, 2013; Ball, et al., 2009; Lampert & Graziani, 2009; Kazemi, Lampert, & Ghousseini, 2007; Sleep, Boerst, & Ball, 2007; Grossman, 2005). Indeed, there are now university-based centers that focus on the development of practice-based teacher education.
pedagogy (e.g. Teaching Works at the University of Michigan, and efforts at the University of Washington). This conversation additionally connects to scholarship aimed at the cultivation of dispositions in novice educators (Villegas, 2007; Shoffner, et al., 2014), providing a firm grounding of practice with which the beliefs and understandings of dispositions can be connected. Essentially, there is tremendous promise in this relatively recent effort within teacher education, and evidence that practice based strategies make significant, positive impacts for novice’s abilities to take up a pedagogy of enactment (Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009), and to buttress assaults on the professionalism of teacher education. This being said, the relationship of practice-based teacher education to the work of the critical project of education just discussed, is somewhat unclear.

Essentially, in the vision of practice-based teacher education, the emphasis is firmly on, according to Lampert et al (2013), the goal of, “preparing novices to engage in “intellectually ambitious instruction.” Now, this intellectually ambitious instruction (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Lampert & Graziani, 2009) is always articulated as being oriented towards the challenge of addressing ‘achievement’ or ‘opportunity’ gaps in teaching and learning, aware of socio-cultural context (Forzani, 2013; Ball & Forzani, 2009). Indeed Matsko and Hammerness (2013) explicitly attend to this, exploring how a richly-conceived setting and rehearsal practices oriented towards the challenges of urban contexts can support novice educators awareness of diversity and recognition that their work in the classroom will look different than the educative experience they likely received in schools; an important aspect of novices’ development, according to Hammerness, et al. (2005). Yet, even in this case, and despite theorists of practice-based teacher education giving peripheral inclusion of attention to, “students’ personal development and preparation for participation in a diverse democratic society,” (Ball & Forzani, 2009) in their
definitions of ambition, the way in which practice based approaches engage historically marginalized communities largely remains located in the culturally responsive paradigm described above. When discussions of engagement with historically marginalized youth and social justice in practice-based teacher education pedagogy occur, they occur in conjunction with the literature focused on responsiveness and awareness (e.g. Darling-Hammond, 2005; Banks, 2003; Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2001, 1999), and thus, are anchored in the limitations of relevance: social justice is conceived and constructed as a function of teachers ensuring historically marginalized youth attain an externally defined academically rigorous disciplinary knowledge, rather than sustaining and growing their own knowledges, as McDonald, Kazemi, and Kavanagh (2013) explain:

By raising the quality of disciplinary teaching, a central goal of this work is to improve the learning opportunities available to students of color, low-income students, and English language learners. The aim is to address the persistent inequities that overwhelmingly limit those students’ opportunities to learn. (p. 378)

This academically ambitious goal is not to be condemned, but it is important to recognize its orientation to an external, majoritarian notion of social justice. I do not point this out to disparage practice-based approaches or dismiss rigorous academic aims. Indeed, their attention to the work of teaching is important, and a huge and needed shift in the paradigm of teacher preparation that can have incredibly positive impacts on the schooling lives of historically marginalized youth. Yet there are limitations in how culture, social justice, and culturally identity are being understood – this ideology may be ambitious and altruistic, but it is far removed from sustaining or revitalizing, invoking relevance at best, and thus in the context of this review, this body of literature is important to cover, an exciting field of thinking in teacher education, but insufficient in explaining how to cultivate a culturally sustaining educator.

*Critical-Poststructural Approaches to Teacher Education and Teacher Learning*
On this note I turn to a third and final body of literature that this dissertation sits in relation to, notably, work that I will classify as critical and poststructural approaches to teacher learning. While there is some overlap between this work and the aforementioned work around culturally responsive and social justice efforts in teacher education, what is critical to note here is that this body of literature has an ideologically different stance, which is similar to, though not identical, to that of culturally sustaining pedagogy. Thus while practice-based teacher education focuses on what skills and actions should be learned – a pedagogy of enactment – the critical/poststructural vein of scholarship is more focused on what ideas and frameworks should be learned so as to guide and inform action, a pedagogy of embodiment (Dixon & Senior, 2011; Davies, 2000), that has much to add to the development of a culturally sustaining paradigm for teacher learning. If we consider the idea of dispositions (Villegas, 2007) the frameworks of both belief and skillset that guide teaching praxis, in comparing these two bodies of literature, we are looking directly at the dilemma of dispositional confusion which can inhibit cultivation and pedagogical identity development due to what Shoffner et al. (2014) explain to be confusion among the varying emphases that different actors and teacher educators place on different aspects of the work of teaching. Of additional significance, this is also the closest family of extant research and literature to what I hope to produce here.

With this in mind, I begin with the work of Dutro (2009), who argues for critical witnessing as an aspect of teaching praxis. This argument suggests, importantly, that authentically serving historically marginalized communities requires a level of engagement beyond awareness and relevance; it requires witnessing, which involves affective and personal connection to both the overt and implicit testimony of youth, and allowing this witnessing to guide advocacy efforts. Dutro’s work is part of and connects with a broader, critical-
poststructural literature on the role of affect in the work of teaching. Her use of witnessing connects in important ways to the work of Zembylas (2006), who draws on Deleuzian perspectives to also advocate for witnessing as a core aspect of a educational practice built on compassion as counter-hegemonic practice (2013). Similarly, both Dixon and Senior (2011) and Estola and Elbaz-Luwish (2003) make the case for an embodied pedagogy, that recognizes the rhizomatic, affective natures of classrooms as central to understanding the work of teaching. More centrally to the work of teacher education, Skattebol (2010) shows how engagement with theories of affect and embodied pedagogy support educators to engage productively in the process of developing and re-conceptualizing their roles as educators, and bolstering their commitments to social justice. Elsewhere, Matias and Zembylas (2014) have explored how, in the context of the colonial, affective economies of classrooms, Whiteness, unexamined, can function in the classroom among educators as a technology of affect which prevents authentic engagement with historically marginalized communities, and fosters resentment and pathologization of youth of color. While this body of literature on the critical and affect in education is powerful and important, enriching our theoretical understanding of what it might mean to enact robust pedagogy that could become culturally sustaining in ways that further explorations of positive-youth outcomes do not, it does not wholly explicate how one might cultivate affective consciousness in novice educators. This is not a critique, merely an observation. A next step for this work, as with culturally sustaining pedagogy, is to continue explore how these perspectives might be brought into being.

This is not to say that no literature exists explicitly attending to the cultivation of more robust social justice frameworks among novice educators. Jones (2009) attempts to do this work, building from this same critical-poststructural framework, and exploring how White female
teachers grew into social justice and culturally responsive educators through a variety of experiences with youth and critical perspectives that expand their understandings of how structures and accepted norms of schooling work on students’ possible lives. She additionally examines how teacher’s exposure to trauma narratives, an example of syncretic texts that emerge from socio-critical literacy production, can have a fundamental and positive impact on novice teachers’ understanding of and resistance to, the nomos of schooling (Jones, 2012). Similarly, Buendía (2000) charts out how extensive exposure to poststructural lenses on schooling; lenses that are not readily available from majoritarian perspectives, can profoundly shift novice educators understanding of what the work of teaching entails, and what the conditions of schools are. This work aligns with that of Cochran-Smith (2004), who examines the unlearning of racism and color-blind conceptions of historically marginalized youth and schools, and of Boler (1999), who engages this affective process in learning to teach as a pedagogy of discomfort, requiring often painful engagement with one’s own assumptions and beliefs as tied to classroom interactions. Similar to this work, Souto-Manning (2011, 2010) explores how the use of culture circles and teatro, two activities with contextual histories for use in resisting oppression, could be employed to play with and engage around dynamics of power, privilege, and identity in classrooms, pushing teacher-participants to experience familiar sensations, discourses, and logics in their pedagogy in fundamentally new ways. The result was an expansion of empathy, as participants explored critically how they and their students were constructed as subjects, how their practices functioned to reproduce certain social and power relations, and where possibility exists to leverage new forms of knowledge in their work towards social justice ends. Most relevant, perhaps, to this conversation is the work of Mirra and Morrell (2011), who approach teacher education with the express intent of rethinking its ideological intent, and construction of
subjectivity. They contest the ways in which neoliberalism has shaped practice and pedagogical identity, positing a critical, democratic vision of the teacher as civic agent instead. This represents the closest to a culturally sustaining theory of teacher education that exists, but I believe that its telos still needs to be extended, inviting and invoking theory beyond that of critical democracy, opening the possibility for more radical lines of flight, assemblages, and profoundly new planes of consistency than exist when still in conversation with the construct of citizenship as primarily salient.

All of these are important contributions to conversations on teacher learning, both how it occurs, and what its content should be, and follow in many ways from St. Pierre’s (2004) observation that, “new concepts,” are required, “in order to think and live education differently,” (p. 285). However, this literature is more oriented towards the thinking, and the ideological perspectives necessary to enact equitable pedagogy. While attention is of course paid to practice, it does not reach the level of explication present in the practice-based teacher education literature. As such, it has been suggested that these critical and poststructural lenses, not grounded in the same way as practice-based dispositions are, are often “washed-out” of novice educators who lack the pragmatic skills to implement them in concrete fashion (Zeichner & Flessner, 2009). Moreover Aveling (2006) notes that this arduous work, particularly with White individuals, amounts to “hacking at our very roots,” and does not always, or typically, end productively. Again, this is not to dismiss this literature, but rather to note extant limitations in a still expanding field. Tradeoffs in focus have been made, fleshing out and theorizing what ideological lenses novices might need, but leaving the question of cultivation somewhat open; a contrast to the earlier discussed practice-based approaches that explored the question of
cultivation, but neglected to robustly theorize who the individuals were, ideologically, who were and are being produced.

With this in mind, I will point to two last points of literature which seek a middle ground in this discussion. Gutiérrez and Vossoughi (2010) describe working with novice teachers in a social design experiment context, similar to Aquetza, as a developmental space in which “theory in action” became possible. Through a process of re-mediation wherein a novice educator might leverage theory, in light of a grounded context, novices were able to “lift off,” gradually acquiring a richer, more complex and authentic understanding of the dynamics at play in a classroom, only to return to the “ground” of their practice informed by this new way of seeing. In doing so, these novice teachers shift how they see the classroom and students, interpret challenges, as they gradually acquire a more complex and authentic understanding of the dynamics at play in a classroom. Similarly, Jurow, et al. (2012) describe a process of “inbound trajectories” with novice educators as they begin to purposefully endeavor to make their understandings of social justice into commitments to equity through participation in a collaborative community of learners that unpacks and explores how these ideas and dispositions might be lived. These exemplars, both occurring in social design contexts, point towards methodologies that might bring together practice-based pedagogies with critical and poststructural ideological perspectives in meaningful ways, and might potentially produce decolonial, culturally sustaining novice educators.

Where the Literature Takes Us

Ana Richert (2012) tells us that the acquisition of pedagogical identity is challenging largely because it simultaneously involves mastery of the task, the action and practice of being a teacher, with mastering ideas about what it means to teach; neither of which happen quickly, and
are linked to deep seated understandings of our own subjectivity and positionality. Learning as a form and process of *becoming* is difficult, arduous. As noted, my purpose and intention in this work is to join the critical project of education, and to explore decolonial, deterritorializing praxis and outcomes in the work of teacher education. Culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy provides a powerful direction in which to journey, taking us away from the co-optation of relevance and multiculturalism, and towards a more decolonial vision for youth agency in knowledge production and academic participation. Yet little is offered in terms of how to engage teachers in doing this work. Extant social justice approaches remain linked to a culturally relevant paradigm, concerned more with multicultural awareness than decolonial immanence. Practice-based approaches to teacher education have managed to articulate excellent designs for what engaging novices in the core tasks of teaching look like, but have largely neglected to interrogate their ideological stances or object of learning. Critical and poststructural approaches to teacher learning have richly conceived the ideological terrain of learning to teach, but have yet to flesh out what the process of cultivation and translation into practice involves. All these conversations are important contributions to the field, and for this work, operate as points of triangulation for the way in which the *Aquetza* social design experiment was orchestrated, and in which my research proceeded.

If we accept that in the present political and historical moment there is a need to be focused on producing transformative educators, a position I do not believe anyone across these literatures would generally disagree with, than I suggest that what is needed are new ways to think about the process of learning as becoming in teaching, and new toolkits for praxis. As I noted earlier, culturally sustaining calls for a new and different paradigm for pedagogy and curricular development as decolonial practice. As such, **we simultaneously need a new and**
different paradigm and pedagogy for cultivating culturally sustaining educators, in order to make decolonization a practical reality. This involves a blending of ideas, theories, and pedagogies; seeking to bring the assets on offer across the extant literatures into conversation with those of other veins of scholarship to disrupt stasis, and explore what decolonial dispositions of teaching might entail. Such work is by no means straightforward, but given the intractable ways in which historically marginalized youth have been positioned in schools, following such lines of flight to new paradigms and planes of decolonial consistency seems a necessary, and urgent task.

With this in mind, I will turn now to an explication of the Aquetza social design experiment setting, locating it in a co constitutive context and history. My hope, in examining the terrain in which the research studies exist, will be to allow the reader to begin mapping how the theoretical framework already noted, this background of prior scholarship, and the conceptual framework and methods that will be discussed in chapters 4 and 5, shape the research presented in the three manuscripts of chapter 6.
Chapter III:
The Setting of Aquetza

The site in which this empirical project takes place is, as noted, the summer Aquetza: Chican@ Youth Leadership, Education and Community Empowerment program, a partnership between UMAS y MEXA de CU Boulder and the CU School of Education. Aquetza, as will be discussed at length, has become realized as a social design experiment for decolonial expansive youth and teacher learning. While the decolonial, critical pedagogy ends were always part of the plan for Aquetza, its existence as a social design experiment, a research space, was not the impetus of its emergence. Rather, Aquetza was, and remains a grassroots program, driven by the goals and interests of undergraduate UMAS y MEXA students. In what follows, I hope to detail the origins, history, ecology, goals, and research dimensions of the Aquetza space, allowing the reader a strong grasp of the program from which this work grows, and in which to locate both the constituent manuscripts, and the larger study.

Program History

The history of the setting and context of this research actually begins four decades ago, with the 1968 founding of UMAS (United Mexican American Students Association) at CU Boulder, parallel to the founding of Chicano youth organizations at campuses in California, Texas, and other Southwestern states. At this time, there were only a handful of Chican@ students at CU Boulder. Buoyed by the momentum of the broader Chicano Movimiento, these individuals began their own grassroots efforts to recruit increasing numbers of Chican@ and other students of color to the CU Boulder campus. Beginning in the summer of 1968, by capitalizing on Federal EOP (Equal Opportunity Program) funding, and working in conjunction with other outreach programs, their efforts proved successful, and by 1972, UMAS had recruited
a claimed 950 Chican@ students to CU Boulder (UMAS, 1972). A central feature of these efforts were their broad geographical outreach, and summer bridge programs that aimed at fostering community on campus for Chican@ youth arriving at CU (UMAS, 2003a). Though successful, administrative conflicts beginning in the fall of 1972, including the appointment of new EOP directors felt by the organization to be in conflict with the UMAS mission and community, led to significant aspects of the program being altered, including financial aid offerings and disbursement. This led to a 33% drop in Chican@ student enrollment (UMAS, 2003a), and over the next several years, tension between UMAS, as well as other communities of color on the CU Boulder campus, and school administration, ran high, culminating with the 18 day occupation of Temporary Building 1 (TB1) in May 1974. During this time, two car bombings occurred, killing 6 Chican@ activists and students, all of whom had connections to the university, and UMAS. These deaths, known as “Los Seis de Boulder” were largely ignored by media reporting at the time, as the Chican@ community and local and Federal police contested culpability for the deaths, and whether they were accidental detonations of explosives the individuals had themselves created, or were the machinations of COINTELPRO, or other outside parties hostile to the Chican@ movement (Dodge & Dyer, 2014; Taylor, 2009; Martínez, 1991; UMAS 2003b). While the history remains clouded, what is certain is that as the occupation of TB1 and administrative disagreements were resolved, the Chican@ community in Boulder, and Colorado more generally, was left shaken. UMAS continued as a substantial organization on campus, but the fledgling connections to Chican@ communities elsewhere in the state frayed, and the grassroots outreach efforts that had been so successful from 1968 to 1972 were irrevocably altered, eventually subsumed by other programs and campus entities with their own agendas and purposes. It is from this history that the genesis of the setting of this research, the
**Aquetza: Chican@ Youth Leadership, Education and Community Empowerment program** emerges.

**Program Origins**

The initial idea for the *Aquetza* program came from Jasón Romero Jr., at the time an undergraduate leader with the UMAS y MEXA student organization from Pueblo, CO. Jasón, along with many of his peers and colleagues, had participated in various summer ‘bridge’ programs as high school students, designed to acquaint and prepare them for life in college and the university. These programs had been integral to their current academic lives, and their pursuit of higher education at CU; however Jasón, and many in the UMAS y MEXA organization, felt that these programs had privileged academic goals over and against the values, traditions, and goals of their constituent communities. Specifically, it was the opinion of several of the students initially involved in articulating the goals of *Aquetza* that in these ‘bridge’ programs, an assimilationist view dominated, positioning their communities and cultural backgrounds as obstacles to be overcome, and identities to be discarded. Community commitments and knowledge were framed in deficit terms; concerns to be abandoned in pursuit of more academically valid, mainstream goals, rather than assets to be leveraged. Moreover, many of the undergraduates most troubled by the nature of these ‘bridge’ programs were from areas beyond the Denver-Boulder Valley metro areas. Many of these communities (including Pueblo, the Western Slope, the Alamosa/San Luis Valley area) have distinctive histories, identities, and characters all their own, and populations that were deeply rooted and committed to them. Such characteristics meant that the premise of leaving behind one’s community for new goals that could be attained in academia was not only emotionally and socially challenging, but in many ways undesirable. As such, CU Boulder’s limited outreach to these more distant Colorado
communities yielded minimal results, and individuals from these ‘other’ regional areas were considerably under-represented, even within the UMAS y MEXA group.

From all of this reflection came the idea of *Aquetza*, driven by Jasón, along with significant contributions from Lorenzo Herrera, KT Trask, and Kevin Patterson. In the late summer and early fall of 2012, these individuals, as well as other contributors, began to outline a concept for a summer program space in which the cultural traditions, histories, and practices of their Colorado communities would become the leading activity. Conscious of and actively building from the history of the UMAS-EOP program, these individuals articulated a shared desire to see: a) increased representation of students of color, particularly Latin@ students, on the CU Boulder campus, b) expanded program offerings to students and communities geographically outside of the Boulder Valley-Denver Metro area, c) alternative academic enrichment programs that were more critical and community oriented in their approach, and d) a program that appealed to students who might not already be focused on college and might need support and community connection to change their educational and academic interests and trajectories. In short, these students hoped to create a program that provided a motivating bridge between community and campus, without relinquishing the value of the community as a source of cultural, personal, and intellectual knowledge and importance. Essentially, rather than ascribing to goals predetermined by and located in the academy (a top-down, assimilationist position), this space would focus on the development of community leadership skills, connecting the interests of disparate Chican@ communities to the opportunities available at CU, and in this way, serving as a community, not just academic, ‘bridge.’ The intention here was to establish a motivating reason for youth with deep community commitments who may not have otherwise considered CU Boulder a viable option, to pursue higher education at the state’s flagship
campus, coming to understand their work at CU Boulder could be additive to the various communities that they came from, rather than separate from community commitments and interests – nothing had to be ‘left behind’ in order to receive a flagship education. Moreover, initial planning envisioned this planned space as one that would purposefully expose youth to critical and decolonial perspectives in Chican@ studies, and connect to the history of the Chicano Movimiento in Colorado generally, and in youth’s various communities specifically. These goals and commitments are perhaps best expressed in the program’s own literature, as the selection of the program’s name – *Aquetza* – is discussed:

In Nahuatl, the language of the Mexica/Aztec indigenous people of central and northern Mexico, *Aquetza* roughly translates as, “to lift your chin up.” This was chosen with great intention in our planning process to embody the overall theme and goal of our program – to empower Chican@ youth from across Colorado, in good academic standing, who may not have otherwise considered pursuing higher education, to begin to include such a trajectory at CU Boulder in their life plans. (Romero Jr., Trask, Patterson, & Domínguez, 2013)

My involvement in this program began several months into the initial development process in December of 2012. During that fall semester, the students had run into several setbacks, but with ongoing encouragement from the Dean of the School of Education, and an admirable urgency of purpose, the students were committed to bringing *Aquetza* to life that summer. However, by December, the group needed assistance refining their program design and messaging, developing a coherent pedagogical vision, handling logistics, and finding viable funding sources. At this juncture, several of the UMAS students involved in the planning of *Aquetza*, who were also in the teacher education program at CU Boulder, invited me to consult with and join them as they reflected on next steps for their efforts to make the *Aquetza* program a reality. Following this invitation to participate, I was invited to take on a program co-director role in conjunction with Jasón Romero Jr., and KT Trask.

Together, our group collaborated to expand and refine the idea and goals that the undergraduates had into a clear vision for their program, as well as to enhance and more deeply
think through aspects of design that had not yet been fully articulated. Notable among the areas in need of development were a theory of learning and pedagogy, a curricular plan, and a theory for what the work and purpose was to be for the undergraduate participants in the space, as well as support for navigating the logistics and institutional hurdles of bringing this program to fruition. My experience in pedagogical design, and in navigating institutions and logistical challenges to build safe and effective youth learning programs while a teacher in Las Vegas allowed me to offer considerable support in these areas to the Aquetza team, and offer different models and possibilities for consideration and reflection as we debated how to close these final gaps in their thinking and planning. Building from previous exemplars of successful, intergenerational, community-engaged programs like the Migrant Student Leadership Institute (Gutiérrez), and always in dialogue with the undergraduates’ particular goals and ideals, the model of Aquetza as it now exists was generated by the group. This model maintains the students’ original ideas for content and purpose, and their community/cultural commitments, but introduced cultural historical activity theory (CHAT) and expansive learning principles to further develop what the purposes and structure of the learning ecology would be (Engeström & Sannino, 2010, 1987; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Additionally, a more coherent critical pedagogical framework (Freire, 1970) was introduced with the intention of bolstering the program’s potential outcomes, and anchoring what the teaching and learning would look like in Aquetza by re-centering the curriculum to firmly privilege youth voices, and allow them to leverage new, transdisciplinary and community content in syncretic ways as a process of Conscientização, or awakening of critical consciousness and identity. Moreover, reflecting the interests in pedagogy and social science research shared by many of the undergraduate designers and staff, we proposed that the site could serve as a social design experiment (discussed more in depth in
chapters 4 and 5). In this way, it became a space of intergenerational learning and knowledge generation, involving undergraduates as participatory researchers, and as a means of encouraging students of color to consider teaching as a profession—a pressing nationwide concern (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Part of this vision also included engaging the program as a way for students from the partner School of Education to expand their dispositions and praxis. Recognizing that all teachers, no matter their cultural or racial background, were constrained by their schooling experiences, it was imagined that Aquetza could also serve as a site of intercultural learning, and become a pedagogical laboratory for pre-service teachers to develop robust culturally sustaining skills, seeing that radical pedagogy was possible. Here, with youth firmly positioned as the holders and producers of knowledge, teachers could experiment in revolutionary and consequential ways with curriculum design on their own practice and relationship to knowledge, rather than learning on youth of color. This collaborative process produced the following mission statement, which guided the efforts of all participants in the Aquetza program:

_Aquetza_ exists to provide youth from Colorado’s Xican@/Latin@ communities the opportunity to see themselves as cultural-historical actors with a vital place on the CU Boulder campus, and to cultivate a new generation of educators who are equipped to engage meaningfully with youth and communities in culturally sustaining ways through their pedagogy. (Romero, et al. 2013)

Building from this mission statement, Aquetza ran a pilot program in 2013 of considerably shorter duration (3 days), before running a complete, 7 day program in the summer of 2014, with Jasón Romero Jr. and myself acting as co-directors, and Josie Valadez-Fraire and Magnolia Landa-Posas serving as undergraduate program coordinators. _Aquetza_ will operate once again in 2015 as an iterative social design experiment, committed to its original, and evolving, goals, and every effort is being made to ensure that this program evolves into a sustainable university offering operated by UMAS and the School of Education.
I am honored to have been a part of the founding and establishment of the *Aquetza* program. I stake no claim on the genesis of the idea for the program itself, and have the utmost respect, admiration, and gratitude for the undergraduates who conceived of this grassroots effort, connecting back to the history and core ideals of the UMAS organization, and invited me to serve as a founding participant. With that said, I am proud of the significant founding contributions I provided to *Aquetza*, both in terms of logistical support, and in terms of vision for what the program could be, the type and style of teaching learning it practices, and what it could offer to youth, staff participants, and the CU community. *Aquetza* belongs to UMAS, and will undoubtedly evolve in future years, but I will remain proud of my work, in collaboration with Jasón Romero, to curate and bring the program to life in its infancy. With this said, I will turn briefly to examine and detail what the design and ecology of the *Aquetza* site looked like during the examined 2014 program year, noting that particular *research* design elements will be discussed in chapter 5.

*Program Design and Ecology*

To make sense of the ecology and design of Aquetza, it is worthwhile to clearly articulate the goals that all involved established, decided upon, and were working towards. In 2014, these were threefold:

1. To provide an enriching, syncretic learning space for Xican@ and historically marginalized youth from across Colorado to see themselves as cultural-historical actors

2. To provide opportunities for undergraduate students of color to participate in meaningful pedagogy, developing their skills as community educators, and exploring the transformative role teachers can play in communities and for youth
(3) To create opportunities for pre-service teachers to recognizing the strengths, assets, and knowledge of historically marginalized youth and communities, and how they might serve schools and youth in culturally sustaining ways.

With these goals in mind, Aquetza was designed not just as a one-week program, but as a year-long development process for staff, which culminated in the enactment of the youth program in the summer.

Beginning in the fall of 2013, staff participants, individuals who volunteered or were recruited as participants due to personal interest, took part in roughly bi-weekly training sessions, in which readings in critical pedagogy, ethnic studies, learning theory, and curriculum design were discussed and examined in relation to the core goals of the program. Beginning in January of 2014, this training program increased in intensity and purpose, with continued reading, and more frequent meetings. During these sessions, there was considerable generative work, as the group of staff took part in mapping activities tracing out the values, goals, and connections they wished to see in their own, and others, pedagogy during the program. Training sessions also involved considerable reflective conversation, and the use of teatro del oprimido (Boal, 1979) based pedagogical rehearsal activities, predicated upon preparing for teaching challenges/classroom oppressions that undergraduate students themselves identified as being likely and important for their praxis during the Aquetza week. A more complete explanation of these sessions is present in Manuscript B. In keeping with the vision of the program, while I was ostensibly the leader of these training sessions, and moderator of discussions, they were driven by participant sense-making and interest, and remained iterative throughout. A schedule of training topics for the spring semester portion of these trainings is included as appendix A.
The Staff themselves were organized into two groups, instructors and counselors. These designations were not intended to be hard and fast hierarchical structures, but rather to delegate and distribute the responsibility for core tasks among the staff. While counselors carried more responsibility for supporting youth in daily interactions, modeling inquiry behavior, and capitalizing on informal learning activities, Instructors, who were more veteran Aquetza staff members or pre-service educators, held the responsibility for designing the curricular modules. With this in mind, these individuals met several times beyond the training courses and activities to discuss, draft, and ultimately create the curriculum that would be deployed in the Aquetza program. The syllabus for these more reading intensive meetings is included in appendix B. Important to note is that instructors worked in strategically paired teams, with one UMASer@ staff member partnered with a pre-service teacher instructor. In this way, instructors were pushed to compliment and learn from their partners’ strengths; with UMAS students acquiring new perspectives on pedagogy and instructional delivery they had not been exposed to in coursework, while pre-service teachers acquired new lenses on engaging and thinking about historically marginalized communities from the ethnic studies expertise of their co-instructors. As a result, the pedagogical plans that were produced involved extensive and thoughtful negotiation, with Jasón Romero and myself acting as curators for all the instructional teams’ work and decision-making. As a final aspect of the staff development portion of Aquetza, on the final Saturday prior to the program, the staff held a daylong training and curriculum review, preparing themselves for the work they would be undertaking.

This arrives us to the Aquetza week and programming itself. Upon arrival, youth participants were organized into Calpullis, small groups (n = 8-10) with 2 assigned counselors. These groups were structures so as to include youth from different schools and geographic
regions, and be mixed in gender and age. Though we did not remain exclusively organized only by these smaller groups, these Calpullis and staff took part in four key activities: (1) thematic modules, (2) Community Knowledge Sessions, (3) Encuentros, and (4) Culture Circles. To elaborate on these, and other features, I will walk the reader briefly through a day of the Aquetza program.

Each day in Aquetza began with an opening ceremony, in which Jasón or myself reviewed that day’s purpose, and participants were asked to reflect, using indigenous concepts – the Four Tezcatlipocas – on what they hoped to achieve for themselves and their communities in their actions that day. Following this, all participants went to a series of three Thematic Modules comprising the core academic experience. These Modules, as noted, were designed entirely by the undergraduate instructors as unique learning experiences, privileging inductive reasoning, collaborative sense-making, and community generated knowledge, and taught by one of the aforementioned instructor pairings. Moreover, by their thematic organization, they were meant to disrupt typical, subject-specific encapsulated conceptions of schooling and learning—rupturing ‘synthetic stupidity’ (Engeström, 2007, 2005; McDermott, 1996; Wagenshein, 1977). Aimed at being transdisciplinary in nature, each individual module involved some-degree of work in literacy, socio-political topics, health science, technology, and leadership skills, all woven together as one, rather than encapsulated into academic silos. As they existed in 2014, these modules included: (a) Our story – focusing on narratives and social storytelling, (b) Systems and Structures – focusing on how socio-political dynamics both constrain choice, and offer new possibility, and (c) Researching our world – focused on decolonial, community-centered research methods, and how research could allow individuals create new, authentic, collaborative knowledge which spoke to community concerns and needs.
The work in these modules was supported by participation in a variety of related and supporting activities that we designated as Community Knowledge Sessions. These sessions, which included teatro del oprimido work with the youth, spoken word poetry, faculty and community guest speakers, college-readiness sessions, and a Photovoice activity, worked to link topics that arose in different modules and different conversations with one another, and provided a space where all youth worked together, breaking out of the Calpulli organizational units. These sessions provided different outlets and introduced youth to new tools with which they might leverage, share, and interact with the content they were learning in their modules. In this way, while modules had their own content, they were also intentionally designed to serve as enrichment for work in Community Knowledge sessions, which conversely would offer new possibilities for engagement that would enrich conversations and work in Modules. These sessions thus served recursive and reinforcing roles. Community Knowledge Sessions also served the important role of collaborative and generative work time, as youth endeavored to create a Syncretic Research Project, the core task of participation during the week.

Directly connected to these Syncretic Research Projects and integral to their development were daily Encuentros. These gatherings included the entire Aquetza community, as well as other community members invited to attend and participate as respondents, and operated as social and intellectual anchor points for this constellation of academic activities. In the Encuentros, participants, both youth and staff alike, were invited to perform or share, and in so doing workshop the knowledge, products, and ideas that were being created, challenged, and developed across their Modules and Community Knowledge Sessions. Indeed, these Encuentros also served as rehearsals for a final performance, a final Encuentro, in which youth participants presented/performed their work to an audience of peers, community members, parents, and CU
faculty, fusing the content they had learned in the modules, fused with frameworks from community knowledge sessions and their own experiences and questions from their communities. Accompanying each of these performances was a written product that was shared with other members of the Aquetza community prior to the final Encuentro performance for feedback and input. To build to this, throughout the week, we strategically employed staff members to model different syncretic products during Encuentro sessions, allowing youth to see how what they were learning, both in terms of content, leadership, and presentation formats, could generatively connect. Indeed, Jasón and myself were the first to share work in an Encuentro, foregrounding these as sites of learning, but also of vulnerability and sense-making. This aspect of community sharing and modeling of values was crucial to the overall ecology of the site, including the already discussed modules and community knowledge sessions.

From the outset of the training work with staff participants, and on the first day with youth, we emphasized that Aquetza was a space for youth voices, stories, and sense-making to take place in a decolonial setting. Building intentionally from the idea of educational sanctuary (Espinoza, 2009), we foregrounded the desire to hear honestly from all participants, openly discussing norms of respect and support, reiterating our ties as a community, employing pedagogical practices of confianza (Razfar, 2010), or trust-building, framing and locating social constructed judgments as colonial artifacts, and swiftly intervening in personal, caring ways when one of these norms was broken. By Jasón sharing a spoken word piece first, and myself sharing a vulnerable testimonio next, on the program’s second night at the end of the first full day, the program was primed for the affective to play a central role in all learning spaces, and staff were prepared to support this. Throughout the week, we saw this work effectively, with only minor interventions necessary, and many students engaging across significant
ideological/identity gaps to support and witness one another’s stories. *Encuentros*, then, became the key sites of sanctuary, in which emotional, affective content was poured out, shared, entertained. In these spaces, youth and staff regularly shared important personal moments and feelings, and received caring feedback from other participants making connections, expressing support or admiration, or simply witnessing the affect presented. It was this sort of engagement that in many ways crystallized academic content, viscerally connecting lessons from modules, formats from community knowledge sessions, and the affective truth of the participants, in the values and final products of the program.

The final activity that deserves note is that of Culture Circles, which, building from Freire (1974), were loosely organized, participant driven informal conversations around critical topics to identity and cultural development, including discussions of regional challenges, race and ethnicity, and gender (e.g. machismo and marianismo; being ‘brown’ in school). While designated culture circles, moderated by counselors, occurred each evening with varying configurations of youth, I share this as a core element because these conversational moments of informal learning and sense-making occurred consistently throughout the week, at meal-times, in walks across campus, and elsewhere, as affective and intellectual threads were picked up, and explored by youth and staff who were participants in a holistic, expansive learning experience. This deserves further stress; while our activities were designed to serve youth, all aspects of the program, woven together by these daily, informal interactions around both light and serious topics, involved learning and development for every participant – youth and staff alike. Having elaborated on these key elements, a complete, detailed, logistical schedule outlining the program activities is included in appendix C.
Before moving on to a discussion of the demographics, a final design and ecology element that is worth noting is the multilingual dimensions of the space. Being a learning site primarily for Chican@ and Latin@ youth, all of our activities occurred to some degree in bilingual fashion. During modules, Community Knowledge sessions, Encuentros, and particularly culture circles and other informal settings, code-switching occurred regularly, as youth were encouraged to use whatever language was most productive for them, and staff members supported their sense making in this language. For some participants, this meant an opportunity to use or employ Spanish they had limited fluency in, or typically used only in blended Spanglish. For others, the site presented a safe opportunity to practice English, with extensive support, and no fear of judgment from more expert language users. In concert with the other design elements around foregrounding vulnerability and inviting youth voices and knowledge to set the tone and direction, the multilingualism of the space produced an ecology rich in confianza, making it a space open to iterative learning and personal growth.

Participant Demographics

Having laid out what the program entailed, it makes sense to consider who was involved as participants. In total, we had 30 youth, and 12 staff participants.

Of our 30 youth participants, 28 self-identified as Latin@ or Chican@, 1 afro-Chicana, and 1 White. Of those identifying as Chican@, there was considerable variety in Latin American ethnic/cultural/national background, including Mexican-origin, as well as Honduran, Guatemaltec@, and Columbian@. Of the group, 14 identified as male, and 16 as female, including the White individual, who identified as a Trans* woman. These youth ranged in age, with our youngest participant a 14-year old rising 9th grader, and our oldest an 18-year old rising 12th grader. 9 individuals were from Pueblo, 8 from Denver, 3 from Aurora, 3 from the Western-
slope, 2 from the San Luis Valley, and 5 from the Boulder Valley area. Language proficiency among this group varied, with 20 of the 30 individuals having some degree of Spanish proficiency, though this was not a variable we collected demographic data on.

Of our 12 staff (excluding myself), 9 self-identified as Chican@, though like the youth, their ethnic and cultural backgrounds across Latin America varied, extending beyond Mexican-origin. Three identified as White, all of whom were pre-service teachers. Of these three, two were female, and one male, and none had any previous coursework or experience with Ethnic or Chican@ studies content. Of the nine Chican@ staff participants, all were extremely well versed in ethnic studies content, either majoring or minoring in the discipline, but while several had taken an education survey course (EDUC 3013), only two, both pre-service teacher education students, had any more extensive engagement with pedagogy. Similarly to the youth participants, language proficiency varied across the group, and with seven individuals having strong Spanish fluency, while two had limited communicate proficiency, and the three White pre-service education student staff members being monolingual.

What this amounts to is an incredibly diverse community of learners. Certainly, Chican@ was a signifier common to the majority of individuals present, but this ethno-political identity is and should not be understood as totalizing or homogenous. Not all of our participants were of Mexican descent, and while some were first-generation immigrants, others had centuries-old family histories in Colorado, or elsewhere in the United States. They varied in age, in their academic abilities/preparation, and in where they called home. Their life experiences were vastly different, and included a variety of political beliefs and commitments, religious affiliations, and personal and cultural interests. While they shared the experience of being historically marginalized youth, they brought, in conjunction with the equally diverse staff, incredible
richness to the Aquetza learning space. Perhaps the only constant that could be said about any group of participants was that the individuals comprising the staff (as a whole, and across the board), were all firmly committed to social justice, and the success of the youth.

*How Research Functioned in Aquetza*

With the ecology of the program and research space mapped out, it seems important to note that the research component of the program was developed after Aquetza had come into being. As noted above in the detailing of Aquetza’s history, its operation as a site of pedagogical research was developed to compliment, learn from, and enhance, but never conflict with, its core goals. This is to say that the primary purpose of Aquetza, all of its components, sessions, designs, and activities, is the culturally sustaining development of historically marginalized Chicana@ youth and undergraduate educators – the vision articulated by those who conceived of it to begin with. Such a point is vital to articulate, because it speaks to the authenticity of the Aquetza program and experience, and the epistemic grounding of this work.

Moreover, while the details of how design elements in Aquetza’s operation functioned in my research is detailed in chapter 5, the studies that comprise this dissertation are a small fraction of the activity that took place in the Aquetza site. Indeed the entire process has been openly constructed as a space for staff participants to pursue pressing research questions of their own. This follows from the notion that not just the youth participant attendees, but the staff as well, are holders and producers of knowledge, and are poised to have tremendously valuable and rich insights growing from their observations of the many dimensions of the program. Presently, a group of UMAS students have successfully submitted a proposal to present at the annual conference of the National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies (NACCS)², while the

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² I wish to highlight that the proposal written by Jasón Romero, Magnolia Landa-Posas, Josie Valadez-Fraire and myself was accepted from presentation, and though we ultimately were unable to attend for financial reasons, their
several of the pre-service teacher participants have submitted a proposal to the annual NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English) conference, with others due to present at the on-campus, CU LEAD research symposium. I point out these efforts both to give due credit to the brilliance and ingenuity of the staff, and to emphasize the intergenerational nature of learning and research exploration in the program, as well as to clearly articulate the nature of my own role with the program, and as researcher of the program. Namely, that I am co-equal with the staff participants, and one of many voices and actors who have helped bring the original vision described earlier into existence, while simultaneously serving as more-experienced peer and mentor in support of other participant’s research efforts.

In the context of a discussion *Aquetza* as a research space, questions of longitudinal study also bear mentioning. The setting I have detailed here describes the *Aquetza* training and program, yet at the conclusion, these individuals, both staff and youth, did not vanish – they returned themselves to their schools, classrooms, and communities across the state of Colorado, each a rich and complicated context in and of itself. Both in the interest of remaining a supportive network on these participant’s paths towards college and teaching, and in terms of building a longitudinal picture of the way that the repertoires of practice, frameworks, and ideas from *Aquetza* traveled across contexts, efforts have been taken to remain in contact with all of the youth participants, with varying success. Town Halls in some regions have been held, with a second round due for later in April, while phone, email, and social media correspondence has allowed continued monitoring of many individuals. Additionally, a database for self-reporting of experiences was employed over the course of this year, to allow us a better sense of how *Aquetza* impacted youth participant’s personal, community, and academic participation. With 30 youth accomplishment in putting together this work should be noted and commended, as they carry these projects forward regardless.
from over 10 cities and more than 20 different high schools, this has been challenging, and for a variety of reasons, we have lost track of some youth, both in terms of research maintenance, and personal support. These have been emotional losses. With that said, I have similarly followed staff participants to build a longitudinal picture, some of this data taking a central role in the third manuscript. With a smaller number of participants, their close geographic proximity, and the fact that many remain involved in Aquetza and at CU Boulder, this has been a less daunting task, and it has been exciting to track the ongoing growth of those participants who have moved into their own classrooms, seeing how the lessons and experiences of Aquetza traveled with them.

Finally, this dissertation research study, and each of its constituent manuscripts, as well as further work that may grow out of this, are explorations aimed at more deeply theorizing and exploring what it looks like and means to do culturally sustaining pedagogy, not as a manufactured intervention, but as a institutional commitment in a purposefully designed space. Growing from and through the involvement of the community, and driven by a coherent and nuanced theory of learning, I am proud to be one of many voices helping to guide the program, to support the youth, and to mentor the undergraduate pre-service teachers and students, but I am merely a steward of a larger vision. When my time at CU will be coming to an end, the program will continue, because its life exists with students who are actively taking up the task of fostering and creating an educational sanctuary (Espinoza, 2009) on CU Boulder’s campus. Indeed, we are presently tracking several Aquetzer@s (program alumni) who will be matriculating to CU Boulder this coming fall, and hopefully serving as staff in 2016.

Aquetza is designed as a space in which it is possible for youth and undergraduates to negotiate and engage in culturally sustaining, and indeed culturally revitalizing, learning and research. The program itself is founded on the premise that knowledge is polyvalent across the
community and the academy, and seeks to live this in practice by constantly refreshing and recreating itself through the energy and passion of the ever changing community to which it belongs. It is the instantiation of this vision, brought to life in a social design experiment, which this dissertation seeks to understand.

*Replication and Implications for Other Contexts*

An important consideration in reflection on this program as both a learning and research site is that it is rooted, on many levels, in the specific context of Colorado, and community of CU Boulder. Indeed, the intentional focus on issues relating to engaging the Chican@ community in higher-education and community leadership speak to the demographics of the state (21% of the state of Colorado identified as Latin@ according to current U.S. Census estimates, the largest historically marginalized group in the state by over 16 percentage points), the demographics of the University (only 10% of CU Boulder Undergraduates identified as Latin@), as well as Colorado’s history as a site for Chican@ political action (e.g. UMAS was founded at CU Boulder, 2014 was the 40\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of *Los Seis de Boulder*, Denver was the site of the Chicano Youth Liberation Conference in March, 1969), and there are numerous central figures from the National Chican@ Movimiento who are from Colorado (e.g. Corky Gonzalez, Ricardo Falcón). Moreover, Colorado has established Chican@ and Mexican@ identified communities in Denver, Pueblo, the San Luis Valley, Longmont, the Western Slope areas and summit county, as well as many other cities and towns. Finally, as a grassroots effort emerging from the UMAS community at CU Boulder, the very direction and definition of Chican@/Chicanism@ upon which the program and curriculum were built, was distinct, idiosyncratic to the commitments of the founders (e.g. Jasón’s commitments and interest in indigenous epistemology produced the Nahuatl program name of ‘*Aquetza*’), and contextually specific.
However, while this specificity did indeed exist, and its genesis was preceded by goals separate from research, the site was thoughtfully designed using formative research principles and a social design experiment methodology (described in chapter 4). Rather than a focus on external goals and generalizability, *Aquetza* was interested in engaging these youth and teachers in expansive learning related to and situated in their context, and shifting that participation. These liberatory goals, of course, are by no means novel, and other similar programs have operated with similar ends, projects, and outcomes in other spaces (e.g. Gutiérrez, 2008; Morrell, 2008), and are evidence that altering the components of empowering, critical pedagogy programs and formative, social design research can be flexibly deployed to serve diverse communities. In other terms, while the specifics here were rooted to the context, I believe the overarching design itself is replicable, and thus could be applied in other contexts, assuming the decolonial goals and definition of learning were retained. Were this vision and design model to be taken up elsewhere or by another grassroots student organization or researcher, one would imagine that its parameters, impetus, and name would change to reflect the contextual desires of the program, the locale, and the community, striving for expansive learning in different directions than occurred here. Even a community exploring Chican@ studies and issues would, indeed, look different were it occurring elsewhere. Such alterations to meet and reflect the contextual climate and culture would indeed be reflective of the pluralistic values at the core of culturally sustaining pedagogical projects, and design based research. In short, while much of the research that follows is specific to *Aquetza*, a program built upon and designed to reinforce Chican@ studies and decolonial lenses, and draw from a Mexica or Nahuatl mestizo heritage, the model itself, if successful, might be seen as a design scaffold around which many other communities, constituencies, and contexts might be engaged. Finally, it should also be understood that the
research itself, while specific to this context, is more broadly applicable – the lessons that emerged from *Aquetza* point to outcomes that, should a researcher, teacher educator, or community activist thoughtfully take up to design programs that reflect their context, produce similar, if contextually specific, research results.

*A Note on Data Choices From Within the Program*

The reader will notice, considering the three stated goals of the *Aquetza* site (page 57-58), that the research explorations featured in this dissertation largely focus on the third of those concerns, aimed at teacher education and the goal of cultivating culturally sustaining and decolonial pedagogical dispositions in pre-service teachers, thereby creating opportunities for them to recognize the strengths, assets, and knowledge of historically marginalized youth and communities, and how they might position themselves to serve schools and youth in culturally sustaining ways. As will be discussed more at length in chapter 5, the *Aquetza* site produced an incredible amount of data; far more than could reasonably be covered in a single dissertation study, even when distributed across three manuscripts. As such, not all of the key goals, let alone the many research questions that emerged around each of them, could be included in the dissertation studies. Choices of focus and data management were required, and the data relating to teacher education, and the pre-service teacher participants in *Aquetza*, emerged as most pragmatically manageable. This means my dissertation will not explore the empirical data that was collected on youth, or around the pedagogical growth of undergraduate students of color. This was a conscious choice, made for several reasons, which I will attempt to detail here.

First, there were purely logistical reasons. With 30 diverse youth participants spread across the state, and ongoing data collection around these individuals occurring, engaging with the research questions that related to these individuals and the data I had on them was a broader,
more lengthy process than I felt was permitted by the timeframe of the dissertation study. I am still collecting data on these youth, and piecing together the impact of this experience on their repertoires of practice, discourses, and community engagement. As such, I intend to explore this data in future papers, and in partnership with some of the other Aquetza staff members.

Second, and similarly, the data surrounding the undergraduate students of color and their pedagogical learning, while incredibly compelling and interesting, also involved a larger group and data-set. As these individuals struggled with living their critical commitments as instructors, several exciting, complex, themes emerged with a group who remain participants, and will hopefully be collaborators in engage this data. None of these factors is problematic, but the size and complexity does make the empirical dataset less feasible to work with and through in a limited timeframe. The data I have explored here, limited to a few individuals and one central thematic trajectory, is a manageable project to take on in the allotted time. Moreover, while in Manuscript C, these individuals will not feature in my empirical analysis of Aquetza staff participants, the ideas, theories, and pedagogies focused on in Manuscripts A and B do indeed relate to these individuals as well – cultivating culturally sustaining dispositions is not just a question of encountering new cultures, but of re-learning and un-learning patterns and expectations of school linked to internal colonization. Though not explicitly featured, these participants are not absent from my arguments and claims.

Finally, based on my experiences while working in the CU Boulder teacher education program, the questions that exist and emerge around pre-service educators and culturally sustaining pedagogy are incredibly interesting, and feel incredibly urgent to me. Thus far, one of the most generative questions I have been asked while presenting on this work has been, “In a space with so many youth and students of color, why focus on teacher education, and the White
pre-service individuals?” I recognize there is considerable tension in this, and while an easy, but
evasive answer might be to simply refer once again to the pragmatic needs of my study, I find
this work as equally compelling and interesting. While the recruitment of teachers of color is a
central passion of mine, I join Souto-Manning (2011) in feeling that even while we work for
more representation and diversity in the teaching force, we must actively attend to the robust
cultivation of the White individuals who are the present demographic reality, and will be moving
into the classrooms of underserved schools and historically marginalized communities in the
interim. In other terms, I firmly believe that cultural nationalist stances (e.g. had we excluded
White educators from participation in Aquetza) focusing exclusively on in-group work and
development are a disservice to our communities at large, a turn towards failed cultural
nationalist politics (Omi & Winant, 1994), and a refusal to deterritorialize our own stances, and
seek decolonizing lines of flight in regards to the demographic realities of the teaching force.
Essentially, the work of cultivating culturally sustaining allies who have robust understandings
of what it means to teach and learn with, and not on, communities may be a tertiary goal in terms
of design, but it is no less important. So long as we remain aware of the tension, and do not let
our broader design bend towards focusing on White-identity development over and serving
White educators with opportunities to learn on youth of color – we are pushing them to be
destabilized and uncomfortable in their learning – the tension is mitigated, and remains a part of
a decolonial project. With this said, I believe deeply in the importance of this work, and am
proud of the growth and participation of these White individuals in Aquetza, and am eager to
showcase the ways in which they grew as individuals, teachers, and allies to historically
marginalized communities.
With this setting established, I turn our discussion more directly towards research, and the conceptual framework and methodology that, following from the goals, values, and history outlined here, were incorporated into the *Aquetza* program as a research framework.
Chapter IV: Conceptual Framework & Social Design Research

Conceptual Framework

I situate this next chapter in the history, details, and demographic specifics of the *Aquetza* site elaborated on in chapter 3, and the theoretical background detailed in chapter 1. The conceptual framework\(^3\) which guides this study is anchored firmly in cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT), whose roots lie in the situated psychology of L.S. Vygotsky (1978). CHAT posits learning as socially situated and intersubjective, a process that occurs through the individuals’ participation in activities, mediated by artifacts, in interactive social contexts, all of which are culturally specific and derived (Cole & Engeström, 2007; Rogoff, 2003, 1990; Moll, 1998, 1990; Cole & Engeström, 1993). This is a definition of learning in which cognition is not an isolated, individual process, but rather the “mind” is distributed across and through an affective geography of learning that is itself social, cultural, and historical (Matusov, 1998; Wertsch, 1985; Rommetveit, 1979). Recognizing the social, cultural, and historical antecedents of this geography of learning allows us to think of any given context as an activity system of learning. Now, because contexts are fluid, immanent, and constantly changing, even in one particular spatial setting, activity systems are numerous, and overlapping, a fact which should not be dismissed, even as we employ this conceptual tool to map out the parameters of every aspect of learning within an activity system: from the object or goal, to the tools that might be used, to how the division of labor functions, to the rules that must be applied, as well to define the settings, subjects, and community in which the activity system is to be oriented. As seen in Fig.\(^1\)

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\(^3\) I draw once again on Ravitch and Riggan (2012), to understand the conceptual framework as distinct from, but informed by, theoretical framework. This conceptual framework, then, flows from theory, seeking to employ a design in which the analytical tools of theory can coherently be brought to bear on the subject of topical interest.
1, modeling activity systems in this way allows us to see quite clearly the flowing interrelation among disparate aspects of an activity system, and emphasizes consideration of more than a single, or even limited elements (Engeström, 1987).

![Basic CHAT Activity System Model](image)

*Fig. 1 – Basic CHAT Activity System Model*

Turning to the realm of education, CHAT allows us to think of schooling as itself as an activity system, and one which is far too often dominated by an overriding logic comprised of constraining sets of rules, prescribed ways of being for its subjects, rigid and undemocratic divisions of labor, and strictly and narrowly defined goals – a colonizing and limited plane of consistency that has remained in stasis for years. This logic was famously described by Freire (1970) as the, ‘banking method,’ that defines much of the education experience for youth from historically marginalized communities as vessels into which majoritarian knowledge will be ‘banked’ by a teacher, whose authority and expertise ought not to be questioned. These restrictive parameters or ‘rules of the game,’ insist on unquestioned authority and unidirectional knowledge flow are identified by Tyack and Cuban (1995) as “the grammar of schooling,” and
by Bourdieu (2000) as the *nomos*. While both formulations of the rigid and limiting logic of traditional schooling ecologies speak to the same general construct, the latter – *nomos* – implies an intentionality to it, recognizing that the activity system is not a passive construct, but through its various rules, arrangements, expectations, and limitations, is rather *actively* involved in producing itself, and its own power. Bourdieu’s *nomos* relies upon a Foucauldian approach to the way that power functions through Discourse – the broad, ideological schemas of the social, political and material world as it is ordered and given meaning and material reality through language (Gee, 2008; Rodgers, 2004), – emerging as ideological and polyvalent, and entrenched in institutions as normalized (Foucault, 1978). Bringing these constructs together, CHAT theories of learning help us understand schooling as activity systems, and allow us to trace out the ways a ‘banking model’ of education, as the logic of the *nomos*, is constructed and sustained in classrooms through discourse (Cazden, 2001).

To anchor this in an example (albeit a hypothetical one), and connect back to the driving problems of this study, the modeling of learning ecologies as activity systems in this way (Engeström, & Sannino, 2010) becomes a deeply instructive heuristic that aids us in our conceptualization of the ways in which schooling can be constraining to both youth and teachers, and our design of alternatives. Let us consider an underserved classroom, wherein a novice teacher arrives with ambitions of engaging a culturally relevant pedagogy. She enters the classroom of Fig. 1, and, in an effort to create more equitable conditions, introduces a variety of multicultural texts (tools), and progressive strategies for student centered engagement, including Socratic Seminars, regular think-pair-shares, etc. (tools & divisions of labor). This in turn shifts the student’s role and identity (the Subject) in slight ways, as they have more voice, and can more readily see themselves in the curriculum. However, this teacher, legitimately, is still deeply
concerned about the upcoming PARCC test. As such, even in employing these new texts (Tools), and engaging pedagogy (Divisions of labor), all of this work remains oriented towards end pre-defined by the demands of high stakes testing, and as a result, the community, its orientation, purpose, and reason for being together never truly change. The questions the teacher crafts are indeed about multicultural texts, and include more opportunities for students to share, but all of this engagement, with new texts, tools, and divisions of labor, is predicated on extracting academic meanings and interpretations – the Object of learning has not changed, and thus both consumption, uptake of materials and practices, and learning outcome do not significantly change either. Similarly, driven by urgency and the strain of being a novice educator, our teacher adheres strictly to the school’s established disciplinary plans, effectively leaving the rules of engagement in place. Eventually, the students, despite the glimmers of evolution, remain in stasis, anchored to subjectivities and objects of learning that exist in a fixed plane of consistency.

I do not offer this example to disparage our hypothetical teacher, or the many like her. Rather, her actions are not condemnable; they are the logical outcome of novices under-prepared as nomads and war machines, and thrust into the realm of the nomos, limited in the theoretical scope of their thinking and vision. Essentially, the nomos governs its subjects and systems through a Discourse and logic defining an activity system; containing the rules, divisions of labor, available tools, permissible identities, etc. that are given institutional sanction. Once in place, the logic of these rules, tools, identities, etc. become so normative as to become, ‘common sense,’ or ‘natural.’ They are the unquestioned assumptions of what we do in schooling, and who we must be, as Grossman, Smagorinsky, and Valencia (1999) explain: “the practice of teaching … remains much as it has always been: content oriented, teacher-centered, authoritarian, mimetic, and recitative,” (p 3). Growth, innovation, and dynamism in the interactive social
context of the activity can atrophy, the logic institutionalized, and the activity system merely acting to reproduce and insist upon itself and its own power, defining the limitations of the Discourse available, the outcomes possible, and the institutional rules present. The _nomos_ might then be seen as encapsulating nearly all the discursive and structural features internal to ‘normal’ schooling that continually leads to the problem of youth disengagement with learning, as well as the enactment of reductive pedagogies into which many teachers fall. Taking up a postcolonial lens on these constructs, this _nomos_ driven can be seen as neo-colonization: the control and exploitation of non-dominant subjects – the marginalized student and critical educator – who become caught in a cycle of mimicry (Bhabha, 1984), constantly straining to reproduce and emulate the behaviors, discourse, and definitions of success set out for them by the Discourse of power; yet never fully succeeding, always and necessarily falling short of being the subjects they are instructed/desired to be, relegated to marginal positions, framed in deficit ways. Even when new tools are introduced, or individuals like our hypothetical teacher attempt to alter some aspects of this activity system, if they are not conscious and aware of the stasis that exists across the entirety of a given system (all the different elements, not just the tools and divisions of labor, but the rules, community, and construction of subject and object as well), then revolutionary, critical progress is more than likely to stall, resulting in “wash-out” (Labaree, 2004), or the process through which novice educator’s critical goals gradually erode, settling in to a comfortable stasis, and despite their efforts at small variations (such as the introduction of multicultural texts, and more engaging division of labor), their work ultimately replicates the inequitable practices and outcomes that underserved schools have long been known for.

Such conceptualizations about schooling, as an activity system driven and defined by the Discourse of the _nomos_, a new system of colonization, are, admittedly, depressing. Moreover, it
should be noted that this same framework could be used to model and discuss the parameters of classrooms, and how we might work with and extend them, in more positive, optimistic ways. However, as noted, I situate myself in a poststructural and decolonial perspective that sees the overriding logics and present objects of learning available to historically marginalized youth and their teachers as the unacceptable geography, the territorialization, of colonial stasis. That being said, hope and possibility are always present, even if the immanent reality from which we begin is bleak. Considering this, I engage CHAT as a modeling schooling along the lines of the nomos and as an act of colonization in order to allow us to see the principal way in which the decolonial comes together with CHAT and expansive learning to produce an active process of decolonization. Returning to this idea of wash-out, while part of this is a function of external pressure, jaded educators and institutional constraints pushing novices in the direction of stasis, it is also a function of theoretical vision and dispositional development – limitations in how novice are able to understand and imagine classrooms operating. This relates back to the core problem I have suggested in chapter 2, that current approaches to preparing and cultivating critical dispositions in novice educators do not go far enough in fostering decolonial and revolutionary pedagogical commitment and disposition. CHAT, as I have argued, gives us a model or heuristic for unpacking, and understanding how activity systems – including that of the nomos – can operate. But in so doing, we can identify how, in even the most restrictive of activity systems, spaces of hope and possibility for the contestation of problematic, colonizing Discourses and institutions, can be found and cultivated. In short, by tracing out the parameters of the nomos, and infusing imagination and possibility into any point of negotiation, we open the possibility for new lines of flight, and for the mapping of new, decolonial, and liberatory spaces. This is in line with Bhabha’s (1994) suggestion that in a postcolonial/neocolonial world:
…to reconstitute the discourse of cultural difference, demands not simply a change of cultural contents and symbols…It requires a radical revision of the social temporality in which emergent histories may be written. (p.246)

This radical revision, he continues, requires the production and enactment of, “a subversive strategy of subaltern agency that negotiates its own authority through a process of…insurgent relinking,” (p.265). This goal of insurgent relinking is remarkably similar to the goal of expansive learning, and the ‘radical revision’ of the contents, symbols, and temporalities of the activity system and ecology of learning environments. Such work, redefining the subject, rewriting the rules, reorganizing the division of labor, the identification of new tools, become fundamental tasks, and are, connecting back to the realm of poststructural and decolonial theory in which this work is situated, the work of deterritorializing colonial planes of consistency, and affective economies – the very action of decolonization. Connecting this back to CHAT, this work of transformation, of deterritorialization, can be understood as an interplay between decolonial epistemology and activity theory, the process of expansive learning (Engeström, 1987).

This idea of expansive learning is a key one to a CHAT framework. Emerging from Engeström’s (1987) work, and further developed over the last several decades, expansive learning can be understood as involving not just the acquisition of new knowledge or skills, nor the production of a subject who has achieved some given object or outcome, but rather, participation in an activity system such that the production of new activity systems is its object. Rather than merely reproducing itself and its nomos, learning that is expansive actively seeks to generate and create new outcomes and forms of participation in the activity of learning. The object of learning thus becomes doing the world differently, and learning and development represent the transformation of participation in activities (Rogoff, 2003). In other terms, the expansion of those activities in which one takes part (Engeström & Sannino, 2010) involves
exploding, transforming, or re-mediating constitutive aspects of it. Here, re-mediation is not low-level support of basic skills or ‘fixing’ of the individual, rather it is a reorganization of how a problem or artifact is approached or understood in the ecology and historicity of an activity, such that producing knowledge happens in new ways, learning itself is transformed, and new meanings are created (Cole & Griffin, 1983; Gutiérrez, et al., 2009), thereby generating a new activity system in which to participate (see Fig. 2).

![Fig. 2 – Model of Anticipated Expansive Learning](Image)

To elaborate a bit, let’s return to our hypothetical teacher. In our previous instance, by altering the content and divisions of labor, in significant and manageable ways, did make changes to the activity system of schooling in which she operated, contesting stasis and positively impacting the subjectivity of her students in likely important ways. Yet, reflecting what I believe to be the core dilemma of how culturally relevant pedagogy was undermined, these small interventions, without a broader appreciation and conceptualization of the broader activity system(s) at play, failed to fundamentally alter the object and outcomes for her students. The teacher’s efforts are significant, important, and likely improved student experience, but
ultimately, they are limited, constrained to operation within the set plane of consistency defined by the *nomos*. The way that participation occurred did not change; there was no fundamentally different engagement with the activity system of schooling, or learning itself. By Engeström’s definition, this falls short of expansive learning, which requires the reorganization and rupturing of multiple, though not necessarily all, of the elements of an activity system in a coordinated, intentional way: there must be an awareness of how the holistic system operates, how its object and subject are constructed, and what the manipulation of certain elements does in relation to that subject and object. It is this intentional aspect, which, I argue, accounts for the expansiveness of learning – the act of insurgent relinking well aware of the affective, colonial geography in which the learning occurs. Awareness, even in the case of constrained spaces, opens the potential for shifting the very object of the activity, and thus the possibility of expanding the entire activity system of learning itself. Such actions not only serve to change the activity system and the ecology, but necessarily alter the discourse, allowing for an escape from the constraints of mimicry, and the articulation of new possible identities and ways of being in which the subject might be recognized as an important holder and creator of knowledge.

To extend this discussion some in decolonial directions, it is worth noting that this theory of knowledge begins with an important fundamental premise: that students and their communities, despite their marginalization and likely framing in deficit terms, are in fact holders and producers of important and legitimate ‘funds’ of knowledge (Moll, et al. 1992; Moll, 1992; Delgado-Bernal, 2002). What one must immediately notice about this premise is its fundamental difference from that of the *nomos*, wherein the expert, the teacher, is merely a transmitter of established knowledge. To make this epistemological leap demands a fundamental change in our Discourse, and our expectations for how schooling and intersubjectivity – defined here as shared
purpose, coordination of participation, and joint agency (Matusov, 2001) – might emerge and be construed. This is where liberatory possibility often falls apart, as educators, even those equipped with more democratic pedagogical practices and awareness of the need for culturally relevant texts/tools/etc., fail to make the ontological and Discursive leap of re-mediating this vision of who their students are, and what they need from them⁴. What follows from this is that expansive possibility depends heavily not just on pragmatic skill, but on identity and ideology as well. In decolonial terms, the possibility for insurgent re-linking, for the work of deterritorializing the Discourses and affects of colonization, of shifting and contesting the colonization of the nomos, rests on educator’s acquisition of what Anzaldúa (1989) has termed, La facultad:

…the capacity to see in surface phenomena the meaning of deeper realities, to see the deep structure below the surface....The one possessing this sensitivity is excruciatingly alive to the world. (p. 60)

Thus while CHAT and expansive learning might guide us to make sense of the many factors that go into structuring and designing what mediates a learning ecology, la facultad, and decolonial epistemology in general, press us to deeply analyze the ways in which the ecologies we design work with regards to differential power, whose voices are being served, and whose are excluded, rendering liberatory, expansive outcomes possible.

Considering this, and the ontological and Discursive dilemma of ensuring an educator’s ideology is poised to be consciously aware and tuned towards decolonial possibilities, there remains a practical question of: what will this look like? The very nature of expansive learning is that the activity systems, and how participants engage in them, will be new. Moreover, precisely what reorganized, re-mediated, ruptured practices that would expand the activity systems of schools in liberatory directions are unclear, largely because they will necessarily be contextual, immanent, and not easily delineated beforehand. As a result, the bar for truly expansive learning

⁴ This particular issues will be explored at length in the second manuscript, which is contained in chapter 6.
is high, and requires teachers to be capable and prepared to engage in more than just the practice of enacting existing skills and strategies, but engaging in the CHAT conception of prolepsis, or organizing learning for the future, which “occurs when an individual, by herself, or through the help of someone else ‘‘sees’’ something that is yet to be developed” (Meshcheryakov, 2009, p. 166), following a line of flight previously unexplored. This idea demands then, that in order for expansive learning to even be a possibility, those involved, youth and educators, need to be conscious of and open to the possibility of following destabilizing and anxious trajectories into the unknown, away from established planes of consistency and stasis, and whose only real anchoring is in a decolonial imagination. Such work, if we seek for it to be expansion in decolonial, liberatory directions, requires spaces that Pérez (1999) describes as imaginaries, “where differential politics and social dilemmas are negotiated.” In the context of education, we then need pedagogical imaginaries (Dominguez, 2014), tertiary spaces (Wartofsky, 1979) in which teachers can recognize themselves and their students as producers and holders of knowledge, play with possibility, and see with renewed clarity the ways in which established logics and discourses act to interpellate them, and play with imagination and possibility for resisting and rupturing the social relations and identities that are produced by these constructs.

In all of this, it is important to remember, as I noted above, that activity systems are never so simple as unitary constructs. While we can conceptualize a broad activity system representing the *nomos* of schooling or banking model education, and encourage novices to strive for expansive learning in their classrooms that resists and ruptures these activity systems, it is important to recognize that there are multiple layers of activity, learning, and social interaction always at play. While we might create expansive possibilities in the black box of a classroom, students exit that room, stepping outside to participate in the larger activity system and ecology
of the school, which itself operates within an even broader activity systems of the community and school district. Moreover, the individual student-subject is, within a classroom, party to smaller activity systems among peers, as well as activity systems and learning spaces wholly separate from the school, in their family, among peers, in casual and professional settings. The point of course is not to map all of these, but rather to note that in the work of teaching, and in this research, we are necessarily attempting to focus our attentions on one, limited, but permeable, activity system that cannot be separated off in experimental-control fashion from the contextual richness of real life, and the immanence and affects of colonialism that linger and follow youth and teachers into every space and geography they inhabit.

This reality has two important implications to our framework. First, it demands that we recognize the limits to agency, and in fact, the way in which agency is itself a questionable concept, shaped and altered by our existence in affective geographies and economies (Ahmed, 2004), rhizomatic assemblages of many dimensions, pressures, and histories. We can follow new lines of flight, deterritorialize space and craft new, liberatory assemblages, but we can never erase the reality of the affect which exists pre-personally, beyond us as individuals, not-determining, but influencing and shaping, our agency and choice (Massumi, 2002). Consider our hypothetical teacher mentioned above. Let us assume, after her first attempt, she became conscious of the *nomos*, and took pains to engage, with her students in prolepsis, envisioning new ways for them to be as learners and a community in her room, coming together for reasons other than achieving PARCC test proficiency. Even if successful, she continues to operate in a system and geography in which truly revolutionary outcomes are not so simple as the sheer exercise of some sort of Nietzschian will to power around the desire for liberation. These just mentioned negotiations are more substantial, more proleptic than the introduction of texts and
conversation noted earlier as limited, but even the most profound, decolonial imagination and expansive possibility will necessarily be a negotiation. This, however, should not take away from the profound importance of when those negotiations are expansive in direction, merely temper our vision to not expect outright revolution, and rather be excited by even limited proleptic efforts that rupture stasis.

Second, this countless overlapping and interpenetration of activity systems means that we cannot, reasonably, account for or examine all of the activity systems in which individuals participate. Even, as this research seeks to do, when we design a space to explore and construct a new, expansive activity system, exploring the effects of that activity system on participants’ engagement with learning, there are necessarily other systems that they remain participants in, that cannot be accounted for. Considering this, these studies and the broader project will make choices of what activity systems to focus on, not out of ignorance for the complexity and influences of others, but in the interest is working to produce generative change through the manipulation of a limited set of variables. More attention to precisely what the foci of these studies will be in terms of that activity system, and what is involved in the manipulation I refer to, are found in chapter 5, but in terms of conceptualizing and tracing out a framework, it remains important to acknowledge that this work does not light or simplistically apply the idea of activity systems, even as it focuses attention to certain ones.

With all this in mind, I situate this work not just in a CHAT framework, but in a framework of critical CHAT, consciously aware of the colonial implications of activity systems, and intentionally working towards imaginative, expansive outcomes that are actively decolonial. Such a framework builds from the assumption that through the joint activity and imagination of youth and educators, the potential emerges for the transformation of pedagogy and learning in
proleptic, decolonial directions. While neocolonial power, as it is exercised through discourse and institutions in social and cultural spaces, might be ubiquitous, and oppressive discourses constantly at work, the pursuit of expansive learning as active decolonization presents the possibility for the design of a space in which power and colonization might be resisted, and hope and possibility located. In this terrain, the marginalizing, colonizing, logic of the nomos can be negotiated, ruptured, and ultimately shifted, creating new possibilities for the object and the ecology of learning, and new lines of flight and forms of participation to pursue for both youth, and the teachers who serve them.

With this framework in mind, than the methodology that we employ to study and design Aquetza, as both learning environment and research site, requires the potential to deterritorialize the stasis of the nomos, rupturing its plane of consistency. We need to be able to organize for learning, modifying, manipulating, and exploring how we might create the conditions necessary for both youth and teacher expansive learning, and engage in the work of decolonization. I now turn to an elaboration on the method, which I believe meets these criteria, and is employed as the overarching structure of the Aquetza program; the social design experiment.

**Towards A Social Design Research Methodology**

*The Origins of Design Based Research*

Methodologically, Aquetza as a research space can trace its origins to the field of Design Based Research. Its methodology, however, is distinct; related to its decolonial and transformative intentions, but in order to establish several key features which emerge out of and in contrast to the history of Design-based research, I will first situate it in the history of this methodological paradigm, which is commonly traced back to the work of Ann Brown (1992) and Allan Collins (1992).
Design-based research has grown rapidly in recent decades in the learning sciences, growing into a methodological approach with considerable scholarly attention (Brown, 1992; Collins, 1992; Design-Based Research Collective, 2003; Hoadley, 2002; Kelly, 2003; Barab & Kirshner, 2001; Nicolopoulou & Cole, 2010; Brown & Campione, 1996). While not at all a unitary methodology with a single viable approach, the initial vision of Design Based Research grew out of Brown’s (1992) recognition that in order to study and understand learning in their socially, culturally, and historically situated complexity, required new methods. The laboratory, where much research on learning happened, was divorced from the complexity of real life, and therefore necessarily limiting. On the other hand, ethnographic research methodology, while more attuned to these complexities, regularly assumed a passive stance, and thus never intervened in the learning process to see what possibility existed (Collins, et al. 2004). For those interested in applied outcomes, these and other canonical methods were insufficient to achieve the ends desired in the study of situated learning (Bell, 2004), and, as Barab and Squire (2004) explain: “learning scientists have found that they must develop technological tools, curriculum, and especially theories that help them systematically understand and predict how learning occurs,” (p. 2). Thus, rather than a strict alternative to more traditional methodologies, design based research, as a set of various approaches and toolkits, was meant to represent a bridge from the laboratory, to real world, where experimental methods could interact and be implemented in the complexity of lived socio-ecological contexts (Hoadley, 2004), and learning researchers might, “trace the evolution of learning in complex, messy classrooms and schools, test and build theories of teaching and learning, and produce instructional tools that survive the challenges of everyday practice,” (Shavelson et al., 2003, p. 25). Cobb, diSessa, Lehrer, & Schauble (2003) suggest that:
Prototypically, design experiments entail both “engineering” particular forms of learning and systematically studying those forms of learning within the context defined by the means of supporting them. This designed context is subject to test and revision, and the successive iterations that result play a role similar to that of systematic variation in experiment. (p. 9)

This “engineering” aspect is important, and we will return to it, but first, it is worth continuing to trace out clearly the parameters of the design-based research methodology. Noting that there is considerable variation in how design based research and experiments might be employed, Cobb et al. (2003) go on to identify five cross cutting features of the methodology that capture both its practice, and its pragmatic intentions:

1. Experimentation in design based research works to understand learning processes, and the design that supports them in situated contexts,
2. Design based research is interventionist; with the researchers and participants actively engaged in a constructive process around learning,
3. Design based research works to develop and articulate theory, but necessarily places theory in harm’s way, testing it in real world settings,
4. Design based research is iterative; it changes, grows, and evolves to meet the needs and emergent questions of the designed context,
5. Finally, the theories on learning that design based research produce are meant to be applicable and pragmatic, rather than grand.

(Adapted from Cobb et al., 2003, pp. 10)

Despite the variation across those who employ the methodology, some these five features do appear in some form, in most, if not all, enunciations of design based research. Moreover, beyond these five core principles, design-based research has largely been established as a paradigm that itself actively engaged in the development of theory (not just its evaluation) (Bell, 2004; Lesh & Kelly, 2000; van den Akker, 1999; Brown, 1992), with a focus on analyzing the design itself as an object of study (Edelson, 2002), and largely concerned with identifying and analyzing (but not controlling) the variables within these designs (Collins, et al. 2004), and interested in the generalizability of said designs (Barab & Squire, 2004; Cobb, et al. 2003; Steffe & Thompson, 2000). Essentially, design-based research paradigm can be understood as iterative and interventionist research, building on prior work to extend knowledge, and interested in measuring learning in the complexity of lived contexts and practices (Collins, et al, 2004).
Now, while in many ways this methodology and paradigm move research forward into lived contexts in important ways, there are also some considerable limitations and concerns that should be noted. Notably, turning back to Cobb et al.’s five core principles, I am wary of the fifth feature – that the theories on learning which design based research produce are meant to be applicable and pragmatic, rather than grand – for several reasons. This principle, on the surface, seems somewhat innocuous. Of course we desire pragmatic outcomes, which can be applicable and employed in design contexts elsewhere for the benefit of youth and teachers. However, un-interrogated, it can be forgotten that the insistence on productivity and pragmatism in fact stems from Messick (1992) and Schoenfeld’s (1992) arguments that the consequentialness and validity of design based experiments depend, significantly, on the usefulness of the theories and designs that emerge. To be clear, I am in considerable agreement with the high bar set for consequential inquiry in design based research described by Barab and Squire (2004) that:

Design-based research requires more than simply showing a particular design works but demands that the researcher (move beyond a particular design exemplar to) generate evidence-based claims about learning that address contemporary theoretical issues and further the theoretical knowledge of the field. (p.5-6)

However, however generative a principle this is, the idea of usefulness laying behind it is potentially problematic, because it allows research to be deemed acceptable or unacceptable based largely on how this word is defined, and in a world still defined by neoliberal, neocolonial politics and affective economies of power, and educational establishment whose interests are anchored in quantifiable data and color-blind examinations of youth, usefulness will inexorably bend towards the positivist spectrum. What I mean by this is that if usefulness is a key bar which must be passed, and its definition is controlled by those who implicitly or explicitly have an aversion to the rupturing and radical reinvention of the territoriality of the colonial affective economy, then the outcomes will never be useful enough.
Essentially, what I am concerned about is a decades old worry of critical researchers. Sociologists of science (Kuhn, 1962; Latour, 1987) have long argued that, as Hoadley (2004) puts it, “that all science, as a human endeavor, is filtered through our politics, our biases, our worldview, and so on.” While much recent attention has been paid to historically marginalized communities, as I have argued, efforts to ‘serve’ these communities have typically been predicated on assimilationist ends, and maintaining an ontological distance from the Other. While this ontological distance will be elaborated on more extensively in the manuscripts of chapter 6, the core of my concern is that though seemingly a far cry from the ‘gold standard’ of quantifiable research demanded by some positivist, neoliberal observers, in the functioning of discourse and power, this invocation of usefulness is a troubling means to potentially assert the same sorts of colonial power.

A related concern to this question of the definition of usefulness, with the historic design-based research paradigm is its reliance and interest in variables and generalizability, factors which imply a certain definition of rigor. Particularly around learning, the emphasis on the presence of ‘variables’ and generalizability is concerning, and limiting; it locates this research, in Deleuzian terms as oppressive tracing, rather than liberatory mapping, examination within the confines and boundaries of existing planes of consistency and mind. To be more explicit, in a CHAT (or critical CHAT framework), learning is understood as not wedded to linear growth on a set task/skill. Rather, we recognize learning as being represented in shifts in participation in activity systems, Discursive constructions of identity, and complexity of analysis and vision in a context; a joint, social process, rather than a product (Griffin & Cole, 1984; Engeström, 2007; Rogoff, 2003). When we position research as variable-dependent and interested in generalizability, we position ourselves in relation to a definition of rigor in which these
procedural evaluations and assessments of learning become easily dismissed in significant and problematic ways. Connecting to the usefulness concern, what this can mean is that even those who are or have positioned themselves as allies to communities of color, distant from the affect of historically marginalized experience, are liable to diminish the usefulness of a design or project that may be urgent to a community, but might not produce the same results in relation to generalizable variables (i.e. learning and development around affective-awareness may seem less useful for teachers than high leverage practices to help students pass the PARCC test, but in historically marginalized communities and schools, this is an incredibly useful, urgent, and important learning outcome for educators). In adherence to a plane of consistency, their research interventions trace lines back to oppressive definitions of learning, foreclosing upon the mapping of new possibilities, and new ways to recognize ingenuity. Again, this is not to dismiss methodological rigor altogether. In fact, the requirement of design-based research that it “treat changes in [local] contexts as necessary evidence for the viability of a theory,” (Barab & Squire, 2004, p. 6) is in fact rather crucial and generative to the decolonial project; erecting a firewall of sorts against voyeuristic research that does not contribute to community development. Rather, I raise the point to express a concern with the paradigm as one which, by its own methodological positioning, is vulnerably positioned to fail to recognize the potential and possibility in ambitious, decolonial work, which may (almost certainly) appear through majoritarian lenses to be non-pragmatic, or non-useful.

Now, having established a brief background on the methodology of design-based research, and my concerns with it, this research still exists in the general tradition of design-based research. Indeed, it is vital to attend to this history because the iterative “engineering” aspect, interventionist stance, and the theory-building aspects of this paradigm are powerful
methodological stances, and are commonly, and rightly, attributed in current research discussions
to a design-based research paradigm. However, my purpose in raising concerns over the
paradigm even as I documented its history has been to locate this project – one with
transformative, decolonial ends, and a CHAT conception of learning – in a distinct and unique
family of design research; namely social design or formative research.

The Social Design Experiment

At the root of this project is the idea of the Decolonial, which demands a research
methodology that strives to embody an intersubjective awareness and responsibility for the
marginalized perspectives and historical struggle in which participants are involved. This
requires the researcher to be witness to the affective geography of the participants, striving to
take on a differential consciousness (Sandoval, 2000), wherein the deeply contextual, mediated
ways in which truth and subjectivity are performed and produced by the historically
marginalized may find recourse for agency through our research methodology, interventions, and
designs. These principles do align with many of the goals of design-based research, but also
contain fundamentally different interests and desires; a need to pursue design and theory building
in research as immanent activities with transformative ends. Furthermore, a decolonial
perspective on research recognizes an ethical responsibility in the process of representation, and
a subsequent commitment that the methods and design of any research should lend themselves
towards the re-mediation of oppressive social and cultural relationships and structures (Delgado-
Gaitan, 1993; Smith, 1999; Sandoval, 2000). In short, my critical-CHAT conceptual framework
demands that the methods themselves act to resist and rupture extant logics of oppression and
inequity; that our interventions provide the opportunity for mapping new possibility, not just
tracing out paths back to old objects. Finally, decolonial methodology echoes concerns by
Arzubiaga, Artilés, King, and Harris-Murri (2008) that emancipatory research must be with, and not on, the participants. The usefulness of emancipatory research must be a function of its usefulness to historically marginalized youth and communities, and the teachers who wish to be able to engage with them in culturally sustaining ways. Aspects of this respect for participants and the historicity of their lives are present in some design-based research, but as noted above, concerns linger when academic rigor and usefulness remain core principles, housing the legacy of positivism. Respecting the contributions and history of design-based research, a more congruent methodology is required.

I believe this is found in Social design (Gutiérrez & Jurow, 2013) or formative research (Engeström 2011). While it shares several key qualities with design-based research, and developed somewhat concurrently with similar intentions (to locate the study of learning in the complexity of real-world contexts), this family traces its conceptual and methodological roots to CHAT, and thus to the work of Lev Vygotsky. Central, of course, to Vygotsky’s (1978) work is an understanding that learning is joint, social, historic, and situated practice – a process, not product. Following from this, our methods and design must necessarily engage the social, cultural, and historic parameters of the context, which itself is not some independent object or variable, but co-constitutive of the design, and the learning (Cole, 1996). If we seek to learn about specific types of learning, framing them conceptually as activity systems, we must immerse ourselves and become involved in these systems to understand their parameters and practices, a process in which lines blur, and as Rogoff (1997) notes: in “sociocultural theory…there are not distinct boundaries between theory, methods, and practice,” (p. 265). The study of learning in this way becomes research on the activity system itself, still interested in methodological accuracy and validity, but concerned with speaking authentically to the practices
and process of learning that is significant to participants, not simply an analysis of variables.
This process for Vygotsky, and in a broader CHAT framework, involves a research methodology employing the idea of double-stimulation (Vygotsky, 1978; Engeström, 2011). Essentially, this involves the introduction of thoughtfully designed and novel tools into an activity system, with the goal being to allow learners to 1) take up and engage with problems and dilemmas of their own, and 2) employ tools, and artifacts for them to re-mediate how a problem is approached or understood in the ecology of an activity. In this way, the object of study became the ways in which learning might itself be transformed, new conceptual meanings created, and the learners themselves develop (Vygotsky, 1978; Cole & Engeström, 2007; Gutiérrez, et al., 2009), a research methodology which incorporates the interventionist, iterative aspects of design-based research, but also carries a profoundly different underlying logic, and interest in imaginative, expansive outcomes.

Engeström describes this form of distinct, unique, design research involving double stimulation as *formative* research (Engeström, 2011), which actively strives for expansive learning outcomes, interested in learning as process, rather than a defined variable. To this end, the *Change Laboratory* (Engeström, 2008, 1987; Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013) is a generative means of designing research interventions with an incisive focus on an activity system, and, as the name implies, efforts towards transformation and change of that activity system. Essentially, the change laboratory seeks to create a designed space which involves attention to a specific set of mediated artifacts, cultural organization of participants, the social derivation and genetic nature of an development in that context, and a concern for ethical engagement with participants. As noted, it most importantly places an activity – situated in a specific real-world learning ecology – as its central unit of analysis. Moreover, it expects to study a potentially multi-
directional pattern or process of expansive learning, and an intersubjectivity that is productive, but not predicated on uniform and complete consensus (Matusov, 1996), allowing as well for an interventionist, participatory orientation. Importantly, what the idea of the Change Laboratory adds to our methodological web here is the desire to productively rupture participants’ demonstrated participation and identities within the learning ecology.

Now, considering the Change Laboratory, and what has thus far been suggested, while there is considerable benefit to be found in this model, the particular, liberatory approach of critical-CHAT I employ is not endemic to all Change Laboratories. Interventionist merely entails the active participation and engagement of the researcher, providing tools that might be taken up for various ends; what those ends are can vary immensely. For this work, the ends towards which we were working were, as I have said, intentionally and specifically liberatory, and decolonial. Considering this, I locate this work specifically as a social design experiment (Gutiérrez, 2008), understanding this to mean a cultivated sociocultural space, “oriented toward transformative ends through mutual relations of exchange,” (Gutiérrez & Vossoughi, 2010), wherein youth and adults, researcher and participant, engage together to produce contextually situated, transformative learning outcomes that locate the social, the individual, and the cultural-historical context as inextricably interconnected entities. The Social design research experiment certainly follows in the same mold, and shares many qualities with the Change Laboratory, particularly its transformational intentions and focus on activity systems. What distinguishes it as a methodology, I believe, are the specificity of the ends of its interventionist stance; through awareness of the historicity of activity systems, social design research aims to explore how learning might be designed for intentionally liberatory outcomes, by actively engaging the proleptic, social imagination while research interventions are being simultaneously enacted
(Gutierrez & Jurow, 2013; Meshcheryakov, 2009). Essentially, the social design experiment is a way to engage in an interventionist manner in historically marginalized activity systems with a differential consciousness in order to research decolonial lines of flight, learning, and activity systems in ways authentic to the participant’s contexts and practices. This is the methodology, or model, of research intervention into which Aquetza falls.

To be clear about the assumptions, both conceptually and in terms of design and methodology, with which I began this social design experiment, two key aspects of this methodology deserve elaboration. First, that as I have noted, rather than a focus on learning as specific variables with clearly anticipated and measured ends, the focus in this research was on prolepsis, and widely-open learning outcomes, or, as Cole says:

“It should be possible to evaluate the process of development with evidence about the genesis and transformation of problem solving abilities in the actual process of interactions among participants. Treat the process of developmental change as the product” (1995, p. 15).

To give an example of what this entails and means for research and data collection, one question of learning driving this study was the acquisition of new pedagogical dispositions. However, it is a core tenet of decolonial research that such learning be organic, participatory, and determined by the needs and sense-making of the participants and the context, in all of the richness of their cultural-situatedness and historicity. This means that my tracing out as the research a set list of skills (or even beliefs) to be acquired, and then later measuring their uptake, would have been contrary to the process of expansive learning. Instead, the focus becomes on raising and presenting the challenge, and offering new tools and ways to look at that challenge (double-stimulation), and mapping out new lines of flight – practices, beliefs, dispositions – that are not yet known. In Aquetza, this process of research as mapping (around teaching dispositions, as an example) involved the discussion of challenges and oppressions that emerged in the classroom, and then the documentation of teatro rehearsal activities, discussions, and observations of
teaching performance early on in the training cycle, which were placed in contrast to participant’s framing of and response to these same challenges later in the semester both intellectually and in practice. Rather than a clear pre- and post- test measure on their acquisition of a defined disposition or skillset (a tracing), the research was a function of mapping the new strategies and possibilities they created (see chapter 1 for a richer elaboration of these theoretical terms), which operates as just a valid measure of growth and dispositional development.

Definition matters, and necessarily should influence the research methodology and design. In Aquetza, then, our open definition of learning and search for liberatory possibility meant that our methodology (and therefore data collection) sought to map new possibilities, rather that trace out the old.

Related to this is the idea of theory building as an outcome of the social design experiment and formative research. The reader will notice that, while this is an empirical project, each manuscript includes considerable theory building, examining and proposing new ways to think about learning and pedagogy in teacher education. These are not in lieu of more direct empirical analyses of ethnographic data, but rather, because the methodology involved an immanent process of mapping new possibilities, it necessarily included the mapping and development of new theorizations of learning and activity as participants followed new lines of flight. More specifically, as briefly detailed in chapter 2 we have a substantial body of evidence that culturally sustaining and liberatory practices work in classrooms and pedagogy (e.g. Paris & Alim, 2014; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). Indeed, liberatory and decolonial work with youth and communities is hardly novel, with a history stretching back over decades (e.g. Friere, 1970). Moreover, we have considerable evidence that teachers indeed need to be critically and multiculturally aware, and work at divesting of privilege and bias in their practice (e.g. Darling-
Hammond, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995), and further evidence of work by scholars around perspectives on teacher education for social justice (e.g. Zeichner, 2009). However, what we have substantially less of is work that theorizes what it means for teachers to engage in a trajectory of learning to become *decolonial*, transformative intellectuals; not to just reduce their biases or orient towards equitable ends, but to cultivate their development towards *becoming* individuals who can enact the *determinitoralizing*, consequential pedagogy that is so required in historically marginalized schools and communities. In a sense, we knew going in the importance of culturally sustaining, decolonial pedagogies, and critical work with novice educators. A dilemma for the field, a map that does not (fully) exist, is in articulating what the learning and pedagogy looks like to prepare educators to do this in practice-centered terms, with strong dispositions, and in consequential ways. Thus while many of the products of this study are largely theoretical, that is to be expected; this theory building was a necessary map that the participants and I were crafting as we engaged in the social design experiment itself. Essentially, the work of theory building as a simultaneous research outcome with empirical data is very much in line with the work of formative research, and dealing with this particular problem set – the cultivation of liberatory dispositions and learning in teachers – is an ideal terrain for the use of a social design experiment to *map* the corresponding theory. With this in mind, what I offer here is decidedly the outcome of social design experimentation, and the theory building that is a constituent part of its methodology.

*Methodological Validity in Design Based Research*

Within the context of considering the methodology of social design research, a methodological question around validity that follows from this liberatory stance is: if we are actively working towards liberation in interventionist ways, how does validity function in the
research, when in many ways, the direction of the outcome is presumed? As I have noted, while the theory is very presumed (a liberatory, decolonial one in this case), when we also shift our definition of learning away from linear, fixed outcomes, the full extent of learning, the direction the research intervention takes our data and participants in, is only given full coherence in and through their contributions and interactions in the co-constitutive context. In other terms, while we might design a liberatory space, and actively engage participants in discussion of colonization and consideration of the activity systems that result, the expansive notion of joint, situated, social learning at the heart of the social design experiment means that they remain the ultimate arbiters of how these theories and definitions will come to be understood. We are not imposing or merely testing our extant theories, rather, we are opening the floor, taking on a differential consciousness, to examine possibilities that are lost when we remain beholden to oppressive planes of consistency; we are mapping the neglected ingenuity of historically marginalized youth, communities, and teachers. Moreover, while new tools and activities are provided for remediation, they are not offered in prescriptive or limiting ways, targeted at particular variables being measured. Therefore, the solutions to a study’s central problems (e.g. what a culturally sustaining disposition/pedagogical identity looks like) are themselves not presupposed. Rather, it remains contingent on the participants to take up and use these new (and extant) tools in immanent ways for transformative, expansive ends. Essentially, it is up to the participants to craft both discursively and materially the sorts of resistance and ruptures they need, and the new activity (or not) they wish to create. While theory in many ways leads the intervention, the outcomes – both in terms of theoretical and empirical findings – remain largely open-ended, and thus the validity of the research remains intact.

Design Research as the Mapping of Possible Futures, and the World as it Could Be
With this in mind, while the researcher and theory do play an active, participatory role, if we observe evidence of expansive learning, that speaks to the efficacy of the design, while the direction that this learning takes can inform us about both the design, as well as how the participants took up and lived the interventions in their social ecology. In this context, the present study can be understood as a social design experiment – anchored in activist and decolonial perspectives, with transformative sociopolitical goals, that organizes its research interventions to support and foster participant’s to change their individual and social relationships to, and participation in, the activity system of teaching and schooling (Gutiérrez, Hunter, & Arzubiaga, 2009). Flowing from a critical-CHAT conceptual framework, I noted we required a methodology to let us play with possibility, to research the world as it could be. The social design experiment provides precisely this opportunity; a research intervention in which we can take up the activity system of learning and schooling and experiment with new lines of flight, and design for expansive possibilities. Having set up this critical-CHAT conceptual framework and social design experiment methodology, I will turn now in the next chapter to explicating the research questions, units of analysis, analytical tools, and details of data collection and analysis, the methods, which this conceptual framework and methodology produced in the Aquetza study.
Chapter V: 
Methodology, Data, & Analysis

As I have established, my methodological approach to the designed space and the study is situated in the previous discussion of a guiding critical-CHAT conceptual framework and social design experiment methodology. Here I will try to detail as specifically as possible the analytical and practical tools involved in collecting, reducing, and analyzing the data. This being said, because the Aquetza program was designed as a social design experiment that intentionally sought to intervene in the schooling experiences of both historically marginalized youth and pre-service teachers, it was a complex project, driven by numerous questions and a variety of different groups and sub-groups of participants. Indeed, the richness of the site (and data collection within it) is such that there are countless veins and layers of inquiry to which that I will likely never, unfortunately, be able to attend. With this complexity in mind, as I have noted in chapter 3, I made choices of data to focus on, and selected research questions related to several pressing problems in the field that were also central to the work that occurred in Aquetza. While I will pay special attention to the methods that relate directly to data collection and analysis around the teacher-participants who are the focus of this dissertation, what follows is an exploration of the overarching aspects of the empirical study, so as to inform the reader of the larger context. Moreover, the participation and data related to the teacher participants, the individual cases I present cannot truly be extricated from their participation in the larger, intergenerational and intercultural context of Aquetza site.

Key Research Questions

As has been discussed, the larger empirical study sought to examine how youth and teachers negotiate their participation in learning ecologies and in activity systems, how they re-
mediate their relationships and identities around schooling and learning toward decolonial, deterritorializing directions. Moreover, in keeping with the intent of social design or formative research, a goal was to illuminate design principles and theory that could inform the planning and creation of future educational spaces developed for expansive learning. There are, of course, countless research questions that could be asked in this space. However, we began with attention to three general concerns: youth learning, teacher learning, and design principles/theory building. Oriented by the aforementioned conceptual framework and methodology, and informed by the second and third of these goals (the eventual focus of this dissertation), I focused on core research questions that were more limited in scope, and which drive the corresponding studies. Toward that end, the following questions guide the inquiry processes of the individual studies:

1) In what ways might we theorize learning in critical pedagogical projects to productively account for evolving youth cultural identity?

2) In what ways might a social design context open space for novice teachers to (re)construct their pedagogical identities as cultural-historical actors and educational leaders?

3) In what ways do novice teachers negotiate the tensions and constraints of the logic of schooling when exposed to culturally sustaining pedagogical designs?

From these questions, my purpose in the remainder of this section will be to describe the data and analysis methods that follow from an interest in pursuing these questions, and the conceptual framework and methodology that produced them.

*Units of Analysis and Design Elements in Aquetza*

With this narrowed focus and these research questions in mind, my research efforts in the *Aquetza* design focused on the following units of analysis: (a) the construction of counter-
narratives and social storytelling, (b) the qualitative turning points in participants’ engagement with or participation in the activity of learning, and (c) the ways in which these participants are rupturing activity systems and negotiating alternative ways of participation (being, learning, and teaching) in said activity systems. I will briefly detail what is meant by these three units of analysis in the *Aquetza* design, so that discussions of analytical tools and data analysis are clearly situated.

Counter-narrative and social-storytelling, suggest that the self, our subjectivity, is discursively controlled, and articulated through story. Each of us, Davies suggests, “must locate and take up as their own narratives of themselves that knit together the details of their existence. At the same time they must learn to be coherent members of others’ narratives,” (2000, p. 22).

This assertion speaks, in decolonial and critical terms, to the ways in which story and narrative are the very grounds of our subjectification; the way that individuals write and speak themselves into existence and history (Scott, 2011; Bakhtin, 1986; Solórzano & Yosso, 2009). Thus our agency is deeply rooted in our discursive practice and social-storytelling – defined here as the narratives we create and publish as means of representation. Narrative, understood in these terms, is the way in which people come not just to recount their experiences, but to make sense of and recreate their selves and worlds through language use, social interaction, and exchange (Bakhtin, 1986; López-Bonilla, 2004). Moreover it is through the *social* aspect of social-storytelling that we seek validity for those created subjectivities and identities, finding that storytelling is necessarily intersubjective, as Gee (2008) explains:

> Meaning is not something locked away in heads, rendering communication possible by the mysterious fact that everyone has the same thing in their heads…Meaning is something we negotiate and contest over socially. (p.13)

What this implies is that our stories, critical to agential subjectivity, and the usefulness of our designs to participants striving to be cultural-historical actors, are subject to hegemonic forces,
and can be pathologized, silenced, or erased, as the *nomos* does its ideological work. To contest this control of story is to struggle for the emancipation of our subjectivity.

This means that a task of decolonial and critical representation is to ensure that even marginalized voices and narratives come to be heard and validated, that we, “turn our gaze differently on the social world as it folds and unfolds around us…turn our analytic gaze on the ongoing processes of our own subjectification,” (Davies, 2000, p.10). Methodologically speaking, this means a turn towards seeking opportunities for participants to represent and identify counter-narratives, and to engage in a process detailed in critical race theory (CRT) as counter-storytelling (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Delgado-Bernal, 2002). To take up this lens is to intentionally and assertively invite our participants’ stories, as examples of marginalized and non-dominant narratives, Discourses, and practices, to the fore as a means to contest hegemonic forces (like the *nomos*). Such work can serve to validate their perspectives, and re-mediate and transform social relations and the ecology of social spaces (Solórzano & Yosso, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Sleeter & Delgado-Bernal, 2003).

This process of learning as social-storytelling and counter-narrative production invites our other tow units of analysis into play. Recognizing that we are not the sole authors of our utterances and stories (Bahktin, 1986), the process of breaking free from a plane of consistency, and following a new, decolonial line of flight in proleptic directions begins with moments in which the Discourse that is employed shifts, reaching a qualitative turning point (Kärkkäinen, 1999), defined as: “an event in team discourse during which the team began to outline their object in a new way,” (p. 109) in which new possibilities begin to exist as a new Discourse is engaged. This idea of turning point is related to additional notions of ‘temporal midpoint’ (Gersick, 1988; 1989), ‘breakdown’ (Koschmann, Kuutti & Hickman, 1998), and ‘turn’
(Virkkunen, 1995), but in any conceptualization, what is significant as an object of study is the moment when Discourse changes, which necessarily leads to changes in participation; we speak the world differently, and thus can do the world differently. Shifts in participation are of course our final unit of analysis, and neatly connect to our other two units; altered participation comes in relation to turning points in Discourse, and, understood performatively, altered participation is the production of a lived counter-narrative. Indeed, shifts in participation are the work of deterritorialization, the pursuit of new lines of flight, and are the desired outcome of social design experiments, formative research, any theory of expansive learning, and the decolonial and poststructural theories I have thus far employed. Thus, these units of analysis are the ideal objects of study for the theoretical and conceptual frameworks, and the methodology, used here.

*Design of the Aquetza Experimental Activity System*

With our research questions and units of analysis established, it follows to briefly look towards the specific design elements, the interventions and restructured activity system, that comprised *Aquetza*, and worked to invite evolution and change in those units of analysis. Having already covered a holistic picture of the program in chapter 3, I will note that there were two threads of design for expansive learning, (a) design for the training of novice educators, and (b) design for engaging historically marginalized youth. In keeping with my broader theoretical and conceptual frameworks, and methodology, all of these design elements were constructed in participatory, non-prescriptive fashion. While we began with initial tools and designs, these evolved and shifted, with new tools being called for and others dismissed, as the search for participant directed expansive learning outcomes dictated. Thus while I have tried to capture these in Table 1, this is not a comprehensive listing of design elements, but an overview of key aspects of the activity systems that we collaboratively constructed.
### Table 1 – Design Elements of Aquetza Ecology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension of Activity System</th>
<th>Elements of Design for Instructors</th>
<th>Elements of Design for Youth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mediating Tools</strong></td>
<td>• Critical-CHAT Learning Theory</td>
<td>• Teatro</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Critical &amp; Poststructural Theoretical lenses for analysis</td>
<td>• Spoken word; hip hop; poetry</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Video observation &amp; feedback cycles</td>
<td>• Free writing/testimonial/personal narrative</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Cognitive-mapping</td>
<td>• Staff who share life experiences, who youth can relate to</td>
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<td>• Reflective interviews</td>
<td>• Research and ethnography skills</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Teatro del Oprimidio</td>
<td>• Photography &amp; New Media</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Ongoing pedagogical coaching</td>
<td>• Syncretic</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Youth stories &amp; voices</td>
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<td><strong>Division of Labor</strong></td>
<td>• Co-teaching teams; varied expertise</td>
<td>• Student driven</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Distributed responsibility; instructors &amp; counselor promotores</td>
<td>• Non-hierarchical spatial arrangements</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Collaborative group sense making – no one individual should be the sole source or hold sole responsibility for providing a solution</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Community</strong></td>
<td>• Intersubjective &amp; collaborative: the teacher is one voice of many that leads learning forward</td>
<td>• In Lak’Ech &amp; Community Norms, community focus: Are my choices supporting or deterring from the community?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Student driven, and/or, in the absence of youth, focused on the interests and needs of youth</td>
<td>• Community centered purpose – our actions here serve our communities at home</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Active engagement with youth as co-eval producers &amp; holders of knowledge</td>
<td>• Educational Sanctuary</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Peer &amp; Mentor Coaching</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rules</strong></td>
<td>• Actions &amp; responses dictated by revolutionary love</td>
<td>• Voluntary participation &amp; speaking</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Negotiate object in relation to academic, ‘gate-keeping’ goals</td>
<td>• Multilingualism welcomed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Four Tezcatlipocas as parameters for academic products: Does this represent your reflection, knowledge, transformation, and desired forward action?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition of the Subject</strong></td>
<td>• Teacher as transformative intellectual; designer of new futures</td>
<td>• Youth as producers and holders of knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Collaborative member of intersubjective community</td>
<td>• Youth with “non-traditional” skills and assets</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Witness to youth story, need, affect, experience</td>
<td>• All age inclusive</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Holder &amp; producer of knowledge</td>
<td>• Historically marginalized youth/youth of color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Seeking Differential Consciousness</td>
<td>• Spectrum of academic skills and interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition of</strong></td>
<td>• New ways to participate in the activity of</td>
<td>• Empowered Cultural-historical actors</td>
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</table>
What the reader might see across this table (which could easily be mapped onto an activity system diagram, such as Figure 1) are ways in which the certain aspects and components of the activity system: the mediating tools, rules, divisions of labor, community, subject, and object, of an activity system were all accounted for in some way. We sought to engage variation, radical reorientation, across every component of how learning happened. For all participants, the hope was that these constellations of design factors functioned as an ecology wherein substantial possibility exists to alter the rules, change the tools, shift the division of labor and types of participation, and ultimately reconstruct the object of the activity, and discursively produce, test, and express new identities.

To note a few final things concerning this design, I will say that first, more in-depth explorations of certain tools as aspects of the design are included in the manuscripts. Moreover, I will also note that in constructing Table 1, particularly the column detailing the design elements for engaging youth, I drew directly on the co-constructed designs and plans that staff participants themselves created and mapped out (see appendix D). With this in mind, some aspects of the design are vague. This is, for better or worse, a key factor of this research; we began with the goal of pursuing expansive, decolonial learning that would lead to liberatory, culturally sustaining outcomes. Beyond knowing that extant practices were insufficient, the details of such an activity system did not exist. Thus, these design elements are themselves the result of immanent, iterative, and expansive learning, following a line of flight to construct and design a social ecology that was experimental; a new plane of consistency.
To study these units of analysis within the orientation set out by my theoretical and conceptual frameworks, and my methodology, seeking evidence of the ways in which participants are (re)constructing their discursive identities as teachers, and engaging in expansive learning and development in relation to their participation and engagement in the activity systems of schooling and learning, the analytical tool that was most central to my work was critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA operated as a means of examining the re-mediation of identity, as well as negotiation and rupture of social intersubjectivity as they occurred (or not) in the design. This method of data analysis begins in the epistemic ground we have already tread, recognizing ‘Discourse’ as not just talk or speech (little ‘d’ discourse), but inclusive of overarching ideological, social, and polecat meanings with both material and ideological consequences (Gee, 2008; Erickson, 2004; Foucault, 1978). These ‘big ‘D’ Discourses,’ constrain human action and expression by constructing themselves as normative, ‘Figured Worlds’ (Gee, 2004; Holland, et al. 1998), the nomos of schooling being one of these. We can, then, think of each activity system, each plane of consistency, having its own Discourse that shapes subjectivity and ensures stasis of those participating in it. CDA then allows us to take apart the ways in which discourse normalizes ideology, and cross-examine majoritarian stories and Discourse with the counter-narratives and voices of the subaltern, as Luke (1996) explains:

Because texts are moments of intersubjectivity—the social and discursive relations between human subjects—they involve writers and readers, speakers and listeners, individuals whose intentions are neither self-evident nor recoverable without recourse to another text. (p.13)

But it is important to note that CDA is, “not just analysis of discourse,” (Fairclough, 2010, p.11). Rather, according to Rodgers (2004), “CDA provides the tools for addressing the complexity of movement across educational sites, practices, and systems in a world where inequalities are global in scope,” (p.1). Thus, what CDA specifically offers is an analytic, interpretive lens to
examine the workings of various discursive practices, the texts, speech acts, even embodied actions (Goodwin, 2000; McDermott & Raley, 2011), that become that basis for social storytelling and individual narrative. Considering the established transformative and decolonial orientation of this work, what this means is that CDA is a tool that can aid in, “address[ing] social wrongs in their discursive aspects and possible ways of righting or mitigating them,” (Fairclough, 2010, p.11). In other terms, it looks to the ways Figured Worlds and discursive practices constrain certain stories and voices, as well as exploring the ways that alternative discursive practice might contest that oppression through the production of new counter-narratives and social-storytelling.

Discourse, language, is of course incredibly complex; its many layers imbued with meaning, and, understood as big ‘D’ discourse, widely open to interpretation. Discourse analysis then, is not so simple as plucking a prima-facie intention from a statement, utterance, or piece of text, and requires more finely articulated tools. In this regard, I draw heavily on Gee’s (2011) formulation and deployment of discourse analysis, and his articulation of speech occurring in lines, macro-lines, stanzas, and macrostructures. In this construction, the acknowledgement is made that speech does not happen in the same way that text production does, and as Discourse occurs in a context (or sometimes on the page), meaning is created, links are made, and then constantly, immanently re-mediated to construct a coherent thought or line of expression, with grammar imposed upon it. Lines are the smallest blocks of connected speech, followed by stanzas, which comprise several lines that are thematically linked and contain one idea. Both of these make up macro-lines, or the equivalent of the spoken sentence, capturing a block of speech with a coherent, intentional meaning, and the macrostructures of Discourse, how lines, stanzas, and macro-lines are deployed in patterned, archetypical organizational structures, adds further to
the meaning of Discourse. Yet even within the line, there are variations that could be explored, including pitch movements, “spurts” or idea units that grow from intonation movements, as well as the classification of words themselves into function words that link and structure speech, and content words that describe or name relevant concepts, things and ideas. Beyond this, more questions can be asked of data regarding the arrangement of stanzas within a macro-lines or macrostructure, and variation around intonation, among other possible analyses. And beyond this, the way that the research intervenes, asks the question, and overlapping speech and intersubjectivity function in Discourse, can further shape meaning even further. There is, in short, an immense amount of depth that could be explored through CDA, and my particular analysis, did not, as I will shortly note, examine data on every level of detail. What is worth noting at this point, as I conclude my overview of the conceptual and analytical tools that were used, and their origins, is that these broader tools, as guides on the way to retrospective analysis, are ultimately interpretive, as Gee (2011) notes: “the way in which we analysts break up a text in terms of these units represents our hypothesis about how meaning is shaped in the text. It depicts our analysis of the patterning of meaning in the text,” (p. 145). Thus I have made every effort, in the methods of data collection and retrospective analysis described below, to systematically employ objective tools to explore the narratives and Discourses of learning that emerged from Aquetza, but these meanings do remain tenuous, and open to interpretation.

Moreover, with these complexities in mind, I recognize that in seeking to foster, engage with, and explicate counter-narratives and new forms of participation as a focus of analysis, there is considerable tension in using CDA to identify evidence in the data. To engage in counter-narrative research and analysis invites the danger of appropriating and speaking for participants, positioning them in ways that are totalizing, potentially deficit in their orientation, and causing
an imagined ‘subaltern’ to speak (Spivak, 1988), and potentially producing silencing of a new variety. These are legitimate concerns, and I do not dismiss them lightly. Rather, aware of the unique nature of this research as an interaction and intervention with marginalized youth and pre-service teachers, my intent has been to employ these tools within the ethical dimensions of what Duncan-Andrade (2006) calls cariño. This concept translates directly as caring, but involves richer, more complex ethical concerns and imperatives to ensure that methodology and research works towards, and tangibly produces, some positive change for the betterment of the social and life experiences of the participants. Essentially, by acknowledging my own positionality in the research and data analysis, and seeking to remain in conversation with Harding’s assertion that any way of seeing is a way of not seeing (Harding, 2006), it is possible to identify the counter-stories in my data as one way of reading out of many, and position these stories and my analysis of them as important contributions to the ways in which researchers and educators might see, conceptualize, and design for culturally sustaining outcomes for novice educators, or the historically marginalized youth with whom they work. Indeed, the alternative position – not taking up these narratives in their significance as social-storytelling – serves only to acquiesce to a Cartesian divide that marginalizes the experience of the subaltern, and continue reifying the hegemonic ways in which scientific knowledge and objectivity are defined (Harding, 1993; Sandoval, 2000).

A final analytical tool to mention, native to qualitative ethnography more broadly, is that of the case study. As I have noted, the empirical focus of this dissertation is on the pre-service teacher participants, and while CDA gives me an analytical tool of engaging with their data on one level, analytical tools were also required to thoughtfully organize and examine the data in ways consistent with the conceptual framework and methodology. With this in mind, an
analytical tool to frame and organize these individuals’ learning and evolving participation in the activity systems of school, as well as their construction of pedagogical identity, was needed. This tool was most appropriately found in the case study, which allowed me to frame the experiences of each individual teacher, and each particular moment or episode of teatro rehearsal, as a ‘case,’ or detailed focus on a single subject, event, or setting (Bogdin & Biklin, 2003). With these tools in mind, I will turn my attention to the details of how they were deployed in data collection, processing, and analysis in the Aquetza design experiment.

Data Collection Procedures

As detailed in Table 2, throughout the Aquetza social design experiment, there were a considerable number of data points and elements that were collected in regards to the various units of analysis.

Table 2 – Aquetza 2014 Collected Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aquetza 2014: Collected Data</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-Program</strong></td>
<td>• Video/Audio recordings of participation in training &amp; pedagogical development sessions &amp; teatro exercises</td>
<td>• N/A – basic demographic data only</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data collected</td>
<td>• Audio recording of curriculum development sessions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2013-</td>
<td>• Audio recordings of formal &amp; informal interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2014</td>
<td>• Collaborative Artifacts from Training &amp; Curriculum design sessions (e.g. curriculum materials, cognitive maps, Core-value construction, collaborative definitions)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Individual written reflections on curriculum development topics (e.g. how will feminism fit in this content &amp; my pedagogy? What does it mean to position youth as holders &amp; producers of knowledge?)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Written reflections on pedagogical development topics (e.g. what</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-Program</td>
<td><strong>Data collected</strong></td>
<td><strong>July 20th – 26th, 2014</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Post Program</td>
<td><strong>Data collected</strong></td>
<td><strong>Aug. 2014-Present</strong></td>
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• Observation documents (Social Org. of learning) on Module participation dynamics & pedagogy
• Self-reported written reflections on pedagogical development & identity challenges including:
  - Pedagogical successes & frustrations
  - Key moments in praxis & relationship development in current settings
  - Challenges faced in integrating new dispositions into current settings
  - Relationships w/ admin. & colleagues

Data collection followed a participant observation model, guided by qualitative interpretive research principles (Erickson, 2004, 1986) to document the Aquetza learning ecology, both on group and individual levels, as thoroughly and completely as possible. During both the pre-program training (fall and spring, 2013–14), and during the program itself (July 2014), this involved audio and video recordings of all observed activities, sessions, classroom activities, performances, and interventions at Aquetza, as well as the collection of participant work and artifacts, and individual interviews. If an event or activity is listed on the schedule of Aquetza (appendix C), then that design event was document. Additionally, informal and impromptu conversations and interviews were audio recorded as was possible, and high definition still photography documented all events, sessions, activities, and informal moments.

In the ongoing study, similar data collection methods were used in following staff and youth participants. Staff were periodically interviewed, and these conversations were audio recorded. Classroom observations of staff participants were video recorded as was possible and appropriate, and field notes were collected on these observations. Additionally, both staff and
youth participant town halls (held in November of 2014) were audio and video recorded, and field notes collected.

During the program, while I was primarily responsible for data collection across the full duration of the design experiment, all the Aquetza staff participants were trained in data collection procedures and activity-logging of events, and periodically engaged in some degree of data collection. Moreover, an undergraduate participant, Lynn, assisted me in data collection activities in substantial and significant ways. For reasons that will be explained shortly, Lynn actually took on the primary responsibility for data collection during the Aquetza summer program, deploying the recording equipment, and, as much as was possible, collecting field-notes, activity logs, and social organization of learning observations, as well as documenting the topics of conversation, time spent on activities, and who was present in what spaces, with what tools, and what general divisions of labor. Due to the demands of the logistics of the program, our core commitments, and the demands on the staff (as a group of co-researchers), these artifacts were unfortunately sparsely collected. The assistance Lynn provided, however, was exceptional, professional, and extremely appreciated. Across the entire duration, all interviews were conducted by me, following both from some establish prompts (appendix E), but also involving questions emerging organically from the directions that conversations took, and themes that emerged in informal settings. These interviews were almost entirely of the staff, though some conversations with youth did occur. Initial plans to engage in more in interviews of the youth failed to materialize due to logistical constraints.

Since being collected, all non-digital materials have been stored in a locked office at the School of Education. Audio and video data were digitally stored, encrypted, and maintained on a password protected hard-drive. All artifacts collected that could reasonably be digitized and
stored electronically were, with the originals either returned to the participant creators, or destroyed. As much as has been possible with the raw data and secondary data (i.e. transcriptions, activity and content logs), all participant names were redacted for anonymity, with pseudonyms assigned to all participants for data analysis and use. In some cases, names were so consistently used during sessions that removing them from raw data (e.g. videos) would have been impossible. Provisions for this were included in initial IRB approval, and participant consent forms.

**Corpus of Data**

Overall, this data collection process produced an incredibly substantial amount of data (see table 2 above). Presently, over 3 terabytes of data from the 2014 *Aquetza* social design experiment exists, including approximately 200 hours of video, well over 60 hours of audio recording, over 2,000 still photographs, and dozens of documents. In regards to the particular focus on this dissertation – the pre-service teacher participants – data on these individuals was extensive. Not only were they part of larger ensembles throughout the lengthy, nearly year long training program, but there is data from their participation throughout the week of *Aquetza* in various instructor and ensemble roles, as well as several multi-hour interviews with each of these 3 individuals in the subsequent semester. For each focal individual, I observed their classrooms at least 3 times, collecting video and field notes on each occasion. Additionally, I had three 1 to 2 hour coaching conversation and research interviews with them across the semester, one in the first weeks of school, one in the middle of the semester, and one in the closing weeks or after the semester had concluded. In addition, they participated in a 3 hour Staff Town Hall session during the roughly two-thirds of the way into their semester, and provided various written reflections throughout the semester as well. Finally, this data was made even more rich, but also extensive...
and complex, by the multifaceted nature of our relationships. With each of these individuals who will be featured in later chapters (Kirsten and Steve particularly) I was coach, confidant, mentor, and friend, as well as researcher. While this relationship does bear disclosure, it was in my mind not a threat to validity, but rather, a complicating factor – beyond scheduled interviews, I spoke with each of these individuals at least once every two weeks, and while not all of these conversations were generative to the research questions and design, the organic, interventionist nature of social design research, and the identity construction and narrative creation themes that were the main foci of my analysis meant that in almost all of these conversations, something was said that was critical to their developing dispositions and pedagogical identity. It was not uncommon for me to stop a conversation, asking them to repeat something so that I could record or note what was said.

_Avoiding Panopticism in Comprehensive Research_

On this note, it is worthwhile to touch on the ethical issues that accompanied this research. As I have stated, my intention is to engage in decolonizing research, using a poststructural framework, and highlighting the narratives of teachers and youth engaged in liberatory practices. There is thus necessarily a tension to invoking the likes of Foucault, while at the same time designing a research space in which audio and video recording equipment is almost constantly on, creating the feeling of panoptic surveillance. While it is impossible to completely mitigate these tensions, the design of the space, and the data collection procedures, was engineered to be as open and participatory around this as was possible. Notably, staff participants were active co-researchers themselves. From the outset, the design was discussed not just as a summer program, but as a site to generate knowledge about this pedagogical approach. In this way, staff were participants and designers themselves, with several actively involved in
following their own lines of self-inquiry for NACCS or NCTE proposals. In informal moments like those noted above, and throughout the duration of the design, the staff and I had an open conversation, and standing agreement, that in informal settings, should a line of discussion emerge that was of research interest, I would ask permission to record, and possibly have them backtrack to reiterate a previous point, so that the conversation was entered into the corpus of data, both for myself, and for their own later reflection should they be pursuing research proposals.

Similarly, considering that we framed the space itself as an educational sanctuary, and wanted to ensure that the documentation equipment did not interfere with the building of confianza, or trust among the youth or with the staff, one of our earliest sessions with the youth was an open conversation about the research equipment, procedures, and purposes. The purpose of exploring the impacts of liberatory education was discussed, and youth were actively encouraged to contribute suggestions about what they felt it was important that we, as researchers and documenters, captured. Early on in the week, this yielded little response, but was a topic regularly revisited, to continue reinforcing that this was documentation, rather than surveillance, and by the end of the week, youth participants suggested that it was critical we record the valuable perspectives and stories they had to share, and document the strong community they had built. Indeed, the affective relationships among youth were perhaps the most defining take-away for youth. Additionally, we actively engaged youth as photographers, videographers, and interviewers of peers and staff, handing responsibility for operating certain equipment off to youth to reinforce that research documentation was meant to occur on their terms. Moreover, Lynn, as the individual most responsible for data collection, was purposeful in her interactions around data collection, actively relationship building as she engaged in
documentation, asking permission, and inviting suggestion. As a result of this, she noted that engagement with recording equipment shifted as the week progressed, and on Wednesday night, midway through the program, Lynn noted: “today they were more responsive to me behind the camera too and engaging with it, than... You know let me be... Take all candid ones. So, that's been cool for sure,” going on to say that their increasing interactions with her through the camera lens were incredibly interesting. Essentially, as trust and investment grew in the program, and we remained open about the intentions and purposes of the research, so to did participant concerns and affective feelings over the panoptic nature of research decrease. Effectively, while data collection in this extensive and systemic a way could never wholly avoid the tension of surveillance and panopticism, I believe that our design and practices did diminish it such that the data collected reflects participant’s authentic participation in an educational sanctuary space.

Data Reduction, Analysis, and Representation

My data analysis is predicated on my role in this research as practitioner-researcher (Cazden, 2001; Cochran-Smith & Lyte, 1993; Erickson, 2006). As I have noted, I was designer, researcher, instructor, and director for the program, occupying many roles at ones. While this in some ways curtailed and limited my vision (details noted below), the practice and tradition of engaged, practitioner research is also in line with the interventionist stance which follows from my conceptual framework and methodology, and offers the research an important, insider perspective: as a part of the context and design, I am in a position to speak confidently about how the data that emerged related authentically to the intentions, and implementation, of the design. As such, sense-making around the data, guided by the theoretical and conceptual lenses and prior literature already discussed was an ongoing process from the outset, as themes and conclusions began to emerge early in the design intervention and data collection processes.
These initial reflections were collected in informal memos and field notes following training sessions, observations, and activities, and gradually amended and extended over time in new memos and reflections. This process continued through the week of the summer program, now adding reflections on youth learning and experiences, and synthesizing reflections were recorded as written memos, or audio notes. Significantly, the themes that emerged from these initial analyses and memos shaped the questions and elements of the ongoing design as I continued following staff participants into their schools, and reconnected with youth during town hall sessions later in the fall.

To reduce the data once the program week was complete, I began to content log the many components of the program and design. I began by watching video and listening to audio recordings from the early staff trainings, working my way chronologically through the data set, while completing content logs for each item, and connecting these as much as was possible to extant memos written during the activities themselves. This content logging process included taking detailed notes on what had occurred, highlighting important moments and key things that were said, and noting themes that were developing. During this content logging process, I engaged in a first round of coding or retrospective analysis, noting that codes and themes in data are not transparent, but grow from the interpretations of the researcher (Erickson, 2004; Sipe & Ghiso, 2004). Considering this, I examined the data with both my initial and emergent research questions in mind, making informed decisions about patterns that I saw emerging in and across interviews, and within different subgroups of the staff (Erickson, 1998). Several key themes emerged in this round of analysis (notably, the themes entertained most centrally in the manuscripts here), which warranted closer examination of certain data, further theoretical reflection and building, and continued to shift and adapt both my research focus, and questions.
This evolution I take as a positive sign, however, for shifts and changes in what questions, theories, and interpretations are relevant to data as it is analyzed can be understood to indicate that our designs and analysis efforts are pointing us towards things we did not know at the outset of the research design (Erickson, 1986, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). With this in mind, as themes began to emerge in the data, I transitioned from content logs to closer transcriptions. While I completed many of these myself, including the transcriptions of group settings and sessions (the teatro training sessions), I employed a transcription service to transcribe the multiple, multi-hour interviews with staff participants that were crucial to understanding their evolving participation in the activity system of school and discursive constructions of their pedagogical identity. This move was not ideal, but logistically necessary, and all of these transcribed interviews were reviewed and closely checked while listening to the source data once again, as Spanish, Nahuatl, and context-specific words were often misspelled, and significant pauses, emotional responses of characteristics of data, and intonation cues were not included in these rough transcriptions.

Having complete transcripts were generative in that they allowed me to examine the full breadth of the data, looking intentionally for both confirming and disconfirming evidence, as well as regularity and variance among cases. At this stage, I engaged in yet another round of analysis, identifying key moments in interviews that warranted more rigorous analysis and/or transcription. These segments were identified, their transcripts given yet another thorough vetting according to original recordings. It was at this point in coding and analysis when the aforementioned analytical tools of CDA were all brought to bear most directly in relation to the units of analysis, identifying the counter-narratives and Discursive data within cases that would serve as the foundation from which research claims would grow. Specifically, the key
overarching codes that guided my analysis of cases of staff participant data included: (a) decolonial turning points (*travesías*) in participant’s Discourses and discursive constructions of identity, (b) evidence of ruptures in their instantiation of pedagogical identity, or positioning of themselves, (c) deterritorializing analyses of their work, identity, or the activity systems of schooling, and (d) proleptic discourse regarding pedagogy or pedagogical identity. Examples of these codes are detailed in appendix F.

Building from the assertion that representation of data is itself political and theoretically informed (Ochs, 1979), I began to classify data, reflecting on what grain size to analyze, and how best to represent the data. As noted, my larger aims were to capture the counter-narratives (discursively and performatively enacted) of participants around their learning, social-storytelling, identity, and participation in schooling emerging from the Aquetza design over time. As such, a micro-analysis of Discourse on the level of lines or examination of the deployment of content and function words would have been cumbersome, and not altogether productive for the objectives of the analysis. Considering this, and that nearly all analyzed data – primarily one on one interviews – occurred within what had been designed and constructed as safe spaces, with individuals talking relatively freely (thus rendering intonation movements and cues that in more constrained spaces might have contained substantial political or social meaning less relevant), the grain-size for analysis that seemed generative was on stanzas, or micro-lines. By focusing on these elements of Discourse, which represent thematically organized expressions of meaning (Gee, 2011), I would be able to thoughtfully make sense of key themes that were arising in relation to broader counter-narratives, while attending to change over time, and without neglecting the way that affect and emotion might be present in local responses around particular topics. Moreover, considering the ethical need to examine subjects own depictions of their
participation in activity systems, this grain size allowed me to be conscious of the macrostructures at work – the social-stories that they were constructing themselves as participating in, and building both in the stanza or two of a single response to a question, and across multiple interviews. This is not to disregard the importance of smaller utterances, intonation movements, or the like, rather, in making choices about the data, a focus on the meanings deployed as participants constructed stanzas and micro-lines in relation to particular thematic questions seemed most generative.

Subsequently, in data representation, rather than cast the data broken down by line, I offer segments of actual talk, representing stanzas and micro-lines, seeking to place these in relation to various codes, and as instances of Discourse that built larger narratives (macrostructures) across time in relation to the dependent variables of development in learning dispositions, pedagogical identity, and systemic elements of the Aquotza design. This said, I will periodically bold segments within stanzas, what I believe to be significant lines or content words within the real talk of participants in interviews, to highlight the big ‘D’ Discourses that are being used, and how these relate to and contribute to the construction of larger themes within stanzas, and narratives in macrostructures. It is my belief that his manner of data representation allows me a close enough focus on Discourse to identify tensions and contradictions that might exist, but, given my intentions, ensures that the broader counter-narratives of participation and emergent identities being articulated do not become lost in my manipulation of data in its transcribed, written form.

Chronology

It should be noted that the quantity of data was such that this process took considerably more time than expected. As a result of this, as well as the factors noted below that compromised
my ability to better document and activity log events in the moment, I admittedly was unable to engage with as much of the other events, including sessions in *Aquetza* I was not present for, youth data, and some staff training and development moments, that would have added to the richness of the data. Moreover, while as much data was processed as was possible, the sheer volume resulted in some deeply compelling data that was coded as relevant and significant being excluded from the data included in these papers, merely out of necessity.

As noted, data collection remains ongoing. Another round of Town Hall meetings with youth is tentatively planned for late-April, 2015. I remain in regular contact with those staff participants (both the White individuals and the students of color) who are at work in schools. The majority of the staff participants will be returning to participate in *Aquetza* once again in 2015, and thus are continuing their pedagogical development, enriched due to the fact that a significant number of these individuals (whose data is not fully explored in this dissertation), have now either enrolled in education coursework tracking towards teacher-education, or declared for education minors in their studies. Several of these individuals, including all of the pre-service teacher participants, are co-researchers in ongoing, distinct research projects and proposals, largely involving self-study of their own critical teaching practice.

It is my intention to continuing working with the various data sets that have not been fully explored, and to produce several other empirical pieces relating to these findings. Moreover, I look forward to collaborations with staff participants in ongoing projects as they continue their developments as scholars.

*Limitations and Threats to Validity*

As with all research, there were factors that limited the study(ies), and present threats to validity. Perhaps most significant among these is that due to the complexities and intensities of
program logistics, and my multiple roles as program co-director, staff instructor, and researcher, data collection was not nearly as systematic and careful as it could have been. This is not to say that data was not thoughtfully and comprehensively collected, but that throughout the program, my attention was demanded in multiple places at once, and unexpected and uncontrollable events occurred which both removed me from the research space, and shifted independent variables. A few significant examples of this are warranted.

During the pre-program training, the complexity of both training the staff, managing curriculum development and planning, and handling the legal logistics of planning a residential summer program meant that while all events were recorded, my collection of notes, memos, and staff writing and artifacts was disrupted by the needs of the program. This was a minor issue.

More, perhaps most, significant was that on the eve of the program, a severe illness befell one of our core instructors. Because of the aforementioned nature of our teaching teams, in which a ethnic studies student was paired with a pre-service teacher education student, this left an individual without a co-teacher – something upon which all of our designs and plans had hinged for that particular unit. As a result, I stepped into this instructor role, which occupied my time exclusively on that course for the majority (approximately 5-6 hours) of each day, while another several hours each day were typically lost to other logistical or personal support tasks. Anchored to this work, I was unable to see what occurred with youth in many of the other spaces, including missing the entirety of the other core modules, which was a double loss, as I missed seeing the youth in this generative space, and I missed being able to observe the instructors as they were growing and experimenting in their praxis. As a result, a significant hole in the data I rely on when examining case studies of Kirsten and Steve, two of these educators, is their actual pedagogical performance during the Aquetza week. While their reflections and
observations on their work in these spaces was honest, informative, and compelling, and Lynn’s notes on their practice was useful, I do lack my own first-hand observation and assessment.

On this same note, however, it was for this reason (taking over the module instruction responsibility) that the lion’s share of data collection responsibility fell to Lynn, who performed admirably as a research assistant, but was herself meant to be supporting research efforts, but also working with youth in other capacities. With multiple concurrent sessions, Lynn, a novice, was able to ensure recordings of activities happened, but not necessarily arrange for the degree of activity logging as would have been ideal. Moreover, as an undergraduate pre-service teacher, while her pedagogical awareness was strong, and she was able to offer important thoughts and memos on how other instructors were performing, her lenses for analyzing and identifying themes in youth Discourse were (understandably) nascent at best, and with her time and energies stretched thin, was unable to engage in the regular youth interviews we had planned. Put concisely, because I had to teach in the program at the last minute, data collection of peripheral artifacts suffered along with my awareness of what had or was occurring in the spaces I was not present in. As such, I was not present for much of what happened in the program during crucial learning times, and even with staff reporting back to me on exciting and significant moments, the strain of operating the logistics meant that I was unable to immediately follow up on these as I might have if I had more autonomy to research. Essentially, as I explore this data, everything in roughly 100 hours of video is new to me. This unexpected event of teaching thus factored significantly into my decisions around data selection, starting point, and foci for this project.

Additionally, I missed other moments as a result of handling logistical issues and individual personal crises. Throughout the *Aquetza* program week, we had several moments when activities did not go precisely as planned, or when youth or staff had extremely difficult,
emotional moments. In order for me to be emotionally present for these moments, that meant neglecting other responsibilities, many of these relating to research and data collection. Now, while some of these informal moments that happened as I supported youth and staff working through profoundly difficult moments were some of the most thematically-interesting of the week, they were also moments when I was needed as a mentor, confidant, or witness, rather than a researcher. Any formal data collection during these moments of affective intensity would have been extremely inappropriate.

All of these limitations of course relate to the multiple roles I played in the site. While they in many ways did limit the richness of the data, and my own ability to make broad and informed conclusions about the design and participants (particularly the youth), I do not believe they represent a true threat to validity, or to my claims. Indeed, because my studies and questions are more oriented towards the discursive production of counter-narratives and dispositional development, and I have extensive documentation of participant’s own reflections and production of pedagogical identities (as well as observational data of teaching in the fall semester), there is still enough data from which to make substantial claims. There is more to see, yes, but the picture I present, as a result of my immersion and relationship building in these various roles, does capture the truth of the experience for both staff and youth. Regardless, as I have noted in chapter 3, while I am proud of and interested in the social design experiment aspect of the space, my commitment as a decolonial educator, first and foremost, was to the success of our work with youth, and to the support offered to novice educators. Though it compromised my data collection, I would make the same choices to ensure the strength and supportiveness of the program once again.
Beyond these events, there are two limitations or threat to validity specific to the teacher education focus of the studies contained here that deserve mentioning. First, while immersive and intensive, *Aquetza* was a temporally short experience for the staff participants as well as the youth. There engagement in the training was long and substantial, but their work with the youth was intensive, but brief. This is a significant consideration that must be carried into the building of the longitudinal picture of how this design affected their experiences and engagement in their subsequent classrooms – experiences that were much lengthier in duration. That said, my documentation and research analysis has been extensive and longitudinal beyond the intensive *Aquetza* week, following these individuals for well over a year, positioning me, I believe, to make longitudinal claims about their learning, and *Aquetza*’s impact on that development.

Second, specific to teacher education, it should be noted that all of the staff participants, including those who were pre-service teacher education students, had, though not decolonial and critical, some pre-inclination towards social justice and equity. This was, again in consideration of the programs core goals of serving youth, a necessity, for the protection of youth – we could not risk involving individuals who showed no interest in equity work and might damage the community being created. This of course is a potential limitation to the research, though I believe strongly that the data bears out the design and theory around teacher learning are substantial in the gains made; the question is not that this work could not be done with educators without such existing inclinations, it is merely that additional thinking and design would be required about the structure of activities and interventions to produce this sort of expansive learning.

*Methodological Lessons for the Future*

The enormity of this research project presented a number of important methodological reflections for my future research efforts. First, my initial attempts to employ Nvivo as a tool for
coding and analysis eventually proved somewhat fruitless due to my own inexperience with the software, and were eventually abandoned, as I remained mired in the data processing stage. Had I made choices regarding what data to focus on and process earlier, I would have had more time to familiarize myself with all the capacities of this software, and thus my coding and retrospective analysis would have been more systematic and transparent, and better connected the huge volume of artifacts and data. In the future, with large data sets, in addition to utilizing research software, I hope to have more flexibility during the implementation of the design to reflect and memo on the emergent themes, allowing me to better focus my efforts on analysis, rather than simply data processing.

A second challenge, looking forward, was bringing this sort of design research to a conclusion. As I have noted, data collection with this cohort continues, even as we move towards bringing in yet another cohort of youth, and a new set of instructors. Moreover I remain in contact with the staff participants and pre-service teachers who are described here, and it is difficult to not be constantly adding their new insights and growth the already extensive data set. I remain reflective over how to balance this sort of interventionist research, which involved ongoing coaching and support and substantial relationships with closing out a vein of research inquiry.

Third, I continue to wonder how, in the sort of immersive design environment of Aquetza, to capture random moments that occur in transit and other liminal, non-‘research’ spaces. By this I mean both how to find ways to capture in systematic and reportable ways the profound and important events that occurred in moments when pulling out an audio recorder, etc. would have been inappropriate, but also more mundane moments. Indeed, some of the most interesting and generative conversations I heard during the Aquetza week, and in the following
semester, occurred while participants and I were walking across campus, lugging equipment and classroom materials, or in impromptu chats on the phone, and organic sense-making spontaneously occurred. Though I often scrambled for audio recorders in these moments and made arrangements to rehash these conversations, at some points, this was an impossibility, and repetition largely meant that something of the initial affect was lost. Should I continue to engage in this research methodology, I hope to continue devising ways to capture this content.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I remain conscious of the struggle to do this work with, as Duncan-Andrade notes, cariño, while still pursuing rigorous research goals. In Aquetza, while I was of course committed to and invested in my research, my first responsibility was always going to be to the youth, and to my activist work with the community. When a dilemma of collecting important data or being present for youth emerged, I immediately chose the former, both for ethical reasons, and because it remains a role I feel comfortable in. This did, of course impact my data, and while having additional research help may have addressed these challenges to some degree, the underlying issue of balancing research interests with personal, activist commitments remains difficult for me, particularly as I see colleagues critiqued for similar research stances. This is a dilemma without an immediate solution, but one which I am conscious of, emerges in my data and methodology, and which I will need to continue reflecting on.

With this terrain having been explored, and the conceptual framework, methodology, design, and data analysis details laid out, I turn, in the next chapter, to the core of this dissertation, the manuscripts themselves, as individual explorations of expansive learning and the cultivation of decolonial, culturally sustaining dispositions in teacher education.
Chapter VI: Manuscripts: Perspectives on Expansive Learning in Teacher Education

In the following section, the reader will find the three core manuscripts that comprise this dissertation. While, as discussed, the Aquetza program was a larger, overarching social design experiment, each of these manuscripts aims to develop and build around specific aspects of that program. Consequently, the topics and content of the manuscripts vary, either interested in adding something to the field in terms of theory development, or empirical research, in keeping with the methodology of formative/social design research. With that said, while in some ways divergent in their specific content, and purposefully written as independent pieces, each manuscript grows directly from the work and thinking that occurred as part of the Aquetza program. As a result, certain thematic through-lines will carry across all three manuscripts, and their various purposes. However, the reader will note that each manuscript is meant to exist as a stand-alone paper. Thus, there is some overlap, and repetition, particularly in terms of key concepts and framing that are offered up in the preambles to each piece’s core arguments – work that may seem repetitive when read together – but is necessary to establish each argument as independent in the context of the individual manuscripts.

The first manuscript is a theory-developing piece, seeking to elaborate on what identity and learning might look like in the ongoing critical project of education. While culturally sustaining pedagogy and ethnic studies has, in many ways, come into vogue, neoliberal pushback grows as well, resisting any new racial equilibrium. Using culturally sustaining pedagogy as a starting point, I examine and consider how in many ways, the work of the critical pedagogical project is under-theorized, particularly around identity and learning. This reality leaves the efforts of critical pedagogues precariously positioned to fall into stasis and, therefore, open to
neocolonial and neoliberal subversion that erases any perceived gains that are made. I argue that engaging educators to take up more extensive theoretical consideration of identity and learning in their work is crucial, suggesting that Deleuzian assemblage frameworks and CHAT learning theory, might be a generative ways forward to more deeply theorize the implicit assumptions at the root of critical pedagogical projects, including that of culturally sustaining pedagogy, and bolster the work of critical education to resist stasis and subversion.

The second manuscript links to these ideas, but takes a dual purpose of both theorizing, and examining some empirical data, specifically around how the work of practice-based teacher education and rehearsal relate to current critical efforts in education. This work begins by noting that on one hand, discussions of critical and culturally sustaining pedagogy are powerful, but have not adequately attended to how to cultivate teachers to engage in this work. On the other, practice-based teacher education is extremely generative and promising at disrupting ineffective teacher education pedagogies, and cultivating teacher dispositions, but has done so at arms-length from authentically critical work. After examining the theoretical contours of this argument, I offer a short case study, using this data to suggest that the dichotomy between practice-based and critical work is unnecessary, but at present, requires a paradigmatic shift. I suggest that a greater, intentional attention to affect and theory within practice-based approaches, as a means of interrogating our novices’ and our own assumptions and ideological positions as teacher educators, and closing the ‘ontological gaps’ of colonization that prevent us from witnessing youth affective reality and emotional truth, might reasonably be a means towards cultivating skilled, well-prepared, and culturally sustaining novice educators.

The third manuscript builds from and connects to both of the previous manuscripts, but is a primarily empirical piece, in many ways applying the theory developed in the previous two
This paper begins by recognizing the challenge of cultivating dispositions that move beyond superficial caring and cultural awareness, and towards critical and decolonial commitments in White educators, the core demographic of novice teachers. By examining two case studies of White teacher learning in the *Aquetza* program, I elaborate on how the design experiment they participated in led them to experience what Anzaldúa calls *travesias*, or crossings, which profoundly shifted their pedagogical identities and approaches to the profession. My data indicate that the shifts in their dispositions went beyond deeper cultural awareness or acknowledgement of privilege (the ‘growth’ typically depicted in the literature on this topic), and represented deterritorializations of their engagement in the activity system of schooling. I suggest that while these changes occurred in a specific, designed environment, we as teacher educators can more generatively consider the ways in which we structure field experiences to similarly invite and engage such moments of affective border-crossing in our pedagogy, and locate the work of teaching as the witnessing of affective geographies in school.

Finally, while each of these works has been written and prepared as strong drafts of manuscripts ostensibly moving towards submission, they have also been developed with this as a formative process in mind. Each still requires editing and development prior to submission, and includes an editorial note preceding the manuscript noting some of the unresolved issues that I am myself aware of and working on. Additionally, these manuscripts do not yet have individual titles, as I feel those are best to construct as a terminal step, prior to submission. With that in mind, I look forward to feedback and discussion around the contents and merits of various arguments, and how organization worked in the manuscripts, as well as suggestions of ways in which these might be amended or further developed for different audiences, based on the expertise and experience of the reader.
Editorial Notes: Manuscript A

Several issues prior to publication-submission exist for manuscript A, notably that this paper takes on two conceptual topics, both identity and learning theory. While deeply related, it is possible that these topics each warrant their own individual paper, and this manuscript could perhaps be split in two.

Alternatively, I am aware that there is both some redundancy, and some content that might be construed as superfluous, which could be removed to streamline and tighten the manuscript. The intention of including these discussions (e.g. the examination of intersectionality) was to fully address and explore each issue, including counter-arguments and other potential solutions to the dilemma I raise. That said, pairing this down might be more generative, and allow the paper to remain one manuscript.

A final editorial issue I would note is the differentiation of racial, cultural, and ethnic identity within the paper. Because of the nature of the discussion, these distinct constructs are periodically lumped together, but then race, particularly is drawn out as salient and a focus of particular aspects of the discussion. While this conceptually makes sense to me (race being significant to both cultural and ethnic identity, as well as having its own salience as identity within discussions of historical marginalization), I recognize it is potentially confusing here. While I have attempted to address this, and other issues of terminology that I did not want to drag out the manuscript further to explicate, in footnotes, I welcome perspectives on this issue as it impacts the cohesive manuscript, and any other issues or concerns that readers notice, as well.

Prospective journal for submission: Race & Ethnicity in Education
A few days after the conclusion of a Chican@ studies summer program for high school youth, Lora, a pre-service teacher and instructor in the program, who herself identified as Chicana, wondered aloud as we debriefed from the experience:

“Are we giving [the youth] multiple ways to be, or are we giving them one way to be, even if that's what we feel is the right way? That's still the danger of what the opposition is doing, giving one way to be. And I guess maybe a way to say this... I don't know. But I want it to be okay if they don't wanna like, leave [the program] being Chicano or Chicana. And for there to be a way for them to navigate beyond that.”

Lora’s dilemma – wondering if our program, foregrounding Ethnic and Chican@ studies content, providing space for youth to learn about the Chican@ Movimiento, and interact with critical, reflexive, youth-centered, content, may have been, in fact, ironically restricting – speaks to a dilemma that has underscored projects of liberatory education for decades; namely, that lingering in every revolutionary educative project is the potential for stagnation, for conservatism, and for the emergence of neo-colonization through the very discourses of liberation. In our efforts to create opportunities for historically marginalized youth to learn and grow in decolonial ways, we constantly risk bending towards what Omi and Winant (1994) describe as a nation-based paradigm of race, or cultural nationalism, static endeavors for social change that are “never politically viable” (p. 42). From Gramsci, to Freire, to the Third World Liberation Front and present-day efforts, calls for liberatory education, consciousness-raising, and educative decolonization for racialized, colonized, and historically marginalized peoples are hardly new. Yet worldwide, there is little evidence that even the most monumental previous efforts have significantly shifted how teaching and learning are approached (Giroux, 2012a, 2012b; Darder, 2012; Hook, 2007; Grant & Sleeter, 1996; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). Moments of enthusiasm and possibility burst forth, then shrink away, only to roar to the surface with new momentum years later. Indeed presently, while we are certainly facing the prospect of restriction and attack on liberatory and critical education (e.g. AZ-HB2281), we are also witnessing a
renewed enthusiasm and proliferation of interest in critical and decolonial pedagogies. Even as it is constrained in Arizona and elsewhere, Ethnic Studies is emerging as a serious aspect of conversation around youth learning and school reform in California, Texas, and Nevada, and even unexpected places such as Indiana. Moreover recent scholarship and research – notably that on Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP) – continues to elaborate on the importance of cultural pluralism and culturally-based ways of knowing and being to youth success (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014). More and more evidence accumulates, indicating that such approaches to youth learning are incredibly effective, regardless of what measures of success are employed (Cabrera, et al. 2015, 2012). In short, despite ongoing and historical resistance, this is an incredibly exciting moment for the project of critical and decolonial education. Yet as Lora indicated, external pressures are not the only tensions facing our work. Indeed, before we plow forward, it seems astute to consider momentarily the internal tensions that linger in our work, and why our efforts continually trail off, their momentum lost.

Essentially, even as we excitedly rush to tease out, identify, and articulate the parameters of critical, liberatory, and culturally sustaining pedagogical practices, the terrain surrounding the core teleological and ontological questions of this decolonial project – What are we seeking to sustain? Who is the subject we are conceptualizing? How does this subject come into being? What does it mean to become such an educator? – remain under-explored and under-theorized, risking yet another cultural-nationalist flameout. There are important assumptions about culture and identity, and the implications for learning that follow from this, which have thus far only been traced out in cursory fashion in the present literature. Essentially, in our urgency to bring content meaningful to disenfranchised youth to the fore, have we neglected to richly consider and engage with deeper theoretical and philosophical questions that underlie such practices and
pedagogies, particularly along the dimensions of identity and learning? Put another way, I wish to express the concern that current approaches to liberatory, critical, and decolonial pedagogy for historically marginalized and racialized youth – as promising as they may seem – will not prove to be themselves sustainable, either in their implementation or in the integrity of their concept, if we do not simultaneously seek to engage with and robustly elaborate on the theories of learning and identity which must necessarily buttress their enactment by educators and practitioners.

This is where this paper begins, with the premise that the increased attention to culturally-based ways of knowing and being in pedagogy and education that are emerging in conversations around critical pedagogy are positive and necessary developments, yet simultaneously concerned with how this project is moving forward. When we consider the heterogeneity of our teaching force (in terms of race, cultural identity, and experience), as well as the complexity of discourse around race, language, and culture, and the persistent, flexible, and insidious ways in which colonization acts on even the most well-intentioned educator, the prospect of leaving teachers to navigate and consistently enact liberatory practice without a rich and robust understanding of the theories that belie these practices seems almost negligent. If we remain content – as researchers, teacher educators, or practitioners – to operate in a realm that goes no further than mid-level theory, our current projects become pregnant with potential not just for youth liberation, but also for misunderstanding, misinterpretation, and misappropriation.

With this in mind, my purpose here is to dive more deeply into the task of theorizing the dimensions of identity and learning within critical and liberatory projects in education, in the hopes of extending the conversation and supporting the efficacy of these present endeavors. To do so, I will take up CSP as a touchstone of the present wave of liberatory pedagogical efforts, attempting to more richly theorize a few specific aspects of it – namely, around constructions of
culture, identity, subjectivity, teleology, and learning within the framework – intentionally seeking to mitigate the ways that these constructs might be taken in ultimately problematic or limiting directions of practice. I take up CSP not to discount the value of this work, but rather the opposite: CSP represents an important and powerful concept with immense promise, and it is my belief that a conversation, mapping and exploring the deeper theoretical terrain of CSP, as well as the critical project of education for historically marginalized youth more generally, is an important and generative task that is essential to ensuring that this project remains sustainable and intact, both conceptually, and as it is lived pragmatically in classrooms and communities. This paper will then concern itself with three central tasks: first, examining the promise, potential, and limitations in the under-theorized modeling of CSP that presently exists; second, offering a possible theorization of culture and identity for the youth-subject at the core of liberatory education; and third, to link this theorization of subject to a decolonial modeling of learning that might be taken up by pre-service and practicing educators, community activists, and critical and decolonial pedagogues in ways that anchor practice to robust and meaningful theory. Before comprehensively taking up these tasks, a point of departure for us to consider, briefly, is what CSP is, how it differs from its antecedent, culturally relevant pedagogy, and what this distinction means for educators.

**Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy and the Looming Threat of Colonial Appropriation**

In 2012, Django Paris offered *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy* as an innovative update – “a needed change in stance, terminology, and practice” (Paris, 2102) – to Ladson-Billing’s now 19-year-old conceptualization of *culturally relevant pedagogy* (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Reflecting two decades of the continued diversification and evolution of culture in the United States, Paris noted that through misinterpretation and oversimplification, *culturally relevant*
pedagogy had become overwhelmed by a “White Gaze” (Morrison, 1998) which resulted in a sea of “scholarship on “access” and “equity”’ which “has centered implicitly or explicitly around the question of how to get working-class students of color to speak and write more like middle-class White ones” (Paris & Alim, 2014, p.87). Such subtly and overtly assimilationist scholarship has resulted in the proliferation of “current policies [which] are not interested in sustaining the languages and cultures of longstanding and newcomer communities of color” (Paris, 2012, p. 95), a trend epitomized and reinforced by the “explicit assimilationist and antidemocratic monolingual/monocultural educational policies emerging across the nation” (Paris & Alim, 2014, p. 88). Relevance, Paris noted, has simply become insufficient for the present historical moment:

Relevance and responsiveness do not guarantee in stance or meaning that one goal of an educational program is to maintain heritage ways and to value cultural and linguistic sharing across difference, … They do not explicitly enough support the linguistic and cultural dexterity and plurality (Paris, 2009, 2011) necessary for success and access in our demographically changing U.S. and global schools and communities. (Paris, 2012, p. 94)

Effectively, Ladson-Billing’s activist vision has, through misinterpretations due to its terminology, been scrubbed of any trace of the criticality inherent in its original intention. Culturally relevant became a ubiquitous buzz-word, thrust without substance or reflection upon novice and practicing educators, leveraged as a smoke-screen against substantial pedagogical realignment, or truly decolonial and liberatory transformation of outcomes and intentions. Re-colonized by a White Gaze, culturally relevant has “too often been enacted by teachers and researchers in static ways that focus solely on the important ways racial and ethnic difference was enacted in the past without attending to the dynamic enactments of our equally important present or future” (Paris & Alim, 2014, p. 92). Indeed, the core intentions of CSP have been to move beyond reactionary notions of being relevant or responsive to cultural difference, while not questioning the ‘White Gaze,’ and its fulcrum assumptions of monocultural values and knowledge, pushing instead for engagement with the question of:
What if… the goal of teaching and learning with youth of color was not ultimately to see how closely students could perform White middle-class norms but to explore, honor, extend, and, at times, problematize their heritage and community practices? (Paris & Alim, 2014, p. 86)

Thus far, the answer that has been posited in literature has been one that points out exemplary practices that implicitly answer this question, and show praxis that is emblematic of “cultural fluidity” (Paris, 2012) and the ways that youth are blurring and disrupting the lines of easily defined identity, particularly in language-use. Literature exploring the hybridization of language-use – including Spanish and other heritage languages with AAL, and vice versa - as part of evolving youth constructions of their ethnic, cultural, and racial identities, are raised as evidence of how accepted and traditional constructions of those identities to which teachers were previously striving to be ‘responsive,’ are shifting in significant ways (Alim & Reyes, 2011; Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003; Irizarry 2007, 2011; Paris, 2011, 2009), and why CSP should be taken up as a new driving force in the critical and decolonial educative project.

Yet before we can launch forward with this promising new approach to pedagogy, it behooves us to pause for a moment, and interrogate how the White Gaze crept into culturally relevant pedagogy, noting clearly that such outcomes or understandings of relevance as diluted are far removed from Ladson-Billing’s original intentions. To be succinct around this point, if we consider what we know of discourse and power in the post-colonial moment – that they are flexible, insidious, and insistent in maintaining White supremacy and colonial hierarchy – and acknowledge that teachers and practitioners operate regularly in ways that too often are constructed as separate from theory and ideology, I suggest that the emergence of the White Gaze in culturally relevant pedagogy is not solely a function of the discursive significance of relevance as insufficient, but rather more of a dilution of the theories of identity and learning that were meant to operate behind the approach, but were in practice and transmission neglected, and
never fully elaborated upon. In essence, if we know that good teaching practice often emerges from educators who are able to “rise to the concrete,” (Gutiérrez & Vossoughi, 2010), enacting practices that are rooted in meaningful understandings of theory, the White Gaze was able to assert itself because the concrete practices of culturally relevant pedagogy were uprooted from a robust theorization and understanding of identity and learning that could have imbued them with decolonial, critical meaning. With this in mind, simply shifting our focus towards sustaining, and more intentionally concerning ourselves with youth culture is not a significant enough bulwark against misinterpretation and appropriation. In short, while Paris and Alim note that, “CSP must resist static, unidirectional notions of culture and race that reinforce traditional versions of difference and (in)equality without attending to shifting and evolving ones” (p. 95), the theoretical assumptions upon which this assertion is built, and a rich, complete articulation of the evolving youth-subject referent in this conversation, do not fully materialize in the present literature. We are left only to consider that cultural, ethnic, and racial identities among youth are evolving, fluid, and flexible, but for the (often White) practitioner who may be seeking to enact CSP, this is an insufficient foundation upon which to grow praxis respectful of this evolution. This relates deeply to the fact that identity, or identity development, more specifically, – particularly along ethnic, racial, and historically nondominant cultural lines – remains a deeply political and contested issue, both from without, and within, communities of color. Effectively, without more explication and richer theorization, the entirety of the CSP concept becomes vulnerable to shallow interpretations and constructions of identity and learning by even its well-meaning practitioners; interpretations that may limit its reach, and permit a “White Gaze” to seep

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5 In the following discussion, I will periodically to racial, cultural, and ethnic identities, while at times attending explicitly to the functioning of race. This is not to conflate race, culture, and ethnicity, but to honor their distinctions, while at the same time recognizing the salience of race to both culture and ethnicity, and its centrality to any discussion of historical marginalization and liberatory education.
into and corrupt the practice and implementation of CSP in ways that are altogether new, but just as problematic. Engaging in CSP such that deep theory rather than shallow and discrete practices become the foundation from which it operates, might offer something of a bulwark against this misappropriation. With this in mind, let us begin with an interrogation of the theory of identity that operates within CSP, which, just as with the language of relevant and responsive which Paris called our attention to, starts with a question of semantics and terminology.

**Stasis and Sustaining: The Limitations of Cultural Nationalism**

To begin a deeper theorization of identity in the critical and decolonial project, let us take up, briefly, the recent work broadening CSP to include cultural revitalization as an additional core principle. McCarty and Lee (2014), building from work with first-nations communities, offer up culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (CSRP) as a more complete and productive formulation of the concept for communities and cultures who are engaged not just in a project of sustenance, but in an act of reviving nearly extinguished languages and cultural ways of being in their youth. This expansion to include revitalization is premised, according to McCarty and Lee, in notions of Tribal sovereignty – asserting that schooling for first-nations children must respect the sovereignty and community desires of tribes themselves, just as they do the decrees and dictates of state and federal departments of education (McCarty & Lee, 2014). CSRP, they suggest, entails “an expression of Indigenous education sovereignty, CSRP attends directly to asymmetrical power relations and the goal of transforming legacies of colonization….CSRP recognizes the need to reclaim and revitalize what has been disrupted and displaced by colonization” (McCarty & Lee, 2014, p. 103). As with the parameters of CSP before it, I have no concern with McCarty and Lee’s core assertion, particularly in the context of first-nations and indigenous politics – such decolonizing and revitalizing work is vital to these communities that
are/were most directly faced with internal colonization and the genocidal impulses and legacies of the U.S. Nation State. Rather, I wish to point out how such rhetorical moves and terminology choices in general necessarily engage a conversational space that is imbued with the limitations of cultural or racial nationalism (Omi & Winant, 1994). By this, I mean that by leveraging such language as *revitalizing* and *sustaining*, McCarty and Lee (and Paris and Alim) open themselves to interpretation as predicated on a ‘nation-based’ paradigm of race and racial identity, in which “racial dynamics are understood as products of colonialism and, therefore, as outcomes of relationships which are global and epochal in character” (Omi & Winant, p. 37). While such a nation-based paradigm of understanding race and racial/cultural dynamics has substantial, meaningful, and clear significance within the internally-colonized nations of indigenous communities, these ideas become tenuous when generalized outward. They easily invoke the logic of ‘Cultural nationalism’⁶ (exemplified by Pan-Africanism, the notion of a Chicano homeland of Aztlán, etc.), which can be understood as grounded in desires for “collective identity, community, and a sense of “peoplehood’” (Omi & Winant, p. 40). This seems, in decolonial terms, a generative move, yet if we press on the concept, and extend our theorization, limitations begin to emerge, particularly when considering the educative sphere, and the importance of youth agency and culture to CSRP. Notably, drawing on Omi and Winant’s well developed theorization of how racial and nondominant-cultural projects are always in constant conversation – a back and forth, push and pull – for coevalness with the State and its status quo equilibrium, we can understand our task with critical, liberatory, and decolonial pedagogy to be one of shifting that equilibrium. If this is the case, then it behooves us to note that “the U.S.

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⁶ Omi and Winant clarify that while distinct, a nation-based paradigm of race and cultural nationalism are deeply related. While race will factor significantly into this discussion, the scope of liberatory education is broader, and thus I will primarily use cultural nationalism in the following discussion, as a means of capturing more expansive, but no less static, nationalist movements aligned around culture or ethnicity, while still accounting for the racialized elements of these movements, and race-based nationalism itself.
political scene allows radical nationalism little space” (Omi & Winant, p. 47), and moreover, that as already mentioned, such projects, historically, have fizzled, as their focus on a singular, collectivist, unitary subject neglected the evolving, dynamic, and varied factors at play in racial and cultural identity, ultimately rendering the political projects themselves futile (p. 42). While these external attacks are more easily identified, an equally vital issue to consider is that of, “interpenetration” (Omi and Winant, p. 46) of cultural practices between majority and minority communities – the type of cross cultural hybridity and flow specifically discussed as a central tenet of CSP (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014). In this sense, cultural nationalism is antithetical to CSP – so why take this time to discuss it?

I do so not to attribute such intentions to Paris and Alim, or McCarty and Lee (who still evince a clear, dynamic, and evolutionary conception of identity within an unquestionably valid discussion of indigenous sovereignty and nationalism issues). Rather, my intention is to address the looming danger to the endeavor of critical and decolonial education that I believe lies embedded in the under-theorized terms sustaining and revitalizing. It is a threat of misinterpretation, and just as responsive and relevant, by the nature of their definition and understanding, became liabilities to the intention of Ladson-Billing’s theory, so too do sustaining and revitalizing carry with them their own potentially limiting and problematic definitions. Namely, if I speak of sustaining or revitalizing something, there is an implicit referent to which it seems I am referring – we are sustaining something that exists or did exist, we are revitalizing something which once existed and flourished more readily. There is, in short, an implied teleological outcome for identity that thus far has only been theorized and articulated as being ‘evolving,’ but seems in practice doomed to be easily interpreted as something that is static, and a set iteration of racial, cultural, or ethnic identity to be worked towards. Essentially, suggesting
that the thing we are sustaining/revitalizing is evolving does not remove or adequately clarify the telos of the project, and while work exists that embodies or implicitly clarifies some of this (e.g. Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003; Irizarry 2007, 2011; Paris, 2011, 2009), the open ended nature of the project calls for a more deeply and richly articulated ideology from which to grow. Essentially, I am concerned that such terminology invites observers and potential practitioners of critical, decolonial, and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy, both from outside of, and within, communities of color, to misunderstand our project as one aimed at reviving decades old cultural-nationalist racial projects, which have previously failed to shift the racial and cultural equilibrium in this country away from the prevailing White Gaze and color-blind paradigm that is so problematically evident in our supposedly ‘post-racial’ America. So long as the referent to which sustaining speaks – be it Black, Latin@, Chican@, Navajo, etc. – remains under-theorized and open to static interpellation, fixed notions and theories of identity will be applied in the absence of an alternative theorization. The project of critical and decolonial education, aiming towards sustaining and revitalizing ends, may then become corrupted, misunderstood as a process of crafting ‘evolved’, yet static, versions of Black, Latin@, Chican@, Navajo, etc. identities that remain teleologically fixed: defining a certain way to be Black, Latin@, Chican@, Navajo, etc. in the 21st century. Such an outcome may feel agential, but in its stasis, it is decidedly not decolonial. With this task in mind, forward progress for the critical project of education requires that we account for potential assumptions and interpretations of terminology, tempering our efforts with considerations of rich, guiding theory and vision, and considering the implications for how practitioners both without and within communities of color may take up in practice a complex endeavor of understanding and developing identity, and the process of learning that accompanies and supports it. Rather than undermining CSRP or the critical or
decolonial endeavor in curriculum and pedagogy, such work is essential to ensuring the positive educational, political, and social outcomes for historically marginalized youth that these approaches promise.

With regards to the former, the concern is rather straightforward and simple – that opponents and detractors of critical and decolonial educational efforts from outside communities of color will take up this rhetoric to validate their own deficit-oriented arguments that efforts to sustain, revitalize, or validate the non-normative cultural and linguistics practices of youth of color are in fact insidious, seditious attempts at undermining a mythical American melting-pot ideal. One need only look as far as the rhetoric espoused in the debate over Arizona’s aforementioned HB2281 to see an extreme instance of such reactionary responses to decolonial praxis, and an instance in which even in the face of substantial success, a White Gaze and color-blind paradigm of race (Bonilla Silva, 2013; Omi & Winant, 1994) exerted substantial resistance to even the perception of racial or cultural nationalism disrupting the extant State equilibrium. Responses filled with such wide-spread personal and political vitriol are, while unfortunately common, not perhaps the primary concern here. Rather, it is the more subtle manifestations of this color-blind paradigm – actively rejecting the salience of race and culture – that are more likely to arise. There is an extensive body of research showing that teachers, particularly middle class, White individuals who comprise the majority of practicing and potential educators who will be teaching historically marginalized youth (Sleeter, 2008, 2001), continue to struggle with their understandings of racial and cultural identity (Gotanda, 2004; Leonardo, 2009; 2002; Sleeter, 2005). Too often, these individuals are encouraged to believe in racial and cultural identity in one of a number of static, shallow ways. Some of the most prevalent of these that bear consideration in this discussion include, (a) understanding race through a lens of color-blindness,
that racial identity (specifically, and within culture and ethnicity) is not at all salient (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Leonardo, 2009), (b) that race and identity is purely a discursive fiction, which can be misconstrued as believing it is easily dismissed (Butler, 2004; Gilroy, 2000), or most problematically, or (c) seeing race, culture, or ethnicity in deficit terms, that these identities are reflections of real, biological and psychological failings (Herrstein & Murray, 1994; Murray, 1984).

All of these are concerning positions. Should practitioners bring these common positions to bear on CSP as an idea without a framing, explanatory theory to accompany and guide reflection on the youth-subject who is being posited, the result would be CSP failing to be taken up adequately in praxis. Rather than rising from theory to a dynamic, evolving concrete conception of identity and learning, these external, and problematic explanatory theories would be projected onto the practice of CSP, generating faulty interpretations of racial and cultural identity, and either imposing practice that reflects this onto youth in static ways, or hesitating and dismissing CSP out of ideological fear over ‘sustaining’ some imagined radical, nationalist, racial subject. It would be a tragedy – to our project, and most importantly, to our youth – to see teachers, administrators, community leaders, or other educators, still grappling with their own nascent or static notions of identity, misunderstand, reject, or denounce the critical and decolonial project out of confusion, fear, or White-racial anxiety (Leonardo, 2009; 2002) sparked by the specter of radical nationalism, and revert to programs and pedagogies with explicitly assimilationist ends. This is not to say that critical and decolonial education will become somehow immune from such criticism by better theorizing our assumptions and conceptions of what evolving identity means. Rather, wherever truly liberatory pedagogy is practiced, it is bound to run afoul of extant power structures, merely because its function is to disrupt. However,
if practitioners carry with them not just a strong repertoire of community-based practices, but also a rich and clear theory of what the evolutionary aspect of identity within a broader critical and decolonial future might mean, and what this entails for their praxis, then the inevitable debates that will occur might prove to be more productive, and importantly, misconceptions around race and identity among new practitioners might be addressed from the outset, cultivated as part of their core dispositions. There is promise, and still ample disruption of existing norms, if we can find ways to challenge deficit assumptions of youth of color without straying into the prickly political terrain that arises when cultural/racial nationalism becomes a part of the conversation.

With regards to within-community concerns, not recognizing the implications of such a cultural nationalist stance around identity, we run the risk of continuing to develop and mobilize politically around notions of ethnic and cultural identity, racial projects, that have proven to come up short in the past. While understanding racial, cultural, or ethnic identity as an expression of nationalism is undoubtedly a motivating and mobilizing force - a way to raise consciousness in our communities - it lacks the substance and flexibility to account for the types of evolving identities that critical and decolonial education must aim to serve. Specifically, cultural nationalism has in the past sought to imagine a broad coalition that ignores in-group heterogeneity, and glosses over internal problematics, such as patriarchy and homophobia. This runs directly counter to the ongoing use of an “inward gaze” that Paris and Alim (2014) insist must be constantly at work, but this inward gaze itself, if not imbued with robust theorization, will itself become shallow and selective. Moreover, to return quite directly to our central question of identity, the subject that cultural nationalist projects posit – be it positive or problematic – is rapidly changing. What does it means for me, in ontological terms, to recognize
myself as Chicano? Growing up across Virginia, Tejas, and Nevada, and now living in Colorado, my experience and understanding of this identity-signifier is drastically different than that of an individual who was raised and lives their entire life in Los Angeles, even though we may all identify ourselves with precisely the same signifier. Is one of our identity constructions more authentic than another? Is one of us, carrying a different definition or manifestation of Xicanismo, constructed through our particular and idiosyncratic experiences, to be more welcome in the cultural-nationalist, mythic Chican@ nation of Aztlán? And how, when such terms remain contested, are we to know, and posit for youth, which is ‘right’ and to be sustained? I suggest than that such efforts at seeking authenticity are pointless, problematic, and themselves acts of colonization – forcing us to remain indebted to deficit constructions of ourselves, historically charted, but immanently ignorant, still linked to perhaps-unseen colonial influence. Such exclusionary, “authenticity” games are specifically disabused from CSRP, as McCarty and Lee discuss the problematic, ‘uncritical interpretation,’ that is involved when the authenticity of one’s identity based on their language skills, historical knowledge, or cultural practices is “dismissed or denigrated within the larger society and even within the youths’ communities if they do not possess those skills or that knowledge” (McCarty & Lee, 2014, p. 103). Quite simply, CSP/CSRP is as much about engaging fundamentally new racial and cultural identities as it is about recognizing the salience of their historical antecedents. As Paris and Alim note, “our pedagogies must address the well-understood fact that what it means to be African American or Latina/o or Navajo is continuing to shift in the ways culture always has” (Paris & Alim, 2014, p. 91).

So what does all this mean? I am not suggesting that CSP/CSRP are positing a cultural nationalist agenda or subject. As I have noted, such a paradigm would, in fact, be contrary to the
core values and ends of the project in which they are engaged – to the very paradigm of race and culture as flexible, discursive, and evolving, that decolonization labors under. What I am suggesting is that because the ontological question of identity, and who the subject we are endeavoring to sustain is, has been, and continues to be, left quite open not to interpretation (which it must), but to theoretical interpellation, CSP is poised to be problematically misunderstood along these lines. The terminology of sustaining, revitalizing remains in conversation with fixed conceptions of identity and culture, concepts which remain thorny and contested issues in the realm of education. Thus far, these approaches to coalescing the critical/decolonial project remain articulated only in the ‘mid-level’ theory space. In fact, the tension that is wrapped up in sustaining – its heritage referent, but also evolutionary telos – points towards what our task really is; articulating a theory of racial, cultural, and ethnic identity and decolonial learning to accompany the critical project of education.

How racial and ethnic identity and culture come to be understood among critical and decolonial educators will have very real, immanent consequences for both youth and the educators we hope will be taking up CSP, among other revolutionary approaches, in their praxis. In short, as we move the project of critical/decolonial education forward in the present historical moment, we must, as a first step, attend to how we will theorize and formulate the pluralistic, evolving identity at its core, and plan for learning that fosters this process of identity development, allowing us to articulate the subject who, through revolutionary and decolonial pedagogical offerings, might challenge and produce a new racial equilibrium.

**Decolonization Beyond Intersectionality**

With the aforementioned pluralist, evolutionary subject of decolonial learning as our starting point, and having established that a paradigm of race as national-identity is not
altogether productive, a place to begin our deeper conceptualizing, is with the idea of intersectionality, which is an attempt to account for, in one theoretical paradigm, the confluence of many factors that impact identity (Osei-Kofi, 2013). We should note that there are many conceptualizations of intersectionality (Lykke, 2010; McCall, 2005), and among these, there is considerable debate over the ‘how’ through which intersectional identities are constructed, and critiques concerning a lack of theoretical depth in some formulations (Davis, 2008). Overall, however, the intent of the concept in all uses is to complicate narrow conceptions of racial, cultural, ethnic, class, and gender identities by overtly calling attention to the ways that these factors interact in varied, complex, and shifting ways. As Lykke (2010) says, intersectionality:

[Is] a theoretical and methodological tool to analyze how historically specific kinds of power differentials and/or constraining normativities, based on discursively, institutionally, and/or structurally constructed socio-cultural categorizations such as gender, ethnicity, race, class, sexuality, age/generation, dis/ability, nationality, mother tongue and so on, interact, and in so doing produce different kinds of societal inequities and social relations. (p. 50)

On the surface, intersectionality would appear to meet our needs for theorizing evolutionary, decolonial identities in practice. It is a term and concept widely — almost universally — used, and accessible to practitioners as a paradigm for understanding race, culture, and ethnicity beyond unitary, fixed conceptions of these identities. It seems to account for the plural, multidirectional, constantly evolving nature of identity in youth culture. Both because of its paradigmatic intentions, and its current ubiquity, it is likely that many practitioners and researchers, when approaching critical and decolonial education, will implicitly use a paradigm of intersectionality to understand the evolving, shifting subject of with whom they are working. Yet, when examining this paradigm through post-structural and decolonial lenses, two serious concerns over intersectionality arise in relation to the goals of our project. First, intersectionality, despite all appearances, still posits a unitary, fixed subject. Second, it permits the salience of race to be
too easily dismissed and subsumed by larger, homogenizing discourses. It is both teleological and ontologically flawed.

Let us take up the former of these claims first. By most cursory examinations, intersectionality avoids positing the sort of limited, fixed, subject of cultural-nationalist paradigms of racial, cultural and ethnic identity. It intentionally takes into account the way that not just race, class, gender, sexuality, etc. shape identity, but how the constellation of these factors, over time, produce a subject who identifies in particular ways, is positioned and privileged (or not) in particular ways, and interacts with the world in particular ways. This seems a valuable lens, until one considers that like previous paradigms of racial, cultural, and ethnic identity, intersectionality too is seeking to name, to locate at some particular crossroads, the subjects’ identity. As Puar (2007) suggests:

Intersectionality demands the knowing, naming, and thus stabilizing of identity across space and time, relying on the logic of equivalence and analogy between various axes of identity and generating narratives of progress that deny the fictive and performative aspects of identification. (p. 212)

In short, though it is a more complex identity, intersectionality still seeks stability by the naming of the axes of power at play, relying on a fixed telos of self that might be located, once and for all. Such a move creates a false subaltern (Spivak, 1988), its past-evolutionary aspects accounted for, but not those in its immanence or futurity. Among other things, this halts the potential evolution of the youth-subject. Pedagogically, striving towards naming intersections only serves heritage cultural practices, and newly evolved cultural practices that are known, excluding futurity and immanence (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). A truly evolutionary theory needs to account for sustaining practices that may not yet even be imagined. Additionally, it encourages the practitioner herself to believe that identity is merely the locating of oneself in a web of intersectionality. Thus, all that becomes required is to survey all the dynamics at play, trace out all the axes, and locate their intersectional, subaltern students, as well as their needs and
perspectives, in quite deterministic ways. She is able to remain in stasis, comfortable and complacent, knowing (in deterministic fashion) herself and her students, aware of the past, but ignorant to the witnessing of the immanent future, and halting the constant need of decolonial practitioners to press themselves to engage in border-crossing and critical reflection around culture, identity, and affect. As Spivak says, she comes to believe that the subaltern subject she has located at some intersection can ‘speak,’ and by acknowledging this, can protect herself from disruption by construction a alibi of Whiteness (Leonardo & Zembylas, 2013), dangerously neglecting how new manifestations of coloniality and marginalization are shaping new generations and individuals in ways distinct from the historically charted oppressions of the past, as well as the complicity of present pedagogical systems and practices. Thus intersectionality does not do enough to disrupt either the practitioner or the youth from traditional, fixed understandings of identity that abound, and dangerously positions the project of decolonization to be one of accounting for past oppressions, rather than acknowledging immanent ones. It remains static, ignoring the immanence of the evolutionary process, one whose teleological ends are infinite and unclear.

The second concern that an intersectionality-paradigm raises is that it too easily dismisses the salience of race when attending to identity, something that a decolonial project must not do, and in fact serve as a protection against. By this dismissal, I mean that when all intersecting influences are constructed as equal for all people in all contexts, the substantial impact that phenotype and skin color have on racialized bodies in the United States (and worldwide), can become easily ignored (Saldanha, 2006). This is problematic not in the sense that class, gender, sexuality, or other dimensions of marginalization are less valid, but rather that when all difference is made equal, far too often, something is lost for the racialized Other. We see this in
the way that queerness has morphed in some cases into colonizing homonormativity or homonationalism (Puar, 2007), supporting and mimicking the extant racial regime while reaping political benefits, as well as in the ways that lower socioeconomic European cultural and ethnic groups – historically and in the present moment – have actively staked claims to whiteness as hierarchical moves to shore up their own limited political and social efficacy (Roediger, 2007). Effectively, intersectionality too easily lends itself to a politics of liberal humanism – seeing all difference as equal, and thereby neglecting the historical and evolving weight of race and ethnicity as deeply salient ontological markers of identity. Turning back to Omi and Winant, intersectionality too easily allows race to be subsumed and understood as something else, dismissing historical and immanent colonization, affects, and systemic racism, and undermining the efficacy of any project that might emerge to destabilize and decolonize the extant regime, and current racial paradigm.

What these teleological and ontological failings of intersectionality tell us are that our theory and framework cannot pose a unitary subject, nor can it dismiss race too easily. Paris and Alim, as voices of the current critical/decolonial project, have established an interest in sustaining both evolving, fluid identities representing “dynamic enactments of our…important present or future” (p. 92), without losing the salience and value of traditional and heritage cultural practices and racial, ethnic, and cultural identities. In short, this is identity constructed immanently, and with a proleptic vision. For such a framework, I believe that the most powerful and most suitable – not the easiest, or the most straightforward – answer, is to turn to the post-structural idea, posed by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), of machinic assemblage, as a way to theorize racial, ethnic, and cultural identity in robust terms as an accompaniment to the critical and decolonial task of education. Our task now is to trace out what an understanding of
assemblage in reference to pedagogy might be, and what this might look like to both youth, and
critical/decolonial practitioners.

**Cultural Evolution and Identity as Assemblage in the Critical Educative Project**

An assemblage, to draw directly from Deleuze and Guattari, can be understood as:

…every constellation of singularities and traits deducted from the flow – selected, organized,
stratified – in such a way as to converge (consistency) artificially and naturally; an assemblage, in
this sense, is a veritable invention. Assemblages may group themselves into extremely vast
constellations constituting “cultures” or even “ages” (1987, p. 406)

Deciphered a bit, assemblage is a network of factors that cohere through both natural
(phenotypical) and artificial (discursive) circumstances, coming to cluster together in ways that
have thematic meaning, and socio-political salience.

For our purposes here, we should note that for Deleuze and Guattari, ‘culture’ is one of
these constellations, but they do not explicitly mention race. Yet this is not to dismiss it, for the
openness and fluidity of the assemblage framework allows us to understand race as yet another
possible-assemblage (and a contributing aspect of culture), as well as a singularity that might
influence other assemblages, such as culture. This is reminiscent of the meaningful aspects of
intersectionality – recognizing the varied and overlapping influences of many different factors on
identity, rather than just one - yet assemblage does not fall into the same unitary-identity trap as
intersectionality. For an assemblage is neither fixed, nor predestined, and importantly, includes a
contingent element – a focus on something that exists only in potential and possibility. We leave
open the promise of futurity, the imaginative possibility that identity may/will change and
evolve, as Puar notes: “Assemblage has yet to be known, seen, or heard, it allows for becoming
beyond or without being” (2007, p. xx). Thus assemblage can be understood as reflecting the
various contextual identities and associations that we as individuals cohere ourselves to in
society. It takes immanence and possibility into account, and allows for evolution, as well as the
It is thus necessary to take into account the selective action of the assemblages upon the phylum, and the evolutionary reaction of the phylum as the subterranean thread that passes from one assemblage to another, or quits an assemblage, draws it forward, and opens it up. (Deleuze & Guattari, p.407)

Essentially, just as is desired in race-conscious decolonial projects, the way assemblage functions does not necessarily discount the salience of race, or the possibility for it to “draw forward” or “open up” assemblages of identity in powerful ways. This is a function of the rhizomatic nature of assemblage, that it is multiplicitous, and not marked by any fixed beginning or end. Instead of thinking genealogically, we can think in terms of how lines of flight – particular ontological and experiential factors, themes, or ideas – shape the coherence (or consistency) that emerges through and across an assemblage, as Deleuze and Guattari suggest: “Multiplicities are defined by the outside: by the abstract line, the line of flight or deterritorialization according to which they change in nature and connect with other multiplicities” (p. 9). For our purposes, we can think of racial phenotype, race, as a meaningful ontological concept, as a line of flight – a significant marker that shapes and impacts many assemblages in their multiplicity. Race in this way remains salient to the identities and subjects of the youth we are positing, without becoming deterministic; as we have noted an assemblage will still shift and grow beyond and along these lines – it is never in stasis. As Saldanha (2006) notes, to understand race within an assemblage framework is to recognize that “Race should not be eliminated, but proliferated, its many energies directed at multiplying racial differences so as to render them joyfully cacophonic….What is needed is an affirmation of race’s creativity and virtuality: what race can be” (p. 21). Such a positioning both accounts for the ways in which Deleuze and Guattari might...
be skeptical of any unitary construction of identity (racial or otherwise), while ensuring it is theorized as drastically different and more meaningful than how race becomes just one random, potentially static, element of intersectionality. Here, race as line of flight adds to the richness and depth of our analytic power: offering a clear and useful lens through which to examine the multiplicitous assemblages we may encounter in and among youth, and their evolving, rhizomatic functioning. Not tracing, but mapping race (in its immanence), we can recognize how it remains a discursive, historical construction, but also acknowledge how phenotype (as race) acts within the disparate assemblages – their racial, cultural, and ethnic identities – of the youth in our classrooms in powerful ways to create and complicate the planes of consistency (the coalesced identities) that shape how youth understand themselves in the world, and how ‘identities’ are developed and lived. While it is still one of many singularities, race is one with considerable ‘stickiness’ (Puar, 2007), its salience recognized even as it is not deterministically fixed. In CSRP, I arrive at a subject for whom the heritage practices and identities of race, ethnicity, culture are critical, important lines of flight, but whose historicity is not deterministic, open to immanent variation and creativity, a constant process of creation and becoming.

**Towards a Decolonial Theory of Learning**

Understanding identity, particularly racial identity, as assemblage then responds to our needs for supporting critical and decolonial educational projects – offering an open telos for dynamic, evolving, immanent identities to come into being, and an ontological way to maintain the salience and reality of factors and characteristics of lived experience like race, to still play a part. Yet theorizing how identity alone might be understood is insufficient elaboration for a critical educative project. Within such work, we need to meaningfully grapple with what a decolonial theory of learning looks like – a task that I believe has been far too often neglected or
left implicit in critical pedagogical endeavors. Turning back to the idea of the “White Gaze” imposing itself on culturally relevant pedagogy, we can understand this process not just as a misunderstanding by practitioners of culture and identity in regards to historically marginalized youth and communities, but a fundamental misunderstanding of the historicity and colonial nature of pedagogy itself; an assemblage of historically marginalized identity that has gone, problematically, into stasis, and solidified into a limiting plane of organization. Freire long ago articulated the failings and colonial, oppressive characteristics of typical schooling arrangements, describing them in the now well know terms of “banking education.” Yet as we examine this present moment in the critical project of education, and the prospect of CSP being generative in it, moving past this model remains a struggle, in large part because Freire (and many since him), for all his elaboration on the limitations of banking education, did not clearly articulate or propose a theory of learning to accompany liberation. In the absence of that, learning theory has often operated separately from engagement with the decolonial project – constructed as removed, impractical, or unessential. In this void, we instead see pedagogy with ‘critical’ goals, purporting to invoke Freire, whose implicit theory of learning is deeply cognitivist, enacting a pedagogy of resentment (McCarthy & Dimitriadis, 2005) imbued with a White Gaze and racial ‘disgust’ (Matias & Zembylas, 2014). In short, without clearly delineating what a decolonial theory of learning might look like, we are left to rehash and repeat the same endeavors, expecting different outcomes, yet always limited by the approaches to understanding the educative task that have proliferated for decades, stuck, in Deleuzian terms, in a plane of organization, of stasis, and death.

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7 Deleuze and Guattari distinguish planes of consistency (a positive) from planes of organization (a negative); planes of consistency are immanent, assemblages in which the subject is presently making sense of the world before following further lines of flight, while planes of organization are marked by stasis – a nomos in which identities and ways of being have become bound by restricting and limiting Discourses, affects, and power dynamics.
Now this isn’t to say that alternative, successful decolonial learning has not occurred, deterritorializing this plane of organization with new lines of flight. Indeed, there are countless examples of practitioners and researchers enacting powerful, revolutionary classroom praxis. Yet, if we simply hold up these pragmatic models as examples, we once again skirt the issue, and fail to substantially flesh out the robust theory which will allow many practitioners – not just rare exemplars – to rise to the concrete of meaningful decolonial or CSRP praxis. In short, we must consider process as well as product, and explore what a decolonial theory of learning for CSRP, and critical and decolonial education more broadly, might look like, in conversation with the theorization of identity just suggested. With this in mind, I want to suggest that we must first begin by considering the very task of decolonization, which, conscious of the tenuous state of education for historically marginalized youth and communities worldwide, is one of reinvention, as Bhabha (1994) captures, when he suggests that

…to reconstitute the discourse of cultural difference, demands not simply a change of cultural contents and symbols…It requires a radical revision of the social temporality in which emergent histories may be written….a subversive strategy of subaltern agency that negotiates its own authority through a process of…insurgent relinking. (Bhabha, p. 265)

So how do we pair such goals – the cultivation of insurgent relinking – with a theory of learning? I believe that conceptions of learning, or, more specifically expansive learning (Engeström, 1987; 2001; Engeström & Sannino, 2010), that grow from cultural psychology and cultural historical activity theory (CHAT) are key here. By positing learning as socially situated, intersubjective, cultural, and historical, dominated by an object of learning for the subject or subjects which is always defined by the tools available, the rules of the game, the division of labor, the community it takes place in, and the historicity of the activity system itself, we can begin to trace out where and how the colonial exists in the activity systems of our schools and communities. This is essentially the mapping of neocolonial planes of organization, making
transparent the ways that a White Gaze, the *nomos*, creeps into schooling creeps even in the most well intentioned efforts at critical pedagogy.

This process of modeling allows us to examine, and perhaps suggest, that one of the failings of culturally relevant pedagogy, and indeed of other, culturally nationalist educative projects, was that in an under theorized modeling of learning, too much emphasis was placed merely on the *tools*. Surely, engaging with content that speaks more directly to the perspectives and experiences of historically marginalized youth is important, but as we have explored, prescribing identity – which too often content does – is both problematic and limiting. As a practitioner, I cannot expect truly decolonial outcomes if my decolonial efforts merely present youth with critical perspectives, or ethnic studies content, or other subtle shifts in tool use and discursive position. Simply putting a more responsive text and changing my terminology to refer to historically marginalized youth as ‘scholars’ will do little to nothing if the core of the pedagogy, the understanding of *learning* remains framed through colonial approaches to the rules, community, division of labor, process of mediation, and object of schooling. At best, such an invitation will produce static notions of what Black, Chican@, etc. identity is (stasis), and at worst, smacks of appropriation, inviting the resentment of youth who see the contradiction of liberatory rhetoric and colonizing action as pandering and colonial (a rigid, colonial plane of organization). Essentially, unless the fundamental invitation to learn, the very nature of the activity system itself changes, and fundamentally new lines of flight are pursued, than merely altering the content or even discourse within a colonial system does little to change the relationship youth have to the world, and in many cases operates as a technology to maintain stasis; discursively repositioning historically marginalized youth without any true shift in racial equilibrium. To call back to Lora’s original dilemma: if the tools may look different, but the
activity system itself remains constraining, colonizing, offering only one possible way of being, and not the dynamic, immanent possibility that CSRP and true decolonial praxis must call for, we have changed little, and there has been no insurgent relinking.

CHAT then allows us to see that merely changing the tools of an activity systems does little to alter the eventual object or outcome unless those tools change in conjunction with alterations across the whole of an activity system. Undertaking such a complete task is to engage in expansive learning (Engeström, 1987) – learning that transforms the not just the tools at play, but all those components of an activity system – offering new tools, re-inventing the conceptualization of community and rules, charting new divisions of labor, and devising new definitions and positioning of subject and object, and challenging the historicity of the system itself. Such work can be understood as proleptic (Meshcheryakov, 2009), the process of engaging with that which has yet to be seen or imagined, a task vital to the decolonial project in which we seem always to be operating in the shadow of colonialism or neocolonialism. Most critically, expansive learning shifts and alters participation in activity systems; it allows us to expand towards possibilities that are decolonial, and proleptic, future-oriented activity systems that re-write and re-envision the historicity and constitution of colonial activity systems, not just in terms of content, but on fundamental levels of relationships, temporality, and ontology. Expansive learning in this way becomes a way to conceptualize the process of insurgent relinking, a theory of active decolonization - learning whose object is to produce a wholly new and revolutionary activity, a new type of learning, a new way of being and doing, re-constituting the nature of colonial relations. Only by understanding learning on this core and fundamental level will practitioners be in positions to rise, from these theories, to concrete practices that move beyond the plane of organization of colonialism and neocolonial pedagogy, and enact praxis that
invites prolepsis and insurgent relinking into the classroom space – essential elements of any pedagogy that purports to welcome and sustain evolving, dynamic, and immanent youth identities, culture, and possibilities into its pedagogical project.

Now, as I suggest this theory of learning as one that fits the decolonial project, and the theory of identity as assemblage I have posited, it is essential to note the evident tension between these two deeper theorizations. On one hand, I have suggested a way to conceptualize identity growing from Deleuzian post-structuralism, and now on the other hand, I propose an accompanying theory of learning that emerges from Marxist, Hegelian thought. A complete interrogation and exploration of this tension is well beyond the scope of this paper, but I will suggest that, following Houlgate (2006, 2007) and Watkins (2010), I believe that these tensions are less irreconcilable than first glance might suggest, namely because *immanence* is very much present, if complicated, in Hegelian thought and logic. Though indeed Hegel is concerned with historical development and necessity, factors that tend to invite standard logical analysis and static notions of constructs, it has been suggested that this necessity has a “retroactive” quality to it (Žižek, 2004; Deleuze, 1994), which marks reality as incomplete, and always looking towards possibility and the future, and the resulting constructs and theories are therefore contingent (Watkins, 2010). Considering this, by Deleuze and Guattari’s own measure - an awareness of irreconcilable contingency – Hegel’s thought meets the core standard for *immanence*. In short, I wish to suggest that the *immanence* of Hegel has clearly lived on in the *prolepsis* of CHAT, and may have found its fullest expression there. Prolepsis of course aligns meaningfully and productively with Deleuze and Guattari’s notions of *futurity* (as well as their own interest in *immanence*), and thus to be engaged in a process of insurgent relinking is to be engaged in the proleptic endeavor of behaving as a *nomad* or *war machine* (in Deleuze and Guattari’s terms),
focused on the immanence of existence, and creating the world anew, smashing static planes of organization, which can be simultaneously understood as engaging in prolepsis and expansive learning, creating new activity systems which might serve as points of departure for continued expansive learning, constantly seeking to explode stasis, and work in the immanence of history, and in the service of the decolonial task of insurgent relinking.

In the end, I believe that the tensions are in fact productive to the task of theorizing decolonial thinking and learning. The reality is that neither Hegelian/Marxist thought, in its focus on class, nor Deleuzian or post-structural thought more generally, in its calls to discard identity-politics and disrupt subjectivity altogether, have always made easy bedfellows with decolonial theory, in which racial, cultural, and ethnic identity, as well as a history of systematic marginalization along these lines, is of considerable significance. Indeed, rigidly dogmatic thought—demanding we subscribe to either Hegelian logic or Deleuzian poststructuralism, constructing them as irrevocably mutually exclusive—is a construct of Western (colonial) thinking, which has never been adequately attuned to the needs of the historically marginalized, particularly the marginalized of the global south. Simply, insisting on philosophical purity is itself a colonial demand in many respects, and in the absence of pure, unfiltered indigenous epistemic and ontological frameworks from which to work—which are, though available in some degrees, all filtered through centuries of colonial translation and alteration—we are left to create our own assemblages and planes of consistency, following rhizomatic lines of flight, and mapping out strategies through which to engage in the work of decolonization. With this in mind, courting the tension that may exist between Deleuze and Hegel may seen antithetical to those wedded to these dogmas, but from the position of the historically marginalized, living in contradiction—in a state of mestizaje—is a way of life. This contradictory blending becomes
itself a decolonial act, and a way forward the reflects the dynamic, evolutionary, hybrid character of identity, as well as the needs of the critical educative project, of decolonial education, and CSRP. Essentially, what I mean to suggest here is that assemblage and expansive learning living together is not perfect, but it is in keeping with the hybrid nature of the decolonial endeavor, their contradictions only encouraging a continual process of reflection and “inward gaze,” ensuring that our theorizations remain immanent, productive sites of tension and contradiction.

_Assemblage, Expansive Learning, and the Decolonial Educative Project_

Having _mapped_ out a conceptualization of both identity and learning for the decolonial educative project, what remains is to bring these meaningfully together, and consider how these conceptualizations might, as theory, inform CSRP and critical practice in classrooms and communities. To begin then, we might turn briefly back to the core roots of CSRP, and ask whether in accepting the fluidity, immanence, and contingency of assemblage and expansive learning – by questioning the terminology of _sustaining_ and _revitalizing_ and seeking to lay the groundwork for dynamic, future oriented growth – are we acquiescing to further colonization, and abandoning heritage practices altogether? Do assemblage and expansive learning untether us from meaningful planes of consistency that include heritage and traditional identities and practices, from sovereignty and solidarity, so much so that something will inevitably be lost, just as it was in culturally relevant pedagogy? Will practitioners falsely construct activity systems and assemblages for their students whose parameters only allow lines of flight that return them to the plane of organization prescribed by the White Gaze?

These are certainly legitimate concerns, yet I believe that theorizing identity and learning within the critical project as I have done here actually prevents such moves, for if thoughtfully communicated, it prepares practitioners to be guides – _nomads_ – who richly appreciate the
contingency, immanence, and historicity of identity and learning themselves, and empower and encourage youth to be active creators of their own assemblages. Guided by assemblage and expansive learning, the youth-subject of the decolonial project becomes one rich with possibility, a *war machines* who can break away from these tracings of colonial and historically anchored identities (identity in stasis), to follow new lines of flight and craft proleptic assemblages/identities that build from, but are not beholden to previous generations. Not only is this a way to challenge and change the present racial/ethnic political equilibrium (Omi & Winant, 1994), but it is a means to engage hopefully in the fundamental decolonial task – of contesting the “denial of coevalness” (Mignolo, 2003), bringing our work in pedagogy more closely in line with the work of both Spivak and Bhabha. No longer are practitioners or researchers constructing or speaking for some false, fixed subaltern, or asking the youth to do the same (Spivak, 1988). Rather, thinking in terms of assemblage and expansive learning encourages decolonization by empowering youth and practitioners to engage in their own processes of insurgent relinking, embracing the fluidity of their own identities, the rhizomatic nature of their influences, the immanence of history in their own experience, and the contingency of the activity systems they inhabit. Such a theorization for identity and learning across communities of color and in pedagogical spaces might permit what Deleuze and Guattari call the ‘determinitalization’ of space, of identity; resisting colonizing efforts – both external and internal to our communities – that striate and limit the futures and identities available for certain bodies, cementing planes of organization which reinforce divisions of difference across varied communities of color, such as the problematic tensions that have existed among Black and Latin@ communities (Telles, et al. 2011), which are undoubtedly colonial in nature themselves. With this in mind, these theorizations approach the challenge to cultivating cross-contextual fluency – the ability to
navigate gatekeeping points in a white-dominated society – in a more dynamic way. Rather than bemoaning the fact that Blackness/Latinidad/Chicanism@/etc. look drastically different for our you, we celebrate the variation, the futurity, and possibility in youth performances that appropriate, transform, and hybridize mainstream ways of being, popular culture, and history – the new lines of flight, and expansive directions for learning in which those might take us – contained in each subtly varied movement and performance.

**Nurturing Possibility: Engaging Practitioners in Proleptic Decolonization**

We began this discussion by considering the struggles Lora – a practitioner – faced while engaging in the critical educative project; how to sustain and revitalize heritage identities (such as Chican@), while also permitting space for youth to diverge meaningfully from such identities on their own terms. Even as I have suggested that critical education, and CSP more specifically, are in need of deeper, more robust theorization, the ends of this task relate to richly preparing practitioners to enact and carry out the work of liberatory education, and what it means in dispositional terms, to prepare decolonial educators. These tasks are of course one in the same (the purported ‘theory-practice divide’ itself being an expression of colonization that divorces oppressive ideologies from their practical expression⁸), but require unique and thoughtful consideration. With this in mind, it is crucial that the development and transmission of CSRP to novice practitioners like Lora, and of all critical and decolonial efforts in the present moment, are not only accompanied by explorations of CSRP in practice, but also by rich, robust examinations and theorizations of the ontological and teleological aspects of its existence. When we enact these pedagogies, what are our goals? What are our assumptions about knowledge, identity, and learning? Indeed losing sight of such theoretical questions, and providing only cursory answers,

⁸ For more on this obfuscation, including the way that ‘Broken Windows’ theories of policing operate in schools, see: Giroux, 2012a, 2012b; Harcourt, 2005; McCarthy & Dimitriadis, 2005; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003
in a flurry of practical developments promises only to diminish the integrity of CSRP, diluting its decolonial commitments, and obscuring its intentions for practitioners. Without the conceptual, as well as practical, tools to consider the complexity of identity and learning for historically marginalized youth, practitioners will remain beholden to fixed, welded assemblages and activity systems that exist in stasis, territorialized and re-territorialized (colonized and recolonized), planes of organization which are endlessly manipulated by the interests of the State, and the White Gaze. Such a prospect means that in another 20 years, we might be once again struggling for new momentum, reflecting with regret on the gradual appropriation of sustaining.

If we are to maintain the integrity of CSP as capturing something important in the endeavor of critical and decolonial education – not to limit it, but to ensure it remains uncorrupted and subsumed by the White Gaze and neoliberal ideologies that overwhelmed culturally relevant pedagogies – then we must ensure that its enactment and praxis follow from practitioners who have had opportunities to consider both the practical examples of the pedagogy, and the rich, robust theories of race, culture, identity, and learning that actively and generatively account for the immanence of the experiences and realities of historically marginalized youth. Essentially, I am suggesting we must be intentional in speaking openly with practitioners about these admittedly complicated questions of identity and learning theory, building this into our discussions and examinations of practice, and ensuring that cultivating robust understandings of deep theory is as valued and important as explicating discrete examples of strategies for engaging in CSRP. Such anchoring in the pragmatic is useful, but can also stymie ingenuity and imagination. Supporting historically marginalized youth and the ends of liberatory education in a rapidly changing world with many planes possible lines of flight and planes of consistency that might be created and re-created requires more than the stasis and
organization of sustenance. Rather, it demands *nourishment* (Maeda, 2014) – thoughtful attention, care, investment, and room for free, improvisational, rhizomatic growth. It is in these terms that we ought to approach our novice (and practicing) educators, adding *nurturing* to our emerging discourse as well – as a next step that better maintains the integrity of our teleological goals, and deepens the core theoretical underpinnings of the critical project of education. Yes, we must *revitalize* communities that have been assailed by colonization, systemic discrimination, and disenfranchisement. And indeed we need to *sustain* the meaningful, heritage practices that have emerged in communities of color and historically marginalized communities. But we must also *nurture* the improvisation, the variation, the immanent, and the proleptic within the identities and activity systems that arise in youth of color’s experiences – the new lines of flight and expansive directions of intellectual growth that are emerging in these communities.

Revitalization and sustenance provide fertile space for this process, but it is growth, the rhizomatic evolution of the post-colonial subject that must remain clearly centered in our pedagogical lens if our communities are to truly decolonize – for the term decolonizing itself, invoking self determination and freedom, begs us to look forward, beyond coloniality, respecting, but not shackled to, a pre-conquista past that is itself murky with colonial myth and influence.

Considering that practitioners are themselves meeting and leading our youth shaped by their own baggage of identity and engagement in colonial activity systems of learning, framing this work as *nurturing*, I believe, captures the ideas and interests of *sustaining* and *revitalizing*, but more concretely invites prolepsis into a conversation in which that future-oriented vision is easily lost in the pragmatism of *sustaining*. *Nurturing*, moreover, invokes the offering of support, or sustenance, of hope and imagination, but lacks a fixed telos, engaging a more pertinent
implied question; rather than ‘What is it we are seeking to sustain?’ we might ask, ‘What is it I must nurture?’ We nurture growth, just as we sustain or revitalize it, but the impetus of the verb itself changes. The expertise of the nurturer is valued, but the telos of the project is always reliant upon the subject’s self-determination – our outcome necessarily splits away from external determination, leaving room for potentialities which might be rhizomatic, proleptic, and decolonial, surpassing and exceeding the expertise, direction, and experience of the nurturer, constructing something reflective of an immanent, liberatory reality, imagined by the subject who is nurtured, and not shackled to the same, still-colonized constructions of identity, planes of organization, that we as educators have, and do, labor under.

When practitioners take up the critical and decolonial project in education, they must do so understanding, embodying, and communicating, identity and learning as something richly conceived and unassailable by practical assaults from the White Gaze. In this way, liberatory education remains proleptic, something to be nurtured, just as urgently as heritage practices are validated, sustained, and revitalized. Though perhaps a challenging message to communicate, the pragmatic benefits of producing practitioners who recognize the richness of their vision, who understand themselves as nomads and war machines, prepared to rise to the concrete, taking up pedagogy in improvisational, dynamic, and immanent ways to guide youth towards new lines of flight, are immense. In that potential lies the promise of decolonial education, of a project in which youth and educator remake the world in new ways, actively living out a liberatory process of insurgent relinking.
Works Cited: Manuscript A


Manuscript B

Editorial Notes: Manuscript B

As with Manuscript A, this piece is a bit long, and could likely be split as well. There’s a natural break between the theory-building sections that dive into the various literatures, and the examination of the teatro exemplar of culturally sustaining/decolonial practice based teacher education. Additionally, while the discussion engages both practice-based teacher education, and pedagogical rehearsal as an example of that, that argument itself could be split, with the interrogation of pedagogical rehearsal and argument for teatro as rehearsal being separate from the broader critique and push on the ideologies of practice-based teacher education in the context of decolonial/poststructural theory and a culturally sustaining paradigm. Moreover, tightening is also a possibility, as the paper is a bit explication-heavy, and early sections on decolonial/poststructural theory could be woven throughout, both shortening the work, and linking the theory more concretely to the purposes of the paper.

Moreover, I have several other teatro cases that could have worked for this, and together could be their own piece, or perhaps should themselves be drawn out individually. Perhaps the most interesting one, which I did not include, largely because I plan to more purposefully design for its replication this coming summer, was a teatro activity in which both youth and teachers were making sense of what they want from instructors, and peers, in the context of classroom oppressions and challenges. If this piece were split, and potentially paired with an examination of that case/ecology, it might live better as two distinct articles.

Additionally, as this manuscript engages heavily with existing literature, and tries to offer several new ideas into that conversation, I am hopeful that my writing does not a) overstate the novelty of ideas, or b) come off as dismissive of the merits of other bodies of literature. While I did my best to be true to what previous scholar’s work, I think there is always a danger of essentializing, and I want to make sure that this does not read as denigrating previous work, or attacking strawman arguments, as that would undermine the legitimate criticisms and points I am trying to introduce. My writing voice has a tendency to become a bit overblown (i.e. snarky). Thoughts on this will be appreciated.

Finally, I struggled a bit to clarify for a broader teacher education audience what I meant by affect, and further, what I meant by practice (as differentiated from a pedagogical strategy), in the context of discussion on ‘practice-based’ teacher education pedagogy. In short, there are lots of definitions floating around, and the paper hinges on these terms being understood, and I look forward to the reader’s feedback on whether this emerged clearly in my writing.

Prospective journal for submission: Pedagogies
In recent years, a growing conversation in teacher education has focused on exploring Practice-Based approaches to preparing novice educators. These approaches have focused extensively on detailing the complex, intricate work involved in good teaching, and creating grounded learning environments that rigorously prepare novice educators to be in positions to close the academic achievement gaps among historically marginalized youth that neoliberal critics all too frequently note (Ball & Forzani, 2009; National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2010; Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009; Ball & Cohen, 1999). At the same time, another conversation has recently emerged in response to neoliberal policies that have led to the erosion of understandings and applications of culturally responsive or relevant pedagogy, such that ‘relevant’ has become a buzz word, representing little more than a suggestion for the representations of people and authors of color in curricula (Paris, 2012). This vein of scholarship makes the argument that achievement or opportunity gaps among historically marginalize youth are more accurately understood as resulting from pedagogy and teaching that offers little more than relevance, and instead, these gaps should be addressed through pedagogies which strive to be culturally sustaining, and revitalizing (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014; McCarty & Lee, 2014). Interestingly, these two conversations have remained quite disparate and have yet to meet in earnest.

The result is problematic. For practice-based teacher education, this has meant that the practices and orientations these teacher-educators have taken up have remained vague (if not silent), in their relationship to engaging in the preparation of culturally sustaining educators. Certainly, the ubiquitous goals of attending to ‘diversity’ and ‘equity’ have been raised in this literature, and practice-based teacher education is often linked to culturally responsive outcomes (e.g. Ladson-Billings, 1995; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Gay, 2002), but they have stopped short of
the *sustaining* bar that Paris and others have set out. As such, practice-based approaches, though generative and revolutionary in some respects, remain in stasis in their relation to historically marginalized communities, and continue to divorce the work of teaching from the *affects* present in underserved schools and classrooms. At the same time, scholars working in the field of culturally sustaining pedagogy have done little to examine practice and preparation, and it remains unclear what is involved in the *cultivation* of educators who will be prepared to engage in culturally *sustaining* work. While promising and conceptually generative, if culturally sustaining and revitalizing pedagogies are our desired outcomes, we need to richly consider how we go about cultivating these ideas into practical dispositions and pedagogical identities. Indeed, lest this paradigm be subsumed and eroded over time just as cultural responsiveness was, it is vital to explore the process of becoming around culturally sustaining dispositions in novice educators.

With this terrain in mind, the aim of this paper is to interrogate what a practice-based, decolonizing, culturally sustaining framework and pedagogy for teacher education might look like. This involves deeply interrogating the current practice-based literature, particularly around the notable absence of attention to poststructural and decolonial lenses and discourses within it, and then exploring how those lenses might act as alternative frameworks for a new approach to practice-based pedagogy. To this end, I hope to accomplish three things here, a) first, to establish a poststructural and decolonial framework with which to engage practice-based teacher education and pedagogical rehearsal, b) second, to employ this framework to engage practice-based scholarship in conversation, drawing out important elements and pushing on points of underdevelopment, and c) third, to offer an exemplar of practice-based teacher education
pedagogy which might point towards what a decolonial, culturally sustaining, practice-based cultivation of novice educators might look like.

**Affect, and the Colonial Geography of Classrooms**

The intention of shifting from culturally relevant to culturally sustaining pedagogy was meant not just a discursive update, but also a significant paradigm shift. The move to sustaining or revitalizing is ideological as well, ensuring the recognition that historically marginalized youth need far more than relevance; they need a new approach to their subjectivity and agency. Interpreting this approach through poststructural and decolonial lenses, we might understand the extra dimensions that make pedagogy sustaining as affective ones, exceeding the purely academic, recognizing the psychological, emotional, and immanent dimensions of subjectivity – how affect, not just knowledge, shape identity and coevalness. With this in mind, it makes sense to begin by establishing some definitions of key terms within the poststructural and decolonial fields, so as to leverage them later. An obvious place to begin, then, is with affect, a widely used construct in social science, philosophy, and education for several decades, and has been constructed in considerably different ways, for different purposes, by different authors. It has variously been equated with emotion (e.g. Boler, 1997), and argued to be quite distinct from it (Massumi, 2002). For our purposes here, I wish to build on these conversations, particularly following Deleuze and Guattari (2011) and Massumi (2002) to suggest that an affect is “a pre-personal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another implying an augmentation or diminution in that body’s capacity to act.” (Massumi, 2011, xvi) In other terms, affects are immanent forces of becoming that shape and alter the experiences and agency - both personal/internal, social/external – of every subject present in a given cultural context. Rather unlike emotion, which is the individual, cognitive experience of naming an
experience or reaction to an affect within the fixed definitions of a socio-political plane of organization, affects are autonomous, following dynamic lines of flight (Deleuze & Guattari, 2011) – various interests, influences, desires, beliefs, commitments, communities – and impacting disparate individuals in disparate ways, while existing beyond any one, localized, individual subject (Massumi, 2002). Though autonomous, these variations in affective impact have consequential political effect, shaping how subjectivity is given and withheld (Semestsky, 2003; Grossberg, 1988). These disparate impacts and felt intensities produce affective economies (Ahmed, 2004), which in turn shape socio-political relations by circulating power and agency, variously acknowledging and silencing different sensations and reactions to affects; the national mourning in the face of a tragic accident in affluent communities, the media silence and dismissal as youth of color and communities face the pain of extrajudicial killing. Like Foucauldian discourse, these unexamined affective economies operate in ways that maintain stasis, replicating their own tracings and planes of organization (Deleuze & Guattari, 2011). The plane of organization monitors, controls what relations, subjectivities, social structures, and sensations are permissible and recognizable, the tracing, habitual logic and practice reinforcing this organization, and constraining who we can be, what we can feel, and how we might name affective experiences. These tracings in turn produce the affective geography in which we live and operate (McCormack, 2003; Watkins, 2011), the terrain, the plane of organization, which the flows of agency and power in affective economies delineate. Within these geographies, affects – the immanent, irreducible, and unrecognizable forces that impact bodies and subjectivities – can begin to operate as technologies (Leonardo & Zembylas, 2013), leveraged to mechanically produce, through pressure on certain bodies, subjectivities, and sensations, ontological borders with an affective geography. Distance grows between privileged subject positions and bodies,
and those on the wrong side of las fronteras, who become abject (Kristeva, 1982), profoundly marginalized and devoid of any recognizable personhood or sensation.

In the post-colonial world, for historically marginalized and people of color, I wish to argue that the affective economy most predominantly at work is one driven by a colonial affect – an immanent force that lingers from the first European contact and domination of peoples of the global south – circulating power away from brown and black bodies, and tracing an affective geography that locates historically marginalized, people of color as abject. As I have indicated, what I am discussing here is not mere political subjugation or interpellation (though affect is certainly present in those processes) (Althusser, 1971). Rather, the affective geography of coloniality is far more ubiquitous, extensive, and of course, immanent and autonomous. The traumatic affects I locate in this geography are not relics of the past, but very real forces still ensuring that the colonized lack in coevalness (Mignolo, 2003) in and beyond political or social planes. Sensation, and our reaction – both discursive and experiential – to that sensation are curtailed. The affect of coloniality creates heridas abiertas (Anzaldúa, 1989), the open, ontological, soul wounds (Pizzaro, 2006) of previous generations that youth may have (as a result of colonial education) little knowledge of or connection to. It is an affective geography littered with both physical and psychic borders, the sensation, naming, and reaction to which – in both discursive and experiential terms – is curtailed by affective technologies that maintain the stasis, the planes of organization of the extant, colonial affective economy. When encountered, these affects-as-borders exacerbate the wounds, las heridas, bringing coloniality to life in new and profound ways. In the face of systemic racism and micro-aggression, the colonized body becomes frustrated, angry, experiencing what are identified, wrongly, as individual, personal emotions; yet these intensities belong to an affect, existing beyond any one singularity, but only
affecting the colonized. Unless they choose to, the colonizer (or they in position of colonizer) need not experience the intensity of the affect, positioned to dismiss it as emotion, as individual, a singular incident of personal failing. So what does this have to do with schools and teacher education?

What this means for our discussion here is that schools, the classroom – these too are affective geographies – spaces in which affects constantly impact students and educators in rhizomatic ways, prescribing interactions, and shaping subjectivities and sensation (Mulcahy, 2012). More specifically, the affects predominantly at work in schools serving historically marginalized and youth of color – the affective economies they exist in – are colonial in nature and origin. While engaging in a full elaboration on the evidence for this claim would be beyond the scope of this paper, we have extensive documentation of the ways that for historically marginalized youth, their experience and struggles in school go well beyond the academic, social, or political; they are challenges of emotion, sensation, and experience (Camangian, 2010; Duncan-Andrade, 2009; Valenzuela, 1999; Pizarro, 2006). Moreover, we have further evidence that *heridas abiertas* persist as the effects of affects, which bridge the mind-body dichotomy (Watkins, 2006), manifesting as persistent traumatic stress disorders and weathering on the physical, mental, and emotional health and development of historically marginalized youth in this abject state (Geronimus et al. 2006; Kliwer, 2006; Selner-O’Hagan, et al. 1998; Kliwer et al. 2008; Carrion et al. 2002; Dempsey et al. 2000). Indeed, the recent events across the nation in which youth of color have been killed in extrajudicial circumstances – and the dismissive reactions to these from those in power – is testament to an affective economy and geography of coloniality in which the subjectivities and sensations of the historically marginalized, the affects they encounter, are rendered abject.
Following from this, if our youth operate in schools that are the product of colonial, affective economies, then their classrooms, as affective micro-geographies, will mirror the affective economy and landscape of their broader context – one in which the personhood and sensation, the very existence and experience of youth of color is excluded, marginalized, rendered invisible, abject. Linking this back to the idea of decolonization, and the reclaiming of coevalness by historically marginalized youth and communities, Bhabha (1994) tells us that at the heart of colonization is not individual actions or identities, but an affective dimension, a terrain marked by ontological distance, barriers, borders: “It is not the colonialist self or the colonized Other, but the disturbing distance in-between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness,” (p. 45). In such a affective economy, what is needed from teachers is not just recognition and awareness of social inequity, not just attention to funds of knowledge, but a witnessing (Dutro & Bien, 2013; Zembylas, 2006) of affect that redeems the coevalness the colonized Other by inviting the discomfort and destabilization of one’s own location within an affective economy. It is something immanent, felt, and transformative, as Zembylas (2006) explains:

The victims of trauma and oppression are not merely seeking recognition, but they are also seeking witnesses to horrors that are beyond recognition. Witnessing is a practice that reconceives the Other as a subject, and thus requires a more radical opening up to difference than mere (mis)recognition allows. (p. 313)

With this in mind, the call for culturally sustaining pedagogies – and the consideration of the affective dimension and complexity they invite – is a profound one, and should be recognized as going beyond just textual and assignment choices, but as a call for pedagogies that more effectively respond to and productively engage with the affects that historically marginalized youth experience; it is a call to close the ontological distances of colonization. Improving the academic success of youth, sustaining and nourishing their complex, evolving assemblages of
identity towards positive schooling outcomes, is an affective task, requiring teachers to themselves leverage unique and novel tools which might operate in ways that deterritorialize the stagnant, colonial affective geographies of classrooms; in other terms, rupturing and disrupting the stasis of practices and routines that have become limiting, unimaginative tracings and planes of organization which produce consistent, problematic outcomes. Deleuze and Guattari (2011) describe the individuals who are capable of engaging in such dynamic, deterritorialization as nomads and war machines, individuals who are not beholden to that stagnation of planes of organization, but prepared with the imaginative power to close the distances between colonized and colonizer, pursuing dynamic, meaningful lines of flight. Such individuals can operate as schizoanalytic cartographers (Guattari, 1995, 2000) who can map out new geographies to provide, “the existential and the social grounds in which affect becomes thinkable” (Walkerdine, 2013), and the decolonial practical. This brings us, then, to the idea of practice-based teacher education, an approach rich in possibility, but lacking in affective engagement.

**On the Limitations of Practice-based Teacher Education**

Recent conversation around practice-based teacher education is becoming more significant, transforming conversations, approaches, and pedagogies of teacher education. The roots of the practice-based movement lie in the contested terrain of teacher education, in which the efficacy and effectiveness of university based teacher education programs (UBTEs) has come under intense scrutiny (Frazer, 2007). In the last two decades, UBTEs have been questioned by critical friends concerned over the changing demands of teaching in an increasingly diverse world (Darling-Hammond, 2010, 2002; DeShando da Silva et al., 2007; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Banks, 2001; Irvine, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2001, 2000, 1999), and assailed by neoliberal critics skeptical of the pragmatic impact that constructivist, social justice visions and
beliefs on teaching and learning might actually have on achievement gaps (Podgursky, 2004; Hess, 2009; Walsh, 2007; Walsh & Jacobs, 2007; Lemov, 2010). In response to these criticisms, practice-based teacher education emerged as a way to foreground the urgency of preparation, the complexity of teaching, and respond to the legitimate concern that, “After admission, too many UBTEs do not provide teachers with a rigorous, clinical experience that prepares them for the schools in which they will work” (Duncan, 5). The core premise of practice-based teacher education is that teaching is complex, intricate, and unnatural work (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Lampert, 2010; Ball & Cohen, 1999), and thus effective preparation requires that novice educators are able to appreciate and see this complexity and how it lives in discrete practices, and engage in “approximations” of these practices (Grossman, et al., 2009). The goal, ultimately, is for novices to deploy “knowledge in action,” (Ball & Forzani, 2009, Cook & Brown, 1999; Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009; Lampert, 2010; Zeichner, 2012), or the actual implementation of core, high leverage practices (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Windshitl, Thompson, Braaten, & Stroupe, 2012) that flow from what is intended to be a robust vision of culturally relevant, student centered pedagogy that UBTEs maintain. This pedagogical vision, with a clearly articulated interest across the literature in student-centered learning (Forzani, 2013), reflects, according to Lampert et al (2013), the goal of, “preparing novices to engage in “intellectually ambitious instruction.” To this end, there has been considerable and diligent work to delineate and establish what the core, high-leverage practices of teaching that might achieve such “intellectually” ambitious ends are generally, and within disciplines (e.g., Ball, et al., 2009; Ghousseni & Sleep, 2011; Grossman, 2005; Korthagen, 2001; Lampert et al. 2010; Kazemi, Lampert, & Ghousseni, 2007; Sleep, Boerst, & Ball, 2007) and led to the emergence of two UBTEs that explicitly focus on practice-based teacher education (i.e. Teaching Works at the
University of Michigan and the centers at the University of Washington). The logic of these efforts is, as Windshitl et al. (2012) suggest, that articulating a “core” of clearly defined teaching practices can, “serve as a strong teaching foundation, which novices could continually build upon and refine during their careers”; at the same time, a “principled focus on practice” would represent, “an important opportunity for the teacher education community, one that is both responsive to current policy pressures around accountability and one that allows a leadership role in reforming preparation,” (p. 880). This is an important point, as the flexible use of these core practices, rather than seeing them as static and mechanistic, is central to the framework of the practice-based literature. Indeed, there is an explicit interest in locating these practices, and the pedagogical identities that their implementation and use might produce, in a socio-cultural context, as skills, dispositions, and identities as educators that are cultivated in robust communities of learners (Lampert et al. 2013). Moreover, this conversation, like nearly all taking place in education at the moment, orients itself to the challenge of addressing ‘achievement’ or ‘opportunity’ gaps in teaching and learning (Matsko & Hammerness, 2013; McDonald, Kazemi, & Kavanagh, 2013). The practice-based argument in this regard is that, if novice teachers are equipped with a substantial repertoire of high leverage practices and the ability to flexibly implement them across contexts, these educators will be engaged, through action, in equitable, social justice work, as McDonald, Kazemi, and Kavanagh (2013) explain:

> By raising the quality of disciplinary teaching, a central goal of this work is to improve the learning opportunities available to students of color, low-income students, and English language learners. The aim is to address the persistent inequities that overwhelmingly limit those students’ opportunities to learn. (p. 378)

In many ways, the move described here, towards practice-based teacher education as a more equitable practice, is significant, important, and profound. It is an effort to – in the face of stasis and stagnation – smash the planes of organization, the failure of UBTE’s to evolve their
pedagogy and preparation for changing circumstances and a changing demographic world (Darling-Hammond, 2010, 2006; MacDonald & Zeichner, 2009). At the same time, there is something troubling in the *line of flight* – the driving ideological motivation – they have followed to do this.

As we survey the discursive moves with which practice-based approaches address questions of improving performance to attend to diversity and inequity – striving for high leverage practices, quality disciplinary teaching, intellectually ambitious instruction – what we see is an clear arc towards the rational, the intellectual, the pragmatic. This is not to say that historically marginalized communities do not need intellectually ambitious practices. Rather, when considering classrooms as both academic and affective spaces, the issue is that they need *more* than *intellectual* ambition, something rendered impossible when, as St. Pierre (2004) suggests, a compromise has occurred that locates oneself in the positivistic, rational world of the neoliberal and colonial affective economies that themselves produced these conditions. Put another way, in the same moment as a conversation exists on what a culturally sustaining pedagogy and praxis might look like, why is a potentially generative movement to smash one stasis within teacher education following a line of flight that leads to capitulation to a new, but still colonized, plane of organization, dominated by a White Gaze (Morrison, 1998) and colonial affective technologies?

What I mean to call attention to in asking this question is that in the present literature, even the most robust practice-based approaches that do seek to remain culturally relevant and student-centered, have a concerning discursive *telos*, or object, at their core. By this I mean that thus far, by foregrounding a discourse of “high-leverage practices” and “intellectually ambitious” instruction, practice-based approaches, regardless of their intentions, have anchored themselves
to a ideological stance, whether intentional or not, that is, “centered implicitly or explicitly around the question of how to get working-class students of color to speak and write more like middle-class White ones” (Paris & Alim, 2014). In the context of teacher education, what this means is that with this object, preparation, and the identities of the novices produced, become inextricably linked to the existing, problematic, neoliberal nomos of schooling. Novices will see their pedagogical selves as entrepreneurs, rather than civic agents (Mirra & Morrell, 2011), or, as we might hope with a different sort of ambition, decolonial actors. Such an intellectual focus, even if culturally ‘relevant’ at best, necessarily exacerbates the distinct ontological distance between the subject and the Other, the colonizer and the colonized, precluding meaningful engagement with the affective geographies of classrooms, ensuring the perpetuation of “colonial otherness” (Bhabha, 1994), and which, ironically, simplifies and devalues the work of teaching, stripping it of its true richness and complexity, and precludes pedagogy from reaching the bar for sustaining praxis. Essentially, in seeking to bolster the complexity of the work of teaching and teacher education, the current conversation has made the compromise of assenting to an object of schooling – rigorous academic achievement by neoliberal definition – that in turn divorces the work of teacher preparation, and thus of teaching, from the affective geographies of classrooms. In bending towards this position, what has happened has been the sterilization of social justice within practice-based teacher education, and a move to no longer concern themselves with shaping the affective subjectivities of novices, of being deeply concerned with who these people are that we are placing in classrooms, instead busying themselves with what they can do. This amounts to a terrifyingly limited discursive relationship to race, culture, and, as the position of culturally sustaining pedagogy maintains, is not a sufficiently forward-looking stance to make any meaningful progress towards equity or social justice.
Now, the counterargument to this critique is that if the high-leverage, core practices and dispositions those educators carry, honed in effective cycles of pedagogical rehearsal, are effective enough, than opportunity gaps will fall and historically marginalized youth will be better served. Indeed, Ball and Forzani (2009) seek to include “students’ personal development and preparation for participation in a diverse democratic society,” (p. 503) into their version of ambition, aiming to get at “all sorts of students” (Lampert & Graziani, 2009), but the object of learning for this racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse group of students never changes from one oriented towards academic rigor. Yet as Forzani (2013) herself notes, the object of teaching and learning that is constructed matters quite a bit to the outcome, and so long as the discourse employed in practice-based teacher education privileges the rational, positivistic, masculine object of learning defined by “intellectual” ambition and disciplinary rigor (Britzman, 2009; Walkerdine, 1988, 1989; St. Pierre, 2004), then this cursory attention to ‘personal development’ and ‘diverse society’ are woefully insufficient. Indeed, in such a shallow paradigm of diversity and social justice, the affective dimensions of classrooms and youth experience will be neglected at best, and rendered invisible at worst. To anchor this in an example, let us take for instance the work of Matsko and Hammerness (2013), who are somewhat alone in producing practice-based teacher education work that is directly and explicitly oriented towards the preparation of teachers for ‘urban,’ historically marginalized communities (though this pressing demand is noted in most of the literature). Matsko and Hammerness begin conscious of the importance of cultural awareness, and concerned with enriching generic (Haberman, 1996) approaches to practice-based teacher education that might neglect understandings of the social foundations and produce generic practices that produce a “pedagogy of poverty” (Haberman, 1991). From there, they describe a practice-based pedagogy that seeks to link robust, contextual knowledge around the
multiple layers of urban socio-political circumstances, with contextually aware rehearsal practices and field experiences. Yet while the intent of this work and desire for shifting novice’s understandings of their classrooms is appreciated, the extent of development leaves much to be desired; it never shifts to a paradigm beyond relevance. In the trajectories of learning that are documented, participants engagement with all this contextual work brought them to a point where they appreciated that more nuanced ways to understand historically marginalized exist, and they could willingly entertain these, and bring them to bear in their analyses of praxis. There is, however, little evidence that these novices themselves, or their fundamental understanding of what teaching, learning, and schooling mean to the colonized, were destabilized by the work; no evidence that they were poised and prepared for the anxiety that follows being witnesses to the reality of the affective economy of colonization. Effectively, engagement in these practices, even when oriented towards urban communities, was done from a safe ontological distance, maintaining an object of learning that was responsive, but not decolonial, and a vision of their own practitioner identity and work as separate from the affects of schooling that exists for youth of color. What this amounts to is the exercise of White Innocence (Gotanda, 2004; Gutierrez, 2006), and the establishment of White intellectual alibis – affective mechanisms that produce the illusion of safety for the practitioner who can praise themselves for their critical awareness, but continue to act in ways oriented towards the problematic nomos of schooling that dis-identifies White subjectivity from that of the historically marginalized Other – as Leonardo and Zembylas (2013) explain:

White intellectual alibis are established when an anti-racist white educator accounts for his discursive whereabouts. “I am here,” he says. This creation of an alibi or accounting for the white self serves an emotional function. It allows white subjects to establish stability in the face of destabilizing situations, such as critical race dialogue. (p. 156)
In other terms, there is a significant difference between intellectually appreciating the complexity of the *nomos* and the socio-political complexity of classrooms, and engaging in the destabilizing, uncomfortable work of *witnessing* and *deterritorializing* the affective geographies and economies of under-served classrooms through ones’ praxis. In a national context in which youth of color are desperately in need of radical, culturally sustaining, and culturally nourishing opportunities for learning, the former is not at all sufficient, and preparation efforts that only go this far – failing to wade into the tricky work of engaging novice’s in the destabilizing, uncomfortable task of witnessing the affective geographies of their classrooms – remain lacking, and, ironically for practice-based teacher education, ultimately result in a simplification of the work of teaching.

Emerging from this stance anchored in “intellectual ambition,” practice will orient itself to an object of learning that is the (supposedly) clean and sterile product of a White Gaze, beholden to constructions of academic success as they appear on standardized tests. The teachers who will be produced will be excellent at flexibly implementing their delineated core strategies across contexts, but will do so while maintaining a safe, ontological distance from the anxiety and discomfort of witnessing the colonial affective geography of their classrooms – the work youth of color really need. Moments when this affective barrier is ruptured will be silenced, and youth voices will be heard only so long as they operate within the boundaries of the tracings of the *nomos*, the academic, middle class, white ways of being that dominate schooling. Educators will be empowered to care without caring (Matias & Zembylas, 2014), never having to destabilize their own subjectivities, or experience the anxiety that comes from acting as witness to the affective realities and sensations of their students. Youth willing to engage in *mimicry* (Bhabha, 1984) will excel, and youth who resist this White Gaze will falter, as they long have
(Ogbu & Simons, 1998; Tatum, 1997; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986), dismissed as pathological. Opportunity gaps will persist, and regardless of how effective practice-based preparation is to improving the implementation of high-leverage practices, nothing will change, for the distance between colonizer and colonized that perpetuates colonial otherness will remain intact; a affective, colonial plane of organization in stasis.

This sounds, of course, pessimistic, but need not be. The issue, I suggest is that implementation was never the core problem; it has always been the object of schooling, which necessarily shapes and defines the practices that are to be implemented. So long as this object does not change, and we persist in working with better-implemented versions of old practices, neither will the outcomes of schooling for historically marginalized youth. What this entails is not disregarding the idea of practice-based approaches altogether, but rather reframing what we are placing at the center of our efforts, the Discourse and ideology, the line of flight that we follow in pursuing such approaches. With this in mind, I will turn to a key aspect of practice-based teacher education – rehearsal – to examine how practice-based teacher education might reorient itself to become a war machine, finding a new line of flight to follow, and preparing teachers as schizoanalytic cartographers ready to witness the affective geographies of their classrooms, and together with students, craft new, culturally sustaining maps.

*Practice and Rehearsal as Affective Technology*

A key aspect of pedagogy present across the varied approaches and conceptualizations of practice-based teacher education is the idea of pedagogical rehearsal. While not completely novel, this conceptualization in the practice-based literature builds from Grossman et al.’s (2009) examination of other professional fields that employ practice-based approaches to novice development, and their patterns of engaging in representations, decompositions, and
approximations of practice. Grossman et al. (2009) suggest this last aspect, approximations of practice, to be a promising tool with which we might enrich practice-based teacher education efforts, explaining that, “approximations are designed to focus students’ attention on key aspects of the practice that may be difficult for novices but almost second nature to more experienced practitioners,” (p. 2078). In this regard, approximating practice becomes rehearsal – opportunities to try out the enactment of the core practices of teaching that have been learned, while dynamically incorporating the lessons gleaned from seeing and representations and decompositions of practices, and receiving feedback on what is and is not working. Lampert et al, (2013) describe this process of rehearsal as:

> Deliberate practice in the company of others (peers, more experienced teachers, and TE) [which] helps the learner develop an organized system for knowing when, why, and how aspects of their competency are relevant to any particular situation. This organized system becomes the conceptual framework that guides adaptation and innovation in situations of uncertainty. (p. 228)

This construction of a generative community of learners, working towards developing meaningful, dynamic practice has proven to be incredibly generative. Numerous practitioners have explored and engaged this strategy in various forms to cultivate the skills and teaching actions that constitute rigorous, high leverage teaching across a variety of disciplines (Matsko & Hammerness, 2013; Lampert et al, 2013; Lampert & Graziani, 2009). Significantly as well, there has been recognition of the identity aspect involved in rehearsal, as Lampert et al. (2013) note that the public, community of learners setting in which rehearsal might happen is an opportunity for novices to “try on” aspects of a “particular kind of practitioner” identity, ultimately “building novices’ commitment to teach ambitiously.” In the context of a focus on teacher becoming and the development of pedagogical identity, this is a significant move, inviting in rich conceptions of intersubjectivity and collaboration as central to the process of becoming a teacher (Matusov, 1998; Rogoff, 1990; Rommetveit, 1979). This being said, a lingering question here, with
important implications on the direction of development this intersubjectivity takes, however, is what is meant by “teach ambitiously”? This becomes clear as the ideal practitioner identity that rehearsal might foster within the extant practice-based paradigm is articulated:

Through the conversational routines that structured rehearsals, the assumption that they would maintain high expectations of all students and enact practices that accomplish high-level academic learning goals was “normalized” (Lampert, et al. 2013, p. 240)

This description of the telos, the definition, of “ambitious” teaching practice here – as implying high-level academic instruction – is consistent across the literature. The generative cycles of performance, feedback, amended performance, etc. within a community of learners all take for their object the enactment of high leverage practices – whether in math, science, language arts – that are strictly academic and intellectual in nature. The identities and practices being “tried on” may be dynamic and flexible, but reflect a rationalist, positivistic, purely academic, intellectual orientation to the work of teaching. While it should be readily acknowledged that such academic instruction is indeed a complex, challenging, and ambitious task for novices to take on, and I am not suggesting we aim for low academic rigor, the work of teaching, particularly teaching historically marginalized youth, is incredibly more complex and intricate than just maintaining high expectations, or accomplishing high-level academic learning goals. However, by positioning them as such – presumably in response to neoliberal demands for teachers who fit this definition of ambitious and can produce schooling results that meet their standard of proficient, pedagogical rehearsal serves only to become an affective technology, a mechanistic focus on deployable actions and strategies that obscures involvement of the affective complexity of what it means to teach, and to be with others in the affective geography of a classroom. Through their machinations, these rehearsals, while ostensibly crafting dynamic skillsets, simultaneously serve to reinforce static constructions of what counts as academic success, increasing ontological distance between teacher and student, colonizer and colonized. By
defining ambitious teaching only in terms of its academic outputs, this process utterly divorces engagement and witnessing of the affective geographies novices will find in real classrooms from the work of teaching. As such, we may arrive at better, more efficient pedagogy by academic measures, reversing the aforementioned “pedagogy of poverty” (Haberman, 1991) that is often present in urban and underserved schools, but if un-interrogated, this intellectually ambitious instruction, responsive or not, is merely replaced by something potentially worse; in a sense, it devalues what is meant by a practice – a richly conceived, theoretically informed approach to instruction or learning – rendering it shallow, a discrete strategy for efficient academic results as practice. Such a move maintains a fundamentally assimilationist object of learning, and dominant, colonial definitions of academic success in teaching praxis are reinforced, and novices encouraged to dis-identify (Leonardo & Zembylas, 2013) with youth whose lives, behaviors, and affective experiences that do not conform or orient themselves towards the same “high-level” academic goals. Teaching for social justice becomes an act of assimilation, or ‘saving’ youth from pathological communities and cultures, and the exercise of a pedagogy of resentment (McCarthy & Dimitriadis, 2005) that might be effective, but demands mimicry to a White Gaze, or abjection.

Essentially, approximations of practice, pedagogical rehearsals, need to do more than simply provide a forum for perfecting implementation of high-level academic content delivery; they need to engage with practice in all its dimensions. As discussed, implementation of pedagogical strategies alone is not the issue; the same strategy can form part of two different teacher’s practices with drastically different results. Rather, the core of this dilemma is that the discourse and object of learning that produce the practices matters. No matter how clearly delineated and elaborated upon, or high leverage, practices that orient towards exclusively
academic objects of learning are suspect, and insufficient. Historically marginalized youth need cultural sustenance and nourishment, and regardless of how well and dynamically the extant practices of teaching have been rehearsed, they are artifacts of a White Gaze, and will ultimately fail to meet the needs of historically marginalized youth who require much more from education that high-level academics to close the opportunity gaps they face. In other terms, the practices that are needed in historically marginalized communities must include attention to the affective economies of colonization, and how affects live in the geography of the classroom, impacting student lives, learning outcomes, engagement with content, the relational work of teaching, and the identity of the teacher herself. With this in mind, the reality is that the practices our practice-based efforts should be based on (thinking of ‘practices’ broadly, not just as discrete strategies, but as enacted, theoretically informed dispositions that incorporate both strategy and the belief that guides them), do not yet necessarily exist.

I raise these critiques not to dismiss pedagogical rehearsal. Rather, what is needed is a different, decolonial, construction of ambitious practice-based pedagogy that places deterritorialization of the affective economy of colonization and cultural nourishment just as centrally to its object of learning as it does academic development, for these two things, while often viewed dichotomous, are inextricably related. Teacher education should indeed be focused on knowledge in action, it is just that for historically marginalized youth, that needs to be a profoundly and fundamentally different knowledge, one that is decolonial, and from a different paradigm than the present, culturally relevant one. From this position, practice-based preparation and pedagogical rehearsal could become not a technology of abjection, but one of prolepsis and schizoanalytic cartography, mapping the future and the new, culturally sustaining practices that our youth deserve. This is my intent here, and in the sections that remain, I will explore what a
A decolonial approach to pedagogical rehearsal and practice-based teacher education pedagogy might look like, offering a vignette of practice which followed a profoundly different line of flight, and constructed a substantively different definition of what ambitious teaching should entail.

**The Pedagogical Imaginary as a Decolonial Practice-based Pedagogy**

Despite the discursive and ideological concerns I have outlined, the impulse of practice-based approaches to break up the stasis of teacher education is generative, and in line with poststructural work, conscious of affect, that advocates for the practice of *embodied* pedagogy (Davies, 2000; Dixon & Senior, 2011; Ellsworth, 2005; St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000), linking the enactment of practices to the affective relationships that occur in between teacher and student in classroom space. Achieving this however requires we embrace uncertainty, and, as St. Pierre (2004) notes, set off in search of, “new concepts in order to think and live education differently,” (p. 285). More directly, two moves are required to achieve this in regards to practice-based pedagogy. First, the rejection of high-level academic achievement – defined in neoliberal terms – as the sole object of learning, and second, a discursive restructuring to locate our efforts along a decolonial line of flight, taking us in liberatory, rather than static, directions. In regards to the former, I believe that these definitions are and will be diverse, unique, and hard (impossible) to pin down in some unitary fashion. Indeed, doing so would represent precisely the kind of colonizing stasis that Deleuze warns is intellectual and spiritual death. In moving forward then, we might instead rethink what we include in our definition of ambitious instruction, and allow this assemblage to flexibly lead us to whatever ends a context demands. This does not mean excluding competency in traditional academic settings, rather, it involves including in this definition of “ambitious” teaching the witnessing of affect, and engagement with culturally
sustaining, deterritorializing possibilities; as Zembylas (2006) argues, “the focus…should be on what is required of teachers if they are to develop a critical stance of bearing witness and prepare their students to engage in “empathetic unsettlement,”” (p. 313) In short, ambitious teaching practice would involve the syncretic engagement of practices that sustain and open new invitations to youth, positioning teachers not as arbiter of knowledge, but as schizoanalytic cartographer, mapping new lines of flight and assemblages for youth to explore. This is a more extensive challenge than I have time for here, and deserving of further exploration. Regarding the second half of our call for re-mediation, the discursive restructuring, while this is of course a more extensive task as well, I want to suggest that the simple move of including imagination, not as a rejoinder, but as the central, driving framework of our practice-based efforts, is a generative place to begin.

By imagination, I do not mean simply being flexible and dynamic with extant practices. This is, as noted, not enough. I conceive of imagination here as the social imagination, the collective engagement in prolepsis (Mescherykov, 2009) – the future oriented consideration of yet to be created possibility. Moreover, by placing prolepsis and the social imagination central to our efforts, we open the possibility for our practice-based machinations to occur not as repetitive, technical reflexes, but in a pedagogical imaginary (Domínguez, 2013) in which the enactment of practice is linked with embodied praxis, and involves the active negotiation of socio-political dilemmas in the affective geographies of classrooms. What this discursive, and subsequently enacted, move opens, is the possibility of using rehearsal (and indeed other practice-based pedagogies that involve examining and decomposing representations of practice as well) as the setting for the practice of schizoanalytic cartography, the laboratory in which our decolonial dreams and fantasies of what could be, are, “enacted in the world of what is possible both to
imagine and then to create,” (Walkerdine, 2013). As I have said, the practices we need do not necessarily yet exist, and even those that do must be mapped, not traced, into novice’s worlds, made generative through their active, insurgent relinking. But this does not mean we should not engage in practice, or base our pedagogy around practice. Rather, practice-based pedagogy has charted important dimensions for teacher education, and what is required is to continue to engage in practice-based efforts, but shifting our discursive focus, our line of flight, and aiming past stasis and directly into the uncomfortable, anxiety-laden, and uncertain terrain of the affective. Doing so opens the door for us to think and imagine new, revolutionary practices into existence, rather than remaining stuck in the ‘safe’ cycles of ontologically distant practices we have employed. With this said, I will turn to a vignette that will, ideally, show this work in practice, noting that the tools used to construct the space were generated through an engagement with the practices of teatro del oprimido (Boal, 1979), and a community of learners oriented specifically around the task of how, in the context of language arts content, to serve as witnesses to affect, and schizoanalytic cartographers, deterritorializing the geographies-in-stasis they encounter.

**Affective Deterritorialization: Pedagogical Rehearsal as Decolonial Practice**

The following vignette takes place in a course that served as the pedagogical preparation for a group of pre-service teachers and education minor students participating as instructors in an Ethnic studies summer program for Chican@ youth. Prior to the short sequence of rehearsal I will engage with here, students had read extensively around critical and culturally sustaining pedagogy, thoroughly examined and discussed the socio-political circumstances and affective geographies of schooling that the youth they were due to work with had experienced, and participated in activities that involved examining and decomposing critical pedagogical practices. They had additionally participated in several other pedagogical rehearsal activities, all
of which, including the one featured here, following the theatrical methodology of *teatro del oprimido*. This methodology, which that has a history of use in teacher education as a tool for challenging privilege and stasis in educators (Souto-Manning, 2011; 2010) was chosen with great intention, both for its cultural connection to the many Chican@ instructors in the community, and because it itself follows a different ideological line of flight than mere role-playing. *Teatro*, engaged in earnestly and in keeping with its intended, radical, decolonial *telos*, is a technology of decolonization and deterritorialization. It is ontologically conscious of the ways in which colonization diverts the mind from sensation (Boal, 1979), and of how power and privilege circulate and oppress different bodies within affective economies. It is designed as richly intersubjective, and a space in which individual development emerges out of a focus on the collective, and navigating and negotiating multiple perspectives and disagreements around a particular challenge (Matusov, 1998, 1996; Rogoff, 1990; Rommetveit, 1979). Indeed, engaged in purposefully, with all participants serving as spect-actors (active, peripheral or central participants), *teatro* becomes a “collective mind” (Vossoughi, 2011), focused on practices that seek to redress the affective and socio-political oppressions of classrooms, rather than just work within their parameters; indeed the aim of any given *teatro* activity is to ‘break’ the oppression any characters are experiencing (Boal, 2002). To do this, however, imagination as prolepsis is central to *teatro*. To break an oppression involves examining the world as it is, and looking to the world as it could be (Boal, 1979), actively concerned both with pragmatic outcomes, and with affective witnessing and ontological healing through the path of action taken (Boal, 1995). In this way, *teatro* makes for the perfect tool with which to realize a pedagogical imaginary, and actively engage novice educators in an intersubjective space in which to deterritorialize their own subjectivities, such that they might be prepared to do so in their own classrooms.
With this in mind, the enactment we will examine involved forum theatre, which establishes a scenario or task, casts that scenario with actors, and invites a protagonist to enter the forum, navigate the moment, and break any oppressions that may arise. Now, practice-based approaches might desire, prior to beginning the rehearsal, to delineate the practices with which a participant could solve the oppression. This is not so with teatro. Rather, there is a recognition that the tools to breaking the oppression do not exist until it is collaboratively lived, its affective geography brought to light (indeed the only directive given is that violence can never be the solution). Had extant tools worked, the oppression would not exist, and so solutions, the practices that will resolve an oppression and move forward with a task, must be collaboratively imagined. Following this, our goal was not to hone the implementation of extant academic practices that had not worked for youth in the past— it was to devise new, culturally sustaining and liberatory ones. Equipped with considerable theoretical and conceptual knowledge, our community sought to use teatro to enter a pedagogical imaginary and rise to the concrete— devising new concrete dispositions and practices that might be employed in similar contexts, and, as Boal (1979) says, “rehearsing the revolution,” from their abstract vision of culturally sustaining, develop instruction.

For the data that follows, the teaching task, or scenario that we took up was built around the reading and discussion of “Red Clowns” a vignette on sexual assault from Sandra Cisneros’ The House on Mango Street, recognizing that the reading of texts is not just about the transmission of information, but about the shaping of included and excluded identities and affects as well (Luke, 1995), and thus any academic engagement with reading was also an affective engagement, and potential oppression as well. Using the model of forum theatre, a novice teacher served as protagonist, while 5 other participants acted as students, with both
academic and affective profiles to embody, while the teacher educator took on the moderating
Joker role, and the remainder of the 20 participants serving as spect-actors – observers, but still
active participants in the collaborative problem solving, sense-making, and imaginative work of
encountering, resisting, and breaking the affective oppression that was being staged. We pick up
this enactment having already been underway for a few moments. Kirsten, a White novice
teacher, is acting as protagonist, attempting to engage her students with the challenge of
characterization, a core task of teaching fiction, while breaking any oppressions that might
emerge in that process. Having done a think aloud with a short segment of the text, trying to
draw out elements of the text that might help with characterization, she opened the space to
student responses– a presumably solid tactic – and Luis, a Chicano ‘student’ actor in the scene,
in character, voiced a common but problematic opinion: that because the character in the story
had never actively said no, she was thus was in some way culpable for her actions, and therefore
a weak character. This produced a sharp response from Andrea, another Chicana ‘student’ actor
in the scene, and led to a heated exchange between the characters the two were embodying,
which Kirsten attempted to mediate:

Andrea: Like I just want to say that I’m like really uncomfortable with what you just said, because
you’re basically saying that she chose this, and that like, she had the entire role in like what
happened to her, and I just want you to know that that’s like really wrong, and that you should be
really ashamed of yourself for thinking that because…

Luis:  Hey, hey I’m not a sexist!

Andrea: You’re being really hateful towards her right now, and her experience is not your own,
and you can never understand that, So I just want you to know…

Luis: Hey I’m not being sexist I’m just pointing out what’s going on here and she confused, and I
don’t understand how she can respect herself…

Kirsten: Can we pause real quick, not the teatro, I’m pausing this conversation because I know
Steve might still be kind of confused as to what’s going on and I think other people may be as
well, but what are you guys kind of going back and forth about, can you name what it is in the story?
Important to notice here is that the pedagogical challenge that Andrea and Luis produced was not strictly academic. Though centered on engagement with a text – a core task of any English teacher – this dilemma produces a complicated affective geography that echoes the complexity of the classroom; Luis has voiced a politically problematic stance, yet Andrea is engaged in personal attack. Deterritorializing the affect of this space is not so simple as understanding and challenging sexist discourse, and indeed Kirsten’s attempt to intervene shows yet another layer, that in the midst of this there is still the text, which another student is confused by. With this in mind, Kirsten attempts the move of defusing the affective tension by returning to the text, to the content, but doing so elicited yet another exchange between Andrea and Luis, raising the affect and anxiety of the situation for the participants, and for Kirsten herself, who, actively pushing back in her chair and leaning away from the table at which she and her ‘students’ were seated, paused the enactment:

Kirsten: Ok I’m pausing from teatro…This is really hard for me… ‘cause this is something that’s really personal, and so this is like, really good that I’m doing this right now, but, [to Luis] I want to strangle you.

[group laughter].

Luis: [leans back a bit, drops head] I know, I’m sorry.

Kirsten: Um, No, this is very, like, valid.

Luis: Cause I know like a lot of like younger people they don’t, I’m not saying that they do or not but they, they say she should have just expressed herself, she should have just duked it out, I’ve seen people have that conversation.

Kirsten: Oh no, I know! I’m not saying, I’m not saying, please understand, I know the role you are playing right now, I’m not saying, your type of person, not you, but the type of person who does that, I’m like [Kirsten makes a tense expression and shakes her fists in simulated rage]

This is an important moment. Not just because it is an opportunity for imaginative sense-making around a very real pedagogical dilemma, but because it demonstrates the ways in which this approach to rehearsal actually invites affect itself. Kirsten is challenged to attend to the multiple layers of affect at work amongst her students, while engaging the text, and considering the
anxiety and affective reaction that this scenario produces in her. Indeed, it is an affordance of teatro, of modeling oppression so that it might be confronted, that forces Kirsten, who had volunteered for this scene aware of the content and her own relationship to it, to have an approximate experience of what a classroom space with youth would look like were this conversation to occur there. It is worth noting that Luis is supportive, apologetic, himself feeling the intensity of the character he was bringing to life, and how that acted on his friend and colleague Kirsten. This was a community working together to engage in deterritorialization – not seeking safety (which is impossible) or avoidance of anxiety, but creating a space that engages in the jarring work of deterritorialization and decolonization in as gentle a manner as possible, avoiding the “catastrophic falling apart of the subject” (Walkerdine, 2013) which might lead Kirsten, in the long term, to retreat into “safer,” ontologically distant practices that avoid affect altogether. Here, Andrea and Luis are able to force the issue in a way that students likely would not, making it at once artificial, but also productive, demanding that Kirsten consider what it means to serve as witness and schizoanalytic cartographer to her students, while simultaneously allowing her own affective truth to be witnessed in a supportive, if anxiety-ridden, context. She explained her thinking:

Kirsten: so I had to pause it, because I don’t know…I’m trying to make it so everyone feels comfortable but, in reality I want to be like, Yeah Andrea, like freaking go! [group laughter] And then I want to say I worked on a rape crisis hotline, my sister was raped, like, I know many people who were, I want to, like, say all that, but I don’t want to make your person, not you, but like who you’re enacting…

Luis: Yeah, yeah, just to be like…

Kirsten: …uncomfortable. Y’know, ummmm. I’m vocalizing what I’m thinking right now.

Kirsten here is raising a pedagogical dilemma that is real in its complexity, not rendered inert by a focus only on the academic deployment of core practices around textual engagement. Teaching this text (or any) is not, nor ever could be, simply a task of comprehension. Whether vocalized or
not, content and interaction in the classroom draws out affective experience, and every pedagogical move is an affective one as well. Kirsten here has begun to grapple with that, with the multiple levels and layers of affect and oppression that are at work (including her own), seeking to reconcile what it means for a harmful ideological stance to be positioned as victim in a conversation, while herself feeling an affective intensity directed towards that individual, just as she might in a classroom on her own. There is no illusion in the rehearsal that ontological and emotional distance could be maintained – to engage in the practice demands that the affective dimensions of the moment be confronted as well as the academic ones. This is where teatro as collaborative rehearsal, an act of collective mind (Vossoughi, 2011), becomes effective, and the teacher educator was able to step in, inviting imaginative solutions from the community of spectators. Not all agree, or see the breaking of the oppression occur in the same way, but this mapping of the many lines of flight out and away from the colonial plane of organization produce generative possibility, building from, and with one another. At this point, Leslie, a Chicana spect-actor in the forum, and building from a suggestion by Luis to “get a little personal, and express that, y’know there are different places that we’re all coming from here,” offered the thought that:

Leslie: And people are ALL coming from different places, I think that’s what’s important to remember when these kinds of things happen too, and just like, take a breath, and this is another human being, that has had an experience, that has been informed, you know what I mean, the way that they exist in the world has been informed by their experience, just like the way that I exist has been informed by MY experience and like, I’m not in a position to judge, you know, the extent of their experience thus far, and I think its important to keep it open, so that those people don’t shut down and feel like they are being attacked, because sometimes it is, like the, when you know better you do better you know what I mean? And a lot of times ….they don’t realize, the full weight of what they’re saying sometimes…

Leslie, though she does not engage the word in her discourse, is capturing a rich understanding of the affective geography of classrooms here, drawing this out as a critical pedagogical, and human, consideration. Her insistence on attending to “ALL” the different experiences in the class
room ensures that the complexity of the situation, that Luis’ character to is shaped by and experiencing affective intensities, is lost in the intellectual task of combating sexism. This critical comment left the group momentarily silent, pondering the complexity of what it meant to be with youth, before the teacher educator turned the discussion to practice, and how these understandings might rise to concrete practices. Here, Lynn, another White novice teacher, offered up a pragmatic solution, a way to build a “pause” into a real classroom scenario:

Lynn: You could have like have an activity that can maybe be individual for a second, like a quickwrite, that they can release those strong feelings and opinions for a second before coming back together.

This suggestion, though, was not just taken and reintroduced as a quick solution. Rather, we wrote the practice on chart paper to archive it, and then proceeded to discuss the affective dimensions of the strategy, as the participants sought to consider all aspects of the affective geography they were working in. Rosa, a Chicana spect-actor mentioned that for the teacher, Lynn’s suggestion:

Rosa: … gives us like, the opportunity to um, kinda connect with what we’re feeling as well, but then also, ah, having a moment to rethink how we’re gonna go back to it. And I think part of it is remembering that whenever there’s conversations that are really going to create change, they’re gonna be…hard. And there’s gonna be feelings that are gonna be mixed up, and nothing’s ever gonna be clean, because there’s nothing that’s completely clean, but trying your best to come from at it, like to it from a standpoint of wanting to move forward, as a group and so, I mean I think not beating oneself, because I think that many times teachers or educators that beat themselves down for not having things not coming out like how they expected or wanted it to come, and that it should be like a clean way of doing it, a, b, c, but knowing that that’s not the way it’s going to come out. …

Though Rosa’s comments here are in some ways obvious, in others, they are profoundly revolutionary. The context of this activity allows her to make transparent the essential reality that seemingly obvious, this comment makes transparent, draws out an essential reality of the inherent messiness (an inverse of her language) that comes with transformative work. She speaks into existence the consideration of anxiety and discomfort in the practice that is being rehearsed,
preparing the community to not expect clear-cut academic solutions and outcomes. She continued, building from Luis’ earlier comment, and what it meant to be human in the space as well:

Rosa: The way I see it is that its ok for you to get your emotions involved as well, because that’s part of learning. And I think that’s why [this program] is so valuable is because it’s not ignoring the feelings that we’re all bringing in, rather cherishing them, and using it as a tool for us to move forward. And I think that also comes back into this idea of us becoming vulnerable ourselves.

This is a passionate and reasoned argument, connecting practice with affect with pedagogical identity. Yet as with all spaces of intersubjectivity, there was both consensus, and disagreement (Matusov, 1997). Vanessa, another Chicana spect-actor, raised the difficulty in enacting and envisioning the sort of embodied, vulnerable, affect-oriented pedagogy Rosa was advocating. Referencing her own and others experiences in reductive, nomos driven schools, Vanessa raised this tension with the group:

Vanessa: That’s [being vulnerable as instructor] kind of hard though, no? ‘Cause growing up we never saw that…

Rosa: No, but I mean like…

Vanessa: …so I feel like what you’re saying is easier said than done, ‘cause I feel like in her position she’s like, “wait, hold up,” cause y’know we’re not used to this kind of thing, so how would we go about it? I guess it would just be in the moment you’d find out, huh?

Asked to elaborate, Vanessa expanded on the tension she was observing:

Vanessa: Yeah, like from teachers, you know, rare teachers would give you emotion, they’d just like teach you, teach you, teach you, that’s it – go home. That’s it. That’s what I’m saying it’s kind of new to see that, you know? Like, barely in college I’ve had like, awesome teachers but, like K through what, all those years…

There are two significant things to note in Vanessa’s reflection. First, Vanessa ensures that this discussion aimed at prolepsis is not allowed to be seen as easy, “’Cause growing up we never saw that.” In schooling experiences marked by (for them) the testing regime of NCLB and high leverage academic instruction, teachers who would rarely “give you emotion,” and just “teach you, teach you, teach you,” there are no referents to which they can turn to easily envision this
work. It is process-oriented, and necessarily vague in its demands on them to create the solutions. Second, while Vanessa complicates the efficacy of proleptic practice, she simultaneous demonstrates its need. Her repetition of “teach you, teach you, teach you,” emphasized with a fist into her hand brings to life the ontological distance, the borders in the affective geography of classrooms that the enactment is necessarily taking as its object. Vanessa raises complexity, but also urgency, making clear that this line of flight, one that acknowledges affect and emotion, rather than merely replicating old, failed practices to hone their implementation, is one worth following. Picking up on this thread, Rosa offered the following consideration on affect and vulnerability:

Rosa: It just think, what I want, what I want to make sure to work on was um, not getting scared and allowing myself to go back to this uh, I dunno like classroom whole thing where I have the power over the rest of the students but remembering that I have the right just as they do to learn, and express myself and learn with them, because by doing that they’re learning from me and I’m learning from them as well. And so, just not trying to disconnect myself. Cause I’ve seen that where teachers start to become vulnerable, but then the next second they disconnect and they’re inaccessible to the student, and so as a student, you get mixed signals from the teacher, well I did become vulnerable but that was wrong, so I won’t allow myself to do it ever again, and the student, you’re being told that you should do that either. And I think that’s why we don’t come to real conversations about what we feel, what we’re feeling, what we really want to tell each other.

Just as Vanessa named the tension of operating in ways that create ontological distance between student and teacher, Rosa here carries on that thread, recognizing the tension that comes from wading into the affective geography of the classroom, and in her vision of “just no trying to disconnect.” This proleptic hope is linked to concrete outcomes, sense-making about practice – that avoiding affect, maintaining ontological distance and refusing to be vulnerable is not just an affective concern, but one that relates directly to learning, to the richness of conversations that are possible in the classroom space. Building from this, Andrea, additionally considering the complicating factors of gender and how this work could be interpreted differently based on gendered bodies, suggested that:

Andrea: I think sometimes in the role of educator, or like of teacher, you’re expected to be like super strong, and like, never really show how you truly feel, because that could like, make your
students feel some type of way, um, like, kind of perpetuate that your not...capable...of being in that position, or like discussing these things, but like, I personally think that showing emotion, like crying is so healing, and in certain spaces like as an educator you can like, demonstrate that to your students, and like kind of destigmatize, like being emotional,  

.... sometimes [students] do need, almost a little validation for their feelings, and sometimes we as educators can provide that.

While the rich theorization of their practice that these novices were engaging in was important, this discussion did take place in a pedagogical rehearsal, a space intended to develop and hone practice. In this regard, Andrea’s comments served as a bridge from the broader discussion of affect and pedagogical identity, back to pragmatics. Rising to the concrete from this discussion, Luis built on Lynn’s earlier solution, trying to synthesize what a deterritorializing practice might involve in the space, to which Andrea offered a complicating pragmatic wrinkle linked to the potential affective experiences and engagements of youth:

Luis: Yeah I was just thinking about the whole process of having them pausing and uh, and having them writing, y’know their feelings and frustrations down, does anyone think that would be a smart idea to present that with their peers, without interruption? Kind of see where everyone’s coming from, y’know this is how I generally feel, like just simply how they generally feel, just simply what they wrote down, verbat-, verbatim, and just have them just sit down and then start together again?

Andrea: Would you like tell them that initially? ‘Cause I think that that um would um definitely affect the things they’d write.

These are generative solutions – pragmatic ones that seek to break the oppression, and operationalize the vision theorized earlier to recognize the complexity of affect in the space, and witness the voices of all students, even if those evince problematic, oppressive logics themselves. This then led to a further discussion of the feasibility of doing this – could we expediently and efficiently let every student share the fullness of their work, within the confines of a 60 to 90 minute class period, and still address goals and needs relating to comprehending and analyzing this text in its academic context, albeit in a syncretic way? This led Leslie to offer the following pragmatic solution, a concrete practice that grew from the decolonial vision the group held:

Leslie: Sometimes y’know you do a writing and then like come back and just like, everyone could share like a word, or a segment, and that would give you, kind of a little bit of a gauge, without
them feeling like they can’t write what they want to write, or like, y’know. ’Cause I feel like its important for you to be able to write and it actually be like, how you feel like it’d actually be what you feel, and then you could pick, just like a little part.

From here, these additional concrete-practice solutions were added to our written archive, and the teacher educator (as Teatro joker) closed this particular vein of sense-making, and returned the group to the forum enactment to test these solutions, with Kirsten now prepared with some alternative tools to both attend to youth on academic and affective levels, and to conceptualize how the affective intensity she was experience fit into the space, and her pedagogical identity.

She began, immediately testing out the practice that had been devised:

Kirsten:  Ok so I’m going to have everyone take out a sheet of paper real quick. And, so we’ve got a lot of different ideas going on about, um, the sexual assault going on in, um, this story, and so I wondered if you guys to write, for about 5 minutes, any feelings you’re having or what you think went on in this story, um, how you might think that’s getting played out, um, in social situations that you’ve been in, um, yeah.

In what followed, Kirsten, and later several other participants who stepped into the protagonist/teacher role, grappled with this affect, as well as others that were embedded in this forum theatre enactment, testing out the solutions, as well as generating alternative practices based on the results, and archiving all of these for future reflection. This is not to say that the practices they came up with were somehow wildly unique or revolutionary. Indeed, having students do a quick-write is not some drastically novel strategy, but as I have noted, we are thinking of practice here more broadly. Rather, what is key in this segment, and throughout our deployment of pedagogical rehearsal as decolonial deterritorialization, was the telos and intention from which the practices came. We identified particular classroom challenges and tasks that novices in a discipline and generally in the classroom needed to be prepared for, and rather than approach these scenarios, these pedagogical challenges that are also oppressions, set on implementing a pre-defined list of “high leverage” academically ambitious strategies that spring from and are oriented towards a colonizing object of learning ontologically distant from youth
experience, the object itself was reversed. How we responded to the tasks was left contingent, immanent. The practices grew and emerged from the affects that lived autonomously in the geography of the space, and the imaginative task of exploring what it would mean to be a culturally sustaining practitioner in those moments, rising from their vision, to the concrete of decolonized practices and strategies. In Deleuzian terms, teatro rehearsal was a nomadic activity, but as Deleuze and Guattari (2011) say, the nomad, unshackled to planes of organization and acting in decolonial ways, may re-tread extant terrain, but does so in a fundamentally new way:

Even though the nomadic trajectory may follow trails or customary routes, it does not fulfill the function of the sedentary road, which is to parcel out a closed space to people, assigning each person a share, and regulating between shares. The nomadic trajectory does the opposite: it distributes people…in an open space, on that is indefinite and noncommunicating. (2011, p. 380)

Take the suggestion of the quick-write; this is offered not as it commonly is, a tracing, a practice-as-strategy meant to somewhat mindlessly invite student voice in, but without any regard or appreciation for its content; here, the quick-write becomes a strategy of a decolonial practice of witnessing, a nomadic map to access and invite the intensities of affect transparently into the space, breaking the oppression, and deterritorializing the geography of the classroom such that it opens up to new possibility. The strategy operates not as a practice meant to ensure all students are thinking, conforming to the academic script of the classroom, but as a means to witness their voices, closing ontological distances of colonial otherness, while simultaneously encouraging their academic skill. As they moved forward, these practitioners may generate wholly new practices and strategies, or engage common ones; but they will do so, hopefully, as deterritorializing nomadic actors, considering the affective terrain in which their pedagogical choices are taking place. Rather than following tracings, these novice educators were constructing maps. Instead of becoming comfortable and safe within planes of organization, they allowed themselves to entertain discomfort and anxiety as they followed lines of flight.
Six months later, Kirsten was in her own urban classroom, still carrying the dispositions practices in this rehearsal with her. As an English teacher, she regularly employed the strategies and core, decolonial practices that had emerged here, allowing her students to write when their affective intensity was high, and then finding creative ways to efficiently witness these intensities. Moreover, the broader disposition and pedagogical identity of being a deterritorializing educator, someone who serves as witness to the affective geography and economies in which youth live, as well as setting ambitious learning targets for them, lingered as well. While visiting a museum exhibit on the social and cultural construction of race with her students and another teacher, Kirsten took the opportunity to invite a local activist, present at the event, to engage with her students, almost entirely Latin@/Chican@, in a discussion of their experiences of race. While profoundly generative for the students, she found her White colleague to be resistant to the conversation altogether, anxious over this moment when ontological distance closed through a recognition and discussion of the differently racialized experiences that they as affluent, White teachers had from their Latin@ students:

“She [another teacher] seemed really irritated that we were getting into this conversation [on race], and not taking the kids to do the virtual ski jump….but I was thinking, here’s a chance for them to engage with something important to them and someone who’s an activist in this, and that’s an important opportunity…it was messy, it’s just really messy work, and I made people get their hands dirty, and I’m glad I did.”

She would go on to demonstrate a nuanced appreciation for the affect, describing how this deterritorializing conversation had taken place in a complex, affective geography:

[The other teacher] was visibly uncomfortable while we were having those conversations; continually shifting, looking around... Yeah. And then it made it... I think the students that were near her weren't really talking that much. And they normally talk.

Interesting to note here, beyond her robust analytical lens, is that the language she uses – messy – is the inverse of the language used by Rosa in the teatro rehearsal, a fact of appropriation not lost on Kirsten. She has come to a point where she is prepared to do the deterritorializing work
that she had earlier participated, aware of its importance and urgency, and conscious of the need to ask her colleagues as well as herself to face the anxiety of their own subjectivities in relation to the affective lives of their students. She concluded this segment of our interview noting that: “I feel like, teatro was a dress rehearsal, obviously, for the real thing. And I think one of the biggest things that teatros have helped me with is the way that I’ve been communicating things when I find things to be unjust or not okay in some sort of way.” The dispositions and practices, as well as the analytical lenses honed during our teatro-as-rehearsal activities, profoundly impacted her pedagogical identity, not just in terms of what she did, but in who she was. As St. Pierre (2004) suggests, “Once you have used the nomad, rhizome, haeceity, middle, line of flight to think the world, you live differently.” Kirsten, having rehearsed and engaged with affect (among other things), was now living differently, elsewhere asserting that she “didn’t want” and didn’t know if she could, temper her desire for critically engaging with her students.

Historically marginalized youth do not need better implementation of old practices that insist on a White Gaze, a removal of affect, and neoliberal outcomes. They need something different, something nourishing, and culturally sustaining, that respects the affective economies and intensities they live with, seeking actively to deterritorialize them. This is perhaps the core of this argument; that unshackled from a neoliberal discourse and plane of organization that at best only reaches the insufficient realm of cultural relevance, and replacing “intellectual” or “academic” ambition with affective ambition that opens us to the anxiety that comes from deterritorializing our own, comfortable subjectivities, practice-based approaches to teacher education and pedagogical rehearsal, following new lines of flight, could be powerful tools in cultivating culturally sustaining educators.

*Design Considerations for Decolonizing Practice-based Teacher Education*
The cultivation of culturally sustaining novice educators is a pressing, important challenge. Indeed, in a climate in which the discourse has become co-opted with statistical talk of test scores, standards, and achievement gaps that devalue the lived experiences of historically marginalized youth, it is also an urgent one. With this in mind, I believe that focus on decolonial practice-based approaches is a generative endeavor, allowing us to link considerations of cultural nourishment and affect together with the urgency of enactment – moving novices towards embodied praxis, and identities as schizoanalytic cartographers, mapping exciting new possibilities for youth. As Walkerdine (2013) suggests, producing teachers who might embody this affect-sensitive identity:

…provide fertile ground for the development and enrichment of practices that attempt to understand relation to place and space but also to think about the central importance of change and transformation possibilities, especially in relation to the various manifestations of othering. (p. 8)

A decolonial practice-based pedagogy is a way to engage in active decolonization, actively designing and engineering through skilled novice educators the rupturing of stasis, planes of organization, and affective economies that limit our youth. Yet just as culturally relevant pedagogy’s promise was subsumed by stasis, it is worth considering what design principles might be essential to ensure that culturally sustaining praxis does not meet the same fate.

First, achieving authentic engagement with affective practice-based teacher education pedagogy is not easy. The moment described here involved a teacher educator and several students who were skilled and trained practitioners of teatro. This allowed them both to be able to live the affect of the moment with something approaching realistic-intensity, but also the ability to ensure that their performances in the rehearsal did not veer towards the reductive. Connected to this, the community that was participating was composed of individuals who shared a desire and vision for culturally sustaining pedagogical outcomes, and their participation and sense-making was thus moving in that direction. It is a fine line between exploring the
pedagogical implications of the affective geographies of classrooms, and role playing those same geographies in reductive ways that lead to the rehearsal of command and control management practice. If we are seeking decolonial outcomes to oppressive affects, management and disciplinary control – forms of symbolic violence - cannot be our solutions, as they represent a pedagogy of resentment (McCarthy & Dimitriadis, 2005). With this in mind, a practice-based approach to cultivating culturally sustaining educators requires a the teacher educator and community that has actively arrived at, or is steady progress towards, a vision of culturally sustaining education, and conscious of their own positionalities in relation to the affective geographies they are working with.

Second, building from and closely related to this, is that culturally sustaining pedagogy is the work of deterritorialization. Before a novice can be ready to lead their students towards that – to be schizoanalytic cartographers on their own – they must deterritorialize and smash the stasis of their own subjectivities. Yet while this work is necessarily uncomfortable, it must also be done gently, in such a way, as noted, so as not to result in a catastrophic falling apart of the subject. Guattari (2000) noted that deterritorialization too brashly taken, without a supportive community and guide, would lead only to an intractable retreat to known planes of organization, to stasis. In terms of teacher education, what this would entail would be our efforts becoming counterproductive, and experiences with the affective geographies of schooling resulting in a degree of anxiety that would serve only to reinforce deficit notions around historically marginalized youth as under-prepared novices revert to positions free of anxiety for them, but deeply problematic for youth who become interpellated as pathological and in need of control. These outcomes are indeed documented in literature around pedagogical identity development in the face of exposure to historically marginalized contexts (Zeichner & Flessner, 2009), and thus
it follows that the deterritorialization done with the novice educators themselves must be careful, at once pushing boundaries in extreme ways, while ensuring the novice does not become untethered altogether.

Third, just as subjective uncertainty and anxiety are immense concerns, so to is pragmatic uncertainty. As I have suggested, a core tenet of a decolonial practice-based teacher education pedagogy is the foregrounding of prolepsis and imagination, allowing the practices to rise from the vision, rather than to be handed out at the start. Such an approach can be destabilizing while new dispositions become concrete, and is bound to be frustrating and anxious for novices who are feeling the pressures of classroom preparation. This is not to suggest that we should walk back this approach, but rather to note that a crucial design consideration is ensuring we, as teacher educators, are being transparent and clear in the moments when practices are rising to the concrete. As with the chart paper discussed above, methods must be taken to ensure that novice’s pragmatic anxieties are mitigated through and allow them to clearly see where and how concrete, culturally sustaining practices emerge out of their community’s imaginative sense making and theorization.

Fourth, the tools that are to be employed must be carefully and thoughtfully chosen, and consistently deployed, if we are to arrive at decolonial outcomes. By this I mean that while the example and discussion here may have focused on pedagogical rehearsal, attention to affective geography and the work of deterritorialization would need to be spread across all aspects of a practice-based pedagogy. While teatro is a powerful and generative strategy, coloniality, affect, and power could easily be examined in the context of video clubs, or other moments when representations of practice were considered, or practice was decomposed.
With this last thought in mind, just as novices will need to imagine and generate practices, and variations of strategies, that grow out of their vision, teacher educators interested in cultivating culturally sustaining practitioners will themselves need to engage in prolepsis and continue to consider their vision, and practices that might encourage novices to move along decolonial, generative lines of flight. Ongoing, imaginative work will be required to continually break planes of organization that might emerge, ensuring that culturally sustaining pedagogy does not become itself stuck in stasis.

**Conclusions and Future Directions**

Teacher education, and indeed education in general, faces a critical moment. Despite broader machinations, teachers are still desperately needed in classrooms, and their preparation still falls largely to UBTE programs, that do indeed need to innovate and grow their pedagogies and practices to account for the affective geographies facing not just historically marginalized, but all youth in schools and beyond. As this progress occurs, developing new pedagogies grounded in practice, it is essential that rather than bending towards shallow, neoliberal definitions of social justice, UBTEs work to consider a culturally sustaining lens and decolonial consciousness in their efforts. Our practice-based approaches must insist on a definition of ambition and social justice that goes beyond academics, vague mentions of democracy, and White innocence, and strives to account for the affective dimensions, and emotional truth of what teaching might mean. We must consider, in our practices, and with our novices, what ontological distances exist, and how we can push ourselves to enter a tertiary, imaginative space, and cross those borders.

Research around practice-based approaches will of course continue to approach this pedagogy from a variety of ideological angles, but it need not be an approach exclusively
dominated by neoliberal and academic notions of teaching. It is possible for practice-based pedagogy to become an insurgent process of re-linking, allowing critical and decolonial educators the space to foster culturally sustaining dispositions in novices, preparing a generation of educators ready to make the decolonial pragmatic, bringing it, through a new cartography of teaching practice.


Manuscript C

Editorial Notes: Manuscript C

Yet again, this manuscript is far too long, and will need to be broken up prior to submission for publication. This one particularly.

As the writing proceed over the past few months, what emerged quite clearly was that the theory/framework for thinking about teacher learning that I was seeking to worth with did not exist, and thus I ended up trying to both flesh that out, and explore the case studies, in the same manuscript. Eventually, I see this broken into a paper exploring what a teacher-learning framework built on Anzaldúa’s conocimientos and travesías constructs looks like, and then using the establishment of those ideas to considerably shorten the preamble to the data here, and focus more intently on empirical data, possibly bringing in the additional case that, due to length, I had to leave out.

This said, a question I have struggled with in this manuscript is how to capture the longitudinal trajectory of these individuals without perhaps having to hit on every moment. Given the length of the study, and the long-term picture of learning and development I was seeking to call attention to, there was a huge amount of data that I wanted to include. Perhaps what is needed is to either focus on one case for the longitudinal picture, or focus on a smaller aspect of the learning and include all three. In any event, it was difficult to capture everything I wanted to highlight, and even at the excessive length it presently is at, I felt as though I left a large amount out. I look forward to thoughts on this.

Directly related to this, something that has been emerging as I have gone through different rounds of revision is ensuring that my analysis and presentation of data does a better job of letting Steve and Kirsten speak for themselves. I continue to work on this, and in a final manuscript plan to potentially use more framing, and perhaps longer conversational turns, to let their voices shine more fully, and allow my analysis to carry less weight.

As with the previous manuscript, I am also conscious of not overstepping the novelty of the work, and hope that this managed to convey the new ideas and lenses I was seeking to introduce to the conversation, without overstating its contribution.

Prospective journal for submission: Teaching and Teacher Education
Over the last two decades, ‘social justice’ has become a tremendously ubiquitous term in teacher education. Presently, all manner of teacher preparation programs, from traditional university based programs, to evolving practice-based models, to neoliberal options, claim that the goal, the telos of their work, is to produce educators prepared to close achievement gaps in underserved schools. Yet, despite the wide range of programs and methods ostensibly working to prepare ‘social justice’ educators, little has changed in schools since the advent of this language and focus. Indeed, the urgent need for effective educators in historically marginalized communities remains as pressing a task as ever, and for all the machinations around the issue, this process of cultivating teachers for underserved classrooms remains a complicated task to which there are no clear cut, straightforward solutions or methods.

This is the problem space in which I situate my study, as I am interested in how teacher educators might design programs that look beyond the narrow goal of preparing novice educators with high-leverage toolkits to lead students to test-scores gains, and towards more robust, expansive, and transformative goals; guiding novices to transform themselves and their pedagogical identities in such a way as to become culturally sustaining educators who live schooling differently. For years, historically marginalized youth in underserved schools have faced inequitable outcomes, described alternatively as achievement and opportunity gaps (DeShando da Silva, et al. 2007). Yet despite decades of reform and policy-making aimed which has aimed primarily at increasing the rigor of academic disciplinary content and pedagogy in these underserved schools, the gaps, and inequitable outcomes persist, leaving the conditions in these schools taxing for both youth and teachers (Rose, 2014; Giroux, 2012a, 2012b, 2009). Considering this, I argue that what is needed is a radical re-orientation in teacher education towards programs oriented around liberatory transformation and decolonial schooling outcomes,
and attention the affective geographies of historically marginalized youth and schooling. With this goal in mind, the following paper seeks, through an exploration of the learning trajectories of two White, pre-service teachers, to understand the possibilities of more richly conceptualized and designed opportunities for expansive teacher and student learning. I employ a Deleuzian poststructural and Anzaldúa theoretical framework to conceptualize, design, and interpret in concerted and intentional ways, the process of cultivating culturally sustaining dispositions among novice educators, and nurturing them to cross borders – travesías – that fundamentally shift their praxis, their pedagogical identities, and the possibilities that exist for their engagement with historically marginalized youth.

**The Struggle to Achieve Social Justice Teaching Outcomes**

Despite calls to diversify the teaching force as a means of producing more equitable outcomes (Villegas & Irvine, 2010; Zeichner & Flessner, 2009; Gollnick 2008; Villegas & Lucas, 2002), teaching remains a profession in which novices are predominantly White, affluent, female, monolingual speakers of English (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005), and who have entered the profession with positive personal histories of schooling engagement (Haddix, 2008). This is, of course, drastically different than the student demographics of schools in which these novices will likely teach; schools comprised largely of Black and Latin@ students, with increasing numbers of emergent bilinguals, whose relationships with culturally-White school institutions (Grant & Sleeter, 1996) are tenuous at best. This demographic contrast means that the urgent and widely discussed work of teacher educators interested in preparing novice educators to serve these historically marginalized communities more often than not begins in a space of dissonance between the cultural worlds of these novice educators, and the considerably different cultural worlds of the students and communities in which they will teach. As Ana Richert (2012)
explains, “many teachers…attended schools and developed these conceptions [of what it is teachers do] in settings different from those in which they have chosen to teach. The result is predictable confusion,” (p.21). Indeed, it has long been suggested that the cultivation of social justice commitments in White novice educators is a complicated task involving a process of learning and development which involves both coming to understand the dynamics of classrooms and broader societal issues, as well as interrogating fundamental questions of identity, ideology, and beliefs (Cochran- Smith & Zeichner, 2005). Such a complex process is certain to invite confusion and cultural dissonance.

This cultural dissonance is further exacerbated by what has been described as the “two worlds pitfall,” (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1985; Grossman, 1989), wherein novices exposed to ideas about social justice teaching in university settings collide with settings in which, “the practice of teaching … remains much as it has always been: content oriented, teacher-centered, authoritarian, and recitative,” (Grossman, et al., 1999). Faced with overwhelming pressure to efficiently produce measurable outcomes, even the most earnest, committed novice teachers can experience a ‘wash-out’ (Labaree, 2004) of their social justice oriented beliefs and practices. Assailed by the disciplining logic, or nomos (Bourdieu, 2000), of authoritarian schooling practices, problematic constructions of teaching and schooling are accepted in the interest of pragmatism, rather than struggle with the tension of identifying how to live what amount to contradictory pedagogical commitments to social justice in constrained spaces. Alternatively, commitments to equity and social justice values may never be carried or internalized beyond course assignments at all (Grossman, et al., 1999), as novices leverage constructivist lenses to progress in their programs, but never do so in a robust manner that engages reflections on the social foundations of teaching, and of what working towards social
justice might mean for the work of teaching, and their emergent professional identity as novice educators in a diverse society (Liston, Whitcomb, & Borko, 2009).

As a result of these intractable, authoritarian pressures in the lived reality of schools, despite the ubiquitous emphasis placed on social justice, too often novice educators leave their programs with unchanged, fragile, or absent conceptions of racial diversity and social justice (Sleeter, 2008, 2005, 2001; Tatum, 1997, 1992). Moreover, deficit notions, both biological and cultural in origin, of the academic potential and ability of historically marginalized youth, persist among White teachers (Carter & Goodwin, 2004; Aveling, 2006; Boler, 1999) and are sometimes actually reinforced by engagement with historically marginalized teacher education settings (Zeichner and Flessner, 2009). Almost more concerning is that even where commitments to serving historically marginalized populations are retained, they are regularly oriented towards assimilation, dismissing the assets of youth and communities of color, positioning them as disadvantaged, and in need of ‘fixing.’ Recognition of the historically marginalized ‘Other’ remains contingent upon their readiness to engage in mimicry, through access to White cultural knowledge, resources, and ways of being (Freire, 1970; Paris & Alim, 2014; Bhabha, 1984). It is this final point that I believe speaks to the root of the difficulties that have been experienced around effectively cultivating ‘social justice’ educators. While there is consensus that it is critical for novice educators to emerge from their preparation programs having thoughtfully interrogated their identity, privileges, and role as a teachers in a multicultural society requiring social justice outcomes (Galman et al. 2010; DeShando da Silva, et al., 2007; Ladson-Billings, 1997, 1995; Banks, 2001, 1995), there has been and continues to be a failure to interrogate the question of what we mean by social justice. Even as the term social justice has become profligate, it remains vague and undefined (Zeichner and Flessner, 2009), allowing for a cacophony of interpretations,
not all of which orient themselves, or the novice educators they produce, to historically marginalized youth and communities in the same way. This question of defining social justice, then, is critical, and central to any productive movement forward.

**The Travesía as Deterritorialized Social Justice for Teaching and Learning**

For decades, the achievement gap has dominated the telos of what it is we want social justice educators to be able to do in classrooms. Typically, this establishes a goal that amounts to the implementation of high leverage academic practices that, while possibly culturally relevant, are most interested in ensuring historically marginalized and youth of color assent to and meet a normative, White construction of academic success (Paris & Alim, 2014; Valenzuela, 1999). This deficit orientation reflects both White invisibility (Leonardo, 2009, 2002) and White Innocence (Gotanda, 2004; Gutiérrez, 2006), at once refusing to acknowledge the depth of the dynamics and privileges – the affective economies of power (Ahmed, 2004) – that are present and at work in schools and society; while at the same time, constructing alibis of innocence by masking White culpability for disparate outcomes in altruistic work (Leonardo & Zembylas, 2013). Both positions involve a lack of self-interrogation around the roles that White teachers play in the immensely affective geographies as classrooms (Matias & Zembylas, 2014; Leonardo & Zembylas, 2013), and are indicative of individuals in stasis – tied to colonial planes of organization, or frameworks for identity and understanding the world that rarely if ever question that dominant, normative conceptions of schools, schooling, and youth engagement are how things ought to be. In such a construction, the ends of equity and justice are relocated back on the White, normative side, of the earlier discussed dissonance. In this construction, ‘serving’ historically marginalized communities involves a transformation in that neocolonial direction, with a focus on high-leverage actions and academic ends alone, creating an ontological distance
between White teachers, and the affective work of witnessing that is most critical to historically marginalized and youth of color; a distance between a teacher’s settled notions of teaching and learning, their plane of organization, and the reality and complexity of youth experiences limits the extent and possibility of their classroom praxis, and is at the heart of the colonial process of Othering (Bhabha, 1994).

In contrast to these sorts of ontologically distant approaches and definitions of social justice work, I want to suggest that authentically serving historically marginalized communities means engaging with these communities in recognition of their funds of knowledge (Moll, 1992; Moll, et al., 1992), positioning youth as producers and holders of valuable knowledge (Delgado-Bernal, 2002), witnessing the affective truth of their experiences (Dutro & Bien, 2013; Zembylas, 2006), and working towards culturally sustaining and revitalizing ends (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014; McCarty & Lee, 2014). Such an orientation to the work of social justice, and teacher education for social justice, requires a richer, but also more normatively-uncomfortable process of learning which might close such ontological gaps. Considerable work in this regard already exists, and begins, following Jones (2009) in recognizing that White educators are not the monolithic group we imagine and often construct them to be. These individuals enter preparation programs and classrooms with a significant diversity of assets, experiences, and potentials (Laughter, 2011; Jones, 2009). Essentially, even in a color-blind society, White individuals and educators who actively (if subconsciously) participate in institutional racism and colonialism, can productively develop their racial identity in more equitable directions, deconstructing privilege and moving through phases that, while contentious and difficult, bend towards justice (Jones, 2009; Irvine, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2002; Tatum, 1997, 1992; Lawrence, 1999; Lawrence & Tatum, 1999). There is evidence from work in teacher
education that when presented with opportunities to conceptualize youth in asset ways, and reframe and trouble their own engagement and understanding of schools and the work teaching in more complex fashion, White teachers can make considerable progress in their sustainable commitments to equity, and authentic understanding and engagement with historically marginalized youth (Jones, 2012, 2009; Gutiérrez & Vossoughi, 2010; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Boler, 1999). Moreover, the incorporation of critical and poststructural analytical lenses into pre-service preparation has shown to be extremely generative to the cultivation of dispositions – the belief structures that guide future action – which novices carry with them into the classroom being oriented more towards social justice (Buendía, 2000; Villegas, 2007; Gay, 2002; Jones, 2012, 2009), as did opportunities to play with and engage around dynamics of power, privilege, and identity in classrooms (Souto-Manning, 2011, 2010).

Central to all these more generative efforts is a focus on challenging the nomos of schooling, and disrupting the stasis and attachments to planes of organization, and, therefore, pedagogical identities anchored in this stasis, that novices may have held around schooling and teaching. Conscious of the emotional work of teaching across difference, Boler (1999) has defined this process as a pedagogy of discomfort, while others have connected it to the concept of affect – the pre-personal intensities of feeling which are connected to unequal and colonial flows of power and marginalization (Zembylas, 2006; Skattebol, 2010; Mulcahy, 2012; Walkerdine, 2013; Watkins, 2006, 2011; Massumi, 2002). Both constructions involve an insistence that our novice practitioners experience cultural, ontological, and ideological discomfort, and destabilization of identity, in the same ways that the historically marginalized youth they will teach potentially face, whether they choose to or not, each day. This is not to say that our intention is to attack novices’ subjectivities, or prescribe a set outcome for them. Nor
should we dismiss the idea of compassion for the affective challenge of untethering oneself to long held normative notions; indeed compassion is central to revolutionary love, and it would be hypocritical to our intentions to neglect the validity of White teachers’ experiences. However, something is lost when compassion for novices becomes primary (Zeichner & Flessner, 2009), overshadowing the affects of historically marginalized youth. Put another way, if we ask novices only, “to see more clearly and alter, if they choose, the social beliefs integral to their professional identity,” (Liston & Zeichner, 1991). The invocation of choice and compassion in regards to potentially, oppressive, colonial planes of organization, is problematic. Leaving the disruption of colonial frameworks and identities up to the whims and choice of a privileged demographic serves only to construct social justice, and the telos of programs subscribing to such a definition, in ways that maintain the aforementioned ideologies of White innocence and White invisibility. Rather than serving communities of color, such a stance protects the ontological distance between teacher and student, colonizer and colonized, intact, and leaves colonial affective geographies – the oppressive, emotional, intense psychic-terrain of colonization – undisturbed. Moreover, in refusing to push them to see and live differently, all that is accomplished is setting up novices to eventually acquiesce, whether implicit or explicitly, to a praxis whose object of learning is the same one that has for years failed historically marginalized youth and communities. Rather, we need a more robust definition of social justice that equates justice not just with equity, but with decolonization, or the fundamental re-writing of social, community, and political relationships, and what counts as meaningful knowledge.

With this decolonial goal in mind, I wish to build on those efforts to leverage Deleuzian theory (already present in my analysis thus far) to the work of education (St. Pierre, 2004; Walkerdine, 2013; Zembylas, 2006). Specifically, I wish to suggest that if our goals for social
justice are to achieve decolonial, culturally sustaining and nurturing outcomes for youth and communities, rather than to assimilate and transform historically marginalized youth and culturally diverse ways of being into normative white ones, then it seems generative to consider the process one of \textit{detrimentalization}. For Deleuze and Guattari (2011), deterritorialization is the process of deconstructing and rupturing the stasis – in both personal and socio-political/cultural terms – of the planes of organization that dominate and determine our actions, our relations to one another, and the affective geographies in which we exist. In our context here, what that would entail is working as teacher educators towards a social justice \textit{telos} not just of acquiring new skillsets and high-leverage practices ready for deployment, but engaging our demographic mass of White educators to follow new \textit{lines of flight}, or teleological trajectories. This involves opportunities to explore new pedagogical identities and ways to be in the world and schools, leaving the stasis of colonial planes of organization and affective geographies behind them. As a teacher educator committed to decolonization – not equity or justice alone, but decolonization – I am interested in identifying ways in which we might cultivate and prepare future educators to engage productively in this process of rupture; learning to actively resist, disrupt, and alter the affective realities of schooling that marginalize peoples of the global south, while cultivating dispositions that will permit them to transcend the colonial limits that potentially exist on their own teaching identities and practices.

If we begin to understand the work of social justice \textit{as} the deterritorialization of White novice educators’ planes of organization, then new frameworks and theories of teacher learning and dispositional development are required. In this regard, Anzaldúa (1989) offers a tremendously valuable conceptual frame to aid us in this decolonial task: the \textit{travesía}, a crossing, in which the individual moves irrevocably from one terrain of consciousness to another.
Importantly, the *travesía* involves more than temporarily crossing a border and experiencing a different space momentarily; it is not just tourism through historically marginalized communities and ways of being to voyeuristically appreciate hardship and difference. Rather, the idea of *travesías* speaks to a more robust, ontological, ideological border-crossing, a process of learning and development that fundamentally changes — deterritorializes — the individual who engages in new spaces, and new ways of being, thinking, and existing. She explains:

> “Every increment of consciousness, every step forward is a *travesía*, a crossing. I am again an alien in new territory. And again, and again. But if I escape conscious awareness, I escape moving. Knowledge makes me more aware, it makes me more conscious. “Knowing” is painful because after “it” happens I can’t stay in the same place and be comfortable.” (1989, p. 70)

In terms of teacher learning, the *travesia* foregrounds not just becoming aware of the dissonance between one’s own life experiences and another’s (while maintaining some intellectual, psychic, and spiritual distance, as you guide youth to your side of normative), but following lines of flight that lead directly into that dissonance in all its glory; deterritorializing one’s own stasis to cross a border into a liminal space that leads to, and actively seeks, productive discomfort; to new terrain and ways of seeing that cannot be walked back or forgotten, and to new dispositions that guide pragmatic action and pedagogical identity. I suggest that this is the learning process in which we should novices engage in should not just involve learning new actions, but learning new, decolonial and culturally sustaining ways to be as teachers.

With this framework laid out, I will turn now to exploring case studies of 2 White, pre-service teachers – Steve, and Kirsten – who were participants in a social design experiment, *Aquetza*, constructed for the purpose of encouraging *travesías*, and cultivating decolonial, culturally sustaining dispositions in novice educators through a deterritorializing process of expansive learning (Engeström, 2007).

**Expansive learning as a design tool for travesías and deterritorialization**
It is not novel to call for teacher education aimed at social justice outcomes, (Darling-Hammond, 2010, 2002; McDonald & Zeichner, 2009; Zeichner, 2009; Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2001, 2000, 1999; Banks, 1995; Grant & Secada, 1990; Giroux, 1988), or experiences that ensure novices are coming to understand themselves, and their work in the classroom, in ways different from their own schooling experiences (Hammerness, et al. 2005). Nor are calls for novices to transparently see, and appreciate, how they may have a fundamentally different relationship to the oppressive, neoliberal logic of schooling than do their potential students (Jones, 2009; Cochran-Smith, 2004). I build on this work, but also wish to extend it, suggesting that if we seek decolonial outcomes for youth, we must do this and more and engage teachers in a process of learning that fundamentally reshapes their relationships and subjectivities. To accomplish this involves a sociocultural vision of learning as socially situated, intersubjective and occurring through participation in culturally and historically defined Activity Systems that organize the tools, rules, identities, and contexts available to the learner (Vygotsky, 2004; 1978; Cole, 1996; Cole & Engeström, 2007; Rogoff, 2003; Gallego & Cole, 2001; Moll, 1998. 1990).

In the interest of decolonizing extant activity systems, we need a vision of learning that is expansive (Engeström, 2007, 1987), immanent and contextual, tied to evolving sets of challenges, and focused on the rupture (or deterritorialization) of the parameters of old activity systems, and the creation of fundamentally new ones.

Essentially, if our problem is how to design and create expansive, decolonial possibilities in learning, we need a pedagogical methodology that allows us to tinker with the activity system in which participants operate and are engaged, a means through which we can deterritorialize the affective geographies of schooling, and follow lines of flight towards new, transformative, hybrid activity systems. Such ontological and practical conditions for expansive learning are
found in a particular research approach, the social design experiment (Gutierrez & Jurow, 2013; Gutiérrez & Vossoughi, 2010), the fundamental goals of which are transformative outcomes that build from a focus on Social Imagination around issues of inequity, acknowledging the historicity of participants’ involvement in activities, systems, and structures. Moreover, at their best, social design experiments involve an immanent, recursive, and iterative process that actively includes participant’s ingenuity, culture, and the socio-ecological setting as a means to collaboratively design new futures, very intentionally and transparently aiming at collaboratively shifting the parameters of an activity system, including participant’s subject-position (identity). This is accomplished by attending to the historicity of previous systems, and then endeavoring to support participants as they devise new and different tools, rules, community arrangements, divisions of labor, and objects of learning. It is significant to this discussion that such designs necessarily include a robust definition of social justice that aligns with the decolonial; they are predicated on change, and the assumption that while the precise outcome and vision of social justice is immanent and intersubjectively negotiated, it must involve breaking away from extant planes of organization and objects of learning. With this in mind, social design experiments will ideally result in expansive learning, allowing participants’ to rupture their engagement with, understanding of, and participation in activity systems (Engeström & Sannino, 2010; Engeström, 2007), an outcome directly related to the emergence of turning points in participant’s Discourse (Kärkkäinen, 1999), and the emergence of proleptic vision (Meshcheryakov, 2009) as participant’s imagine new futures and possible ways of being (Gutiérrez, 2008). In effect, this process of expansive learning is the work of deterritorialization, providing a space for teacher learning that unsettles novices, while simultaneously opening up new possibility, or lines of flight, for them to pursue as they craft their pedagogical identities in decolonial directions.
Aquetza: Situating Steve and Kirsten’s Journeys

The present study and exploration of White teacher’s *travesías* and expansive learning occurs in the context of a social design experiment called *Aquetza* (Romero et al. 2013). This program, initiated by undergraduate Chican@ students as a site of intergenerational learning for high school Latin@ and Chican@ youth, undergraduate Chican@ students, and White preservice teacher education students, operated as a means to envisioning and bringing to life new, decolonial relationships to teaching and learning for youth and novice educators. With this in mind, while our design worked to be inclusive and deeply conscious of the diversity of perspectives and assets that novice White educators bring to their work (Laughter, 2011; Jones, 2009), we were also aware of the reality that in a trajectory of learning around racial identity and privilege (Lawrence & Tatum, 1999; Tatum, 1997), a common stage at which White individuals interested in social justice, but stuck in abstract engagement with marginalized communities, found themselves was the aforementioned, philanthropic idea of White innocence (Gotanda, 2004; Gutiérrez, 2006) – essentially understanding communities of color to require outside expertise and White cultural knowledge and capital to positively transform. We can see shades of this ontologically distant discursive position in the words of Steve, a White, cisgender, heterosexual male, from an affluent local community who would be a staff participant in *Aquetza*, when he reflected in conversation around what his teaching career goals were that:

“I’m interested in teaching in in Sunrise [a historically Black/Latin@ community adjacent to his own]. I know there’s a lot of poverty in those schools and lots of Hispanic families, and I feel like I could do really positive work there.”

As Steve would note almost a year later, his understanding of social justice at this juncture was shallow, and nascent; this interest and commitment was something he has only just arrived at prior to beginning work in *Aquetza*, having seen Tim Wise speak, and read some of his work, in
the prior year and a half. However the point here is not at all to condemn Steve, but rather to recognize that such a position is a developmental stage, and problematic only so long as it remains in stasis, and the individual fails to continue their growth. Our design then very purposefully endeavored to create spaces in which the White novice educator participants in *Aquetza*, Steve and Kirsten, would have opportunities to bring their own assets and perspectives to bear in robust engagement with communities of color.

To locate our cases – Steve and Kirsten – a bit more, we can note that there was both regularity and variance to the life experiences they were bringing to this work. Both Steve and Kirsten were pursuing teacher licensure in secondary English, and identified as White, cisgender, and heterosexual. Both were from comfortably affluent socio-economic backgrounds, and had lived in communities where Latin@ and Chican@ individuals were a substantial demographic presence, yet they had interacted little with these communities. Moreover, as they reported, both shared a history of very positive, and very successful, engagement with schools and schooling. Their academic careers had been marked by considerable success, and cultural congruency, and both felt extremely comfortable operating in normative classroom spaces, and with normative classroom practices. While both Steve and Kirsten had experiences working in field placements in diverse, underserved school settings, their interactions in those spaces, while culturally aware, had always been within the confines of a power dynamic, an *affective economy*, in which their easy engagement with the *nomos* of schooling automatically positioned them in the metaphoric high ground.

While they did share this common background – one which is similar to the demographic background of many novice educators – there were also differences in their perspectives and
backgrounds, which shaped their readiness to engage in this work. Steve was a creative writing major, self-identified as being a reflective personality, and was working hard to locate a comfortable, authoritative classroom persona. Moreover, his relative newness to this sort of critical work and decolonial perspectives meant that his work in Aquetza was a significant ideological step as well as a practical one; he was learning to think and see in wholly new ways at the same time as he struggled to settle into a fitting pedagogical identity, and find his ‘teacher voice.’ Kirsten, on the other hand, had worked in sexual-assault support roles prior to beginning her teacher education work, and while still most comfortable with normative approaches to schooling, and by her own admission, not deeply familiar with youth and communities of color, she had experiences witnessing, on a personal level, the salience of affect and emotional intensity in individuals’ lives. Thus not only was her critical lens somewhat more developed, but she was also quite outspoken – describing herself as “vocal” – comfortable in front of a classroom or group, and always ready to engage in dialogue. All this being said, while neither had ever taken an ethnic studies course, or had much familiarity with decolonial perspectives that positioned communities and youth of color as holders and producers of knowledge, both Steve and Kirsten, recruited by undergraduate students of color to be Aquetza instructors, were excited to participate and learn in the space, eager to develop what their commitments to social justice.

A number of design elements were employed over a year-long training and implementation process to provide them with this opportunity to shift, in collaborative, participatory fashion, the very foundation of how they saw social justice work, teaching, and their identities in and beyond the classroom shifted. Steve and Kirsten, along with the other instructors, participated in a course on Critical Pedagogy, involving considerable reading around Culturally Sustaining Praxis, Ethnic studies, and learning theory content, as well as a
collaborative and reflexive curriculum building process, in which varied expertise was leveraged by pairing them with ethnic studies undergraduate students. Beyond this, all staff members received ongoing pedagogical coaching, and support for reflective activities, before, during, and after the program. To ensure Steve and Kirsten were not placed in a position where they were learning on youth of color, but rather with them, primacy was placed on the voices, stories, experiences, and expertise of youth, with my co-director and myself operating as supports and curriculum curators to provide feedback ensuring this was occurring. As such, the staff of novice educators, Steve and Kirsten included, became witnesses to youth experience; their pedagogical identity and assumptions brought into more authentic conversation with the affective geographies in which their students operated. This act of witnessing encouraged deterritorialization, a reorientation of expertise and knowledge which left novices destabilized from their planes of organization, experiencing a new perspective in regards to what mattered, and was meaningful practice in schools. Indeed, because the Ethnic and Community Studies content that Steve and Kirsten were tasked with teaching was unfamiliar to them, and relocated expertise to the historically marginalized youth they were ostensibly teaching, the organization of learning spaces and activities, their fundamental pedagogy, was necessarily collaborative and egalitarian, and could not fall into a normative ‘banking’ model. Effectively, this was a space where normative arrangements, practices, and assumptions of authority no longer worked. To participate in any sort of meaningful way required that these individuals had to rethink their pedagogy and pedagogical identities altogether, re-mediating what it meant to be an educational leader, and had to engage in travesías to be successful.

With this in mind, Steve and Kirsten – with positionalities that were rich in potential but still limited – are case studies in decolonial, expansive teacher learning; in deterritorializing
planes of normative organization. Noting that as Anzaldúa says, that the path of conocimientos – knowledge – is neither a linear not a finite one, my purpose will be to examine if and in what ways participation in the Aqueenza social design experiment, aimed at cultivating liberatory educators, opened up new lines of flight for Steve and Kirsten, and allowed them to engage in travesías that had lasting effects on their pedagogical identities and dispositions. The implications of the data should then speak to broader questions significant to the field: How can we encourage novices to engage pedagogically across racial, cultural, and linguistic difference? How can we open new avenues for connection and engagement with historically marginalized youth and communities? How can we invite novices into a transformative process around their own understandings of what it means to teach, and to be a teacher?

Methodology

My intent in this study was to learn in what ways novices’ pedagogical identity and dispositions might develop in the context of a purposeful design setting focused on decolonial and transformative outcomes. As such, the Aqueenza social design experiment in which this study takes places had the intention of inviting travesías as a form of expansive learning, and then allowing novice educators’ the space to grow and develop in new directions following such events. My study was guided by the following questions:

4) In what ways might a social design context open space for novice teachers to (re)construct their pedagogical identities as cultural-historical actors and educational leaders?

5) In what ways do novice teachers negotiate the tensions and constraints of the logic of schooling when exposed to culturally sustaining pedagogical designs?
And as has been detailed, occurred as a social design experiment, offering participants new tools and settings with which to transform their participation in extant activity systems.

Using a qualitative approach to inquiry, my data collection involved a number of sources, as noted in Table 1.

Table 1. Collected Data

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<td>Video/Audio recordings of participation in training &amp; pedagogical development sessions</td>
<td>• Video/Audio recordings of formal &amp; informal interviews (~ 2 per participant)</td>
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<td>• Collaborative Artifacts from Training &amp; Curriculum design sessions (e.g. curriculum materials, cognitive maps, Core-value construction, collaborative definitions)</td>
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<td>Written reflections on pedagogical development topics (e.g. what culturally sustaining means; who we want to be as educators; what is exciting/concerning about enacting critical pedagogy; what it means to position youth as holders &amp; producers of knowledge)</td>
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<td>Video/Audio recordings of pedagogical performance as instructors in Aquetza program coursework</td>
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<td>Video/Audio recording of Town Hall conversation with all participants</td>
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<td>Audio recordings of formal &amp; informal interviews &amp; pedagogical coaching/debrief sessions (~ 4 formal interviews per participant; 4+ informal interviews &amp; coaching sessions)</td>
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In total, the corpus of data relating to the two focal cases here involved roughly 60 hours of video of participation in classrooms and activities, 30 hours of recording from 8 formal interviews (and several more informal ones) spread across the year of the social design.
experiment. Additionally, a number of written artifacts, both individual and collaborative, were collected. This extensive body of data was intended to capture a longitudinal picture of the novice’s participation in, through, and beyond Aquetza; permitting an examination of whether, in the context of the experiment, travesías had occurred, and in what directions learning, growth, shifts in participation, and development of dispositions, praxis, and identity were taking. With this in mind, interviews and key segments of ensemble activities were transcribed, and coded with attention to several thematic, constructs, drawing on Deleuzian and Anzaldúaan theory, including (a) their Discourse practices, or more specifically, what Discourses they were using to frame their pedagogical identities and to analyze their experiences in schools, (b) turning points, or travesías, when new lines of flight were pursued, or relationship to the activity of teaching shifted in significant ways, and (c), ruptures or stasis in individuals active participation in the activity system of schooling as novice educators.

This coding process reduced the substantial quantity of data to a smaller body of evidence relating specifically to of the ways in which Steve and Kirsten’s dispositions, pedagogical identities, and participation in the activity system of schooling were unfolding over time. Considering this, the segments of data that appear in the following analysis represent shorter conversational turns from more extensive and lengthier interviews, discussions, and group activities, but are derived largely from the in-depth, multi-hour interviews and conversations that I had with Steve and Kirsten. Moreover, these data were selected systematically. Though they are not reported in precisely chronological order of collection, they correspond to reflections, either in the moment or sometimes after the fact, about, significant, common points in the ongoing study, and in Steve and Kirsten’s development. Additionally, they capture the participant’s relationships to cross-cutting themes between data sets, in other words relating to
similar challenges and experiences both Steve and Kirsten were dealing with. Finally, these turns were representative of the ontological and Discursive location that Steve and Kirsten were in at each of the moments discussed, based on their retrospective assessment of their positionality/experiences at a given time, or how they Discursively located themselves in those moments. With this methodological picture in mind, I turn now to Steve and Kirsten’s journeys, beginning early on, prior to the program, in our staff training sessions and coursework.

Confronting the nomos

As our work began in the Aquetza social design experiment, Steve and Kirsten were active participants in our training course and curriculum building process. They both read extensively around culturally sustaining and critical pedagogy, as well as gaining some initial exposure to Ethnic Studies, particularly Chicana feminist, content. Additionally, they were presented with more complex and ideologically critical frameworks for understanding the way that schools positioned students and teachers than they previously had encountered. They collaborated with other participants in identifying both the extant, colonizing aspects of schooling (Fig. 1), and in mapping out a vision of what a new, culturally sustaining, multilingual, critical pedagogical identity might look like (Fig. 2).
During this training process, Steve reflected on the immense amount he felt he was learning, regularly expressing gratitude for the opportunity and invitation to be a part of the program, and excitement at the critical possibilities participation was opening for him. Reflecting on the experience later, he noted:

“It is so satisfying, figuring out with all of you, how I might teach in that way, how I could be in a classroom in a way, that disrupts those systems and like, creates opportunities to revalidate student’s culture for those students of color but not in a reductive, assimilationist way…”

Here, Steve’s language captures and directly acknowledges that “systems” and structures might operate in schools – that they are not neutral locations – but also expresses a new relationship to the value and importance of youth and community knowledge. He explicitly notes and expresses an interest in engaging students’ funds of knowledge in a sustaining way, actively wanting to avoid “reductive, assimilationist” outcomes. Though Steve was still completing his field experiences prior to student teaching, the impact of his engagement with this content and perspectives on his pedagogy was evident. During training one day, Steve shared a moment of dialectic reflection around linguistic diversity he had experienced while teaching in his field experience. Noting how students had reacted negatively to a mix-up with differentiated, bilingual worksheets, he connected this experience back to a previous conversation our multilingual, multiracial cohort had had around emergent bilingual students in the classroom in significant ways:

“The idea of having [materials] in another language…That should just be the standard for everyone…when I accidentally passed out some of the bilingual ones for non-MLL students, they were like “What’s this?” and I sort of had the mindset and reaction of “oh, that’s the wrong one,” and **that’s very warped – there’s something wrong with that language**….In the future, I’ll present it so that it's all together, and [multilingualism] is just the standard for everyone, It's just another option.”
Here Steve, himself a monolingual English speaker, had begun questioning the normativity of his own practice, and his own thinking. This is not merely evidence of evolving strategy acquisition, but of a deeper appreciation for the language ideologies behind the pragmatic moves he was and might make, a rupturing of his monolingual plane of organization. He notes that the dichotomization of English and Spanish is not just a challenge of differentiation, but a “very warped” way of thinking, and that there was “something wrong with that language” that had reflexively popped into his head. He catches himself operating in normative ways that impact the affective geography of the classroom, evincing a growing, more culturally sustaining disposition and discourse. Moreover, even at this early juncture, he has begun to engage the social imagination in sharing with the group his vision for the future of his classroom in which multilingualism would be, “just the standard for everyone,” not altogether clear on what that would entail, but conscious that what was required to disrupt stasis was a profound ideological shift, not just pragmatic adjustment.

Steve was not alone in honing his ideological engagement and appreciation for critical and culturally sustaining practices in the classroom through participation in the training course. Kirsten, in a field experience semester in a majority White school setting, found herself in a conversation on the difficult experiences several Latina students were having in school – they were feeling racially positioned and bullied by staff members – and ultimately found herself drawing on theory and new forms of literacy to make sense of the affective experiences her students were making sense of. Specifically, in a moment when these students had divulged a troubling and emotional situation they had experienced, she leveraged the ideas of third space and syncretic literacy in which we had engaged in training the prior week to aid them, and herself, in making meaningful sense of these events in this classroom context:
And that's when she told me about her friend who was about to sit down and the
teacher came down and pushed him into their seat, and there's been other
conversations that have gone on in that classroom that have been inappropriate, and
so that's when I said, "Okay, so this is what... This is... So, what you're talking about
right now... What's... " And she's reading 'A Child Called It,' And I said, "So,
remember the vocab word last week?" And she said, "Yeah." And I said, "Okay,
what was the word?" "It was 'abuse'." I said, "Great, what were the different types of
abuse that you heard?" She goes, "verbal abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse." And
then we went through all the things and I said, "Awesome. So, what do you think
that was in that classroom?" And she said, "That was verbal abuse." I said, "How did
verbal abuse make David feel... Or Dave feel in a book?" And she said, "Really bad.
He got really quiet." I said, "Yeah, and what did you do in that situation?" And she's
like, "I got quiet."

Kirsten, at this point, did not identify this moment herself as syncretic, nor as third space (though
we did subsequently discuss it as such in a coaching context); yet her actions show a
dispositional impulse to enact precisely the practices we had read and discussed earlier as means
of welcoming, rather than dismissing, the affective dimensions of learning. Rather than silence
the conversation, she notices the importance of this moment of sense-making to the youth in both
affective/socio-emotional, and developmental terms, and leverages content – the vocab list they
had covered the previous week, and were working with to craft a story that day – not to
tangentially return the youth to the master-script of the classroom objective, but to generate a
third space. This becomes a moment of syncretism, linking academic content as a way to deepen
students’ sense-making around an affective moment important to them, while simultaneously
helping them more robustly understand and relate to the content itself (Gutiérrez, 2014).

Even, however, as such progression began to be seen in Steve and Kirsten’s pedagogical
thinking, they both struggled to unshackle themselves from their latent attachments to the
affective economies and geographies of schooling. Together, Kirsten and I watched a video of
her teaching a lesson on vocabulary, noting the ways in which her instruction, while engaging in
its energy, was largely teacher-driven, and only elicited participation from the students in the
immediate front of the classroom. This dynamic had gone unnoticed to her while she had been at the front of the room, and she was agitated afterwards that her vision for a more broadly engaged, egalitarian classroom, had not been realized. As our conversation continued, Kirsten became frustrated, less with her lesson itself, and more with her inability to generate alternative strategies with which she might have re-mediated the dilemma. She exclaimed:

“even like this situation we’re going over right now when you’re thinking and you’re asking about how do I create these invitations [to engage more students], even, even knowing what I’m doing there, and knowing what I want to do other than like, what we talked about, it’s, it’s very hard for me to think of any other way. It’s not that I’m not trying to; it’s really that I can’t think of anything…..”

She continued, delving into her own analysis of where here frustration and inability came from—her own “programming” by years of her stasis and comfort in normative schooling:

“…it’s a reflection of my schooling, and the way that I’ve been programmed but I, It’s frustrating, like when you’re asking me that, I’m like, ‘ Why can’t I think of anything?’ like I’m trying, I go group work, well that’s not, well duh, but what am I gonna say, what am I gonna, how am I facilitating this, besides think-pair-share and group work, I can’t think of it, and the way that you said how ‘bout having two groups converse with one another in those different ways and trying to create more conversation that’s bleeding beyond just the vocabulary in terms of how we’re going to think about the vocabulary, what like, I couldn’t get there. It is, it is ZPD, it is zone of proximal development, but like, Come on! I want this, why cant I get this! [laughter]”

Kirsten, even, “knowing what I want to do” (in broader terms, striving for a culturally sustaining classroom) is stymied, frustrated with herself, as she nearly shouted – “why can’t I get this!” – unable to find a line of flight that will lead her towards the praxis she wants to enact. Kirsten was acutely aware not just of her (present) lack pragmatic solutions, but also how their identities intersect with these practices. As we consider the difficulties of preparing culturally sustaining educators, and cultivating culturally sustaining, decolonial dispositions, this issue of uncertainty, of being lost and untethered, is critical to notice. Tied up in her classroom positionality, or pedagogical identity, were the feelings of control, certainty, of being confident and secure with
knowing precisely what to do and who to be. This work, moving away from the *nomos*, was destabilizing, and difficult, something evident as Steve noted in later reflection that he had found it difficult to balance the new approaches we had discussed and mapped in the course, with the historicity and expectations of systems he had long participated in, sharing:

“That urge to talk at students, it’s not something I like, but it’s hard to break out of. And it… because that’s just how things are usually done [in schools].”

Steve’s Discourse here, that he finds it “hard to break out of” “just how things are done,” points to the power of stasis, and normative planes of organization. It isn’t just, as Kirsten noted, that exactly what to do is nebulous, but that the *nomos*, the logic of “how things are done” has a pull of its own. Here, in new pedagogical and affective terrain, the clarity of stasis and *nomos* was hard to come by.

In both these cases, transcending limiting pedagogical practice was not just a function of strategies, nor of cultural assumptions and beliefs (both of these individuals were already beginning to position themselves in more asset based ideologically terrain), but of core identity, of learning and development around what it meant to be a new type of teacher. As Kirsten articulates, both she and Steve are in a Zone of Proximal Development, one that they have created, a space of destabilization and actively not knowing, where vision outstrips ability. Such a moment represents deterritorialization, where the safe terrain of stasis, “how things are usually done,” was beginning to come apart at the seams, uncomfortable to individuals who had always been successful and in control in academic settings, but also full of decolonial potential.

It is at this point in the trajectories of many potential social justice educators that we as teacher educators begin to worry about their preparedness, concerned they will fail to acquire needed pragmatic skills (Zeichner & Flessner, 2009). To compensate for such lack in clarity, concerned with their emotional destabilization, extant skillsets are offered as stop-gaps;
strategies that are meant to be mastered and flexibly modified in the future (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Lampert, et al, 2013; Lampert, 2009; Windschitl, et al. 2012). Yet such an approach, while perhaps comforting to the novice, remains more often than not tethered to the same limiting ideologies (neoliberal White innocence) we seek to move past. Moreover, it implies a notion of learning as linear, with clear-cut objects to be mastered, rather than as an intersubjective, ongoing process. For Steve and Kirsten, introducing an external set of strategies would have undermined the dynamism of their learning – a form of next step assistance that diminishes robust learning, and draws them back to their colonial plane of organization; back to safety of practices and strategies that are clearly known, yes, but also back to the oppressiveness of stasis, and strategies and practices that have not worked in the past. To resort to known, strategies that orient themselves towards academic outcomes, rather than the affective, decolonial lines of flight that were unfolding, reinforces the ontological distance between teacher and their potential students, removing affective reality and experience from their development and consideration of what it means to do the work of teaching. There is thus a tension and line that must be walked, and designed for, as such next step assistance – the reversal towards pragmatic strategies which do not emanate from the decolonial imagination – fails to cultivate culturally sustaining dispositions, because the practices historically marginalized youth need, and their teachers need to be skilled in, do not yet exist.

With this in mind, our designs must challenge individuals, with support and guidance, to grow without the limiting, shallow aid of next step assistance; instead individuals engage in proleptic processes, envisioning approaches, illuminating new practices, and actionable solutions, which do not yet exist, and can not be easily codified into an set of accessible strategies which can be mechanically implemented, but ultimately become limiting. So while
Steve and Kirsten found themselves in a frustrating state of uncertainty, these moments were actually tremendously generative points of rupture, leading, as Anzaldúa (2002) says, “to a different way of relating to people,” or, “the creation of a new world,” (p. 310).

**Designing for Travesías**

Anzaldúa (1989) notes that *travesías* are crossings, steps forward in consciousness that foster *la facultad*, or openness to the affective geographies we exist in, and being “excruciatingly alive to the world” (p. 60). If *travesías* are the goal, our design must create opportunities to follow new lines of flight, nurturing dispositions that lead to witnessing, and embodying *la facultad* through affective witnessing. Attempting to do this in *Aquetza*, our training plans and designs continued to evolve, seeking to embrace the destabilization and dissonance of Steve and Kirsten’s discomfort, as well as the struggles that other participants felt as well. Building from our readings and cognitive-mapping activities, we employed practices – including *teatro del oprimidio* (Boal, 1979), and cross-department lesson planning partnerships between Ethnic Studies and pre-service teacher students – seeking to create the conditions that might push the entire group, including Steve and Kirsten, into a pedagogical imaginary (Dominguez, 2014) in which dilemmas of practice, culture, affect, and politics had to be confronted, and new practices negotiated to respond. This was a rich, tertiary space (Wartofsky, 1979) of intersubjective learning, in which participants had to work as a collective, remaining consistent with the ideological values of decolonization and cultural sustenance, while also reconciling their own perspectives and desired pedagogical identities (Matusov, 2001, 1998).

The most significant aspect of the design, however, was the *Aquetza* space itself. From the outset, the program’s structure of interdisciplinary modules and syncretic literacy projects openly invited the affective experiences of youth to be discussed and entertained. This created a
dynamic in which all of the instructors, regardless of their backgrounds, were challenged to rethink their relationships to schooling, and how they might interact with the participants in an affective geography that had been laid bare. For Steve and Kirsten, individuals with extensive and practiced relationships to normative schooling not just as students themselves, but as teachers, their unfamiliarity with the content, and the affective terrain that youth were openly exploring, left them in a state that demanded a constant repositioning of expertise – this was no longer a space in which cultural relevance was enough. Indeed, their successful engagement as educational leaders depended wholly on their witnessing of youth voices, a dynamic engagement on a level they had never before considered, having only interacted with youth of color in classroom settings where they, ultimately, were the arbiters of knowledge. This happened both in their classroom interactions, but also in profound ways through the informal, daily interactions they had with youth in informal spaces where cultural capital and power were shifted to the Latin@ and Chican@ youth. Kirsten, reflecting a few days after the program on what had been most profound about her participation, shared an observation on the affective significance of this experience:

“Coming from my background…it was so interesting …sitting at a table, and everyone culturally talking about something, and me not knowing what they were talking about. And that happened multiple times…. And this is what people felt at my school… I knew that, but to feel it is a completely different thing…. to for once in my life feel like a minority. I can't phrase it any other way, obviously you're not, but in that circumstance, yeah, culturally different… different….in my future classroom…I'll have maybe five-tenths of one percent of an understanding of that feeling.”

Kirsten had spent considerable time in schools with historically marginalized youth. She had, as she noted, attended school with individuals who identified as people of color. As described, her commitments to equity and analytical frameworks to critique normative practices around race and culture in schools were strong, and continuing to develop. Yet, in each of those settings,
social power and capital had operated much differently for her. Here, she was the one unfamiliar with what was normative for the space, and for the community, and while her discourse was perhaps not yet reflective of a decolonial language – e.g., her use of the term minority rather than historically marginalized – her recognition of the meaningfulness to her future classroom of experiencing the affect of this experience is an important moment in her growth – “I knew that, but to feel it.” Even with her background of working in emotionally intense, sexual-assault support contexts, here was an experience that, by including her as a co-equal participant in new affective terrain, pushed her to shift, as well as witness, an encounter with something that challenged the normativity of her own experience, and the stability of her identity, and participation in schooling; a travesía of experience, a moment of expansive learning.

Steve had similar experiences and reactions, regularly sharing how gracious and honored he felt to participate, and what an honor it was to hear from these youth in this context, where they were clearly the producers and holders of knowledge. In the module he facilitated throughout the week, Steve found that while he had considered some of the issues that were present in creating a culturally sustaining space – attention to language diversity, support of ‘gatekeeping skills,’ thoughtful and dynamic content selection, attention to youth cultural production and interests – other factors and needs arose for the students that he was less prepared for. Indeed, though he had planned his entire unit around the use of syncretic literacy – merging the personal and the academic in research projects – and been involved in planning the program, in setting up the format for the Encuentro performances, conversations, academic modules, and syncretic research projects that were meant to merge the personal and academic, the visceral content, the affect that youth poured into these spaces, was jarring for Steve, who had never
experienced cultural difference in this dimension. Reflecting himself on the most significant aspect of his experience in the program, Steve noted:

“That emotional component that I saw when kids can spend this much time together, but it has that combination of an academic focus, but academics that go back to their communities and their experiences and their culture and their identity. Like, what can happen when you have that and the... I don't know. How it like... Those kids can open up and how cathartic it seemed to be for them. And I can't know, but it just seemed, seemed really worthwhile. Just when they opened up and just... Some serious growth and transformation during the week. So, that was really just really cool to see, and so powerful.”

This statement reflected his regular affirmations of how honored and gracious he was to be there, to be witness to the stories these youth had to share. His wonder at the emergence of affective and emotional content, even as he himself had designed the conditions to invite it, speak to the ease with which ontological distance can be maintained, even when approaching content meant to be equity-oriented and relevant. Without an experience, a travesía, to disrupt that distance, to bring the affect of culture into conversation with it content, can foreclose upon pedagogy becoming truly sustaining. In awe of the youth performances one evening, as we walked back to our dorms, Steve would say: “I really hope I can make just a small piece of that happen in my own classroom,” essentially confirming, in his wonderment at the power of affect and the visceral to the youth participant’s learning and engagement, that the design had supported him to not just entertain the idea of the syncretic, or be able to write lessons with it in mind, but to deterritorialize his stasis in relation to classroom practice. Steve had not maintained an ontological distance because he had wanted to, but because he had operated for two decades of life in a normative plane of organization that rendered such distances normative. Here, supported and encouraged, Steve not only closed that distance, but in witnessing the stories of these youth, embraced the importance of affect as vital to his future classroom. Though the ideas and experiences in training had been generative, it was the opportunity to engage in different ways
and on different terms, to witness youth as producers and holders of knowledge, that ultimately led to this travesía: “That was unexpected,” he said of the emotional aspects of the space, “but once it was actually happening, I mean, it totally went with, I think, what we were trying to do in the program.” On personal and professional levels, following this new line of flight, he was able to crystallize why he ought to transform his approach to expertise and teaching in the classroom, and why the activity system of schooling needed to shift, a desire he himself captured when reflecting on what all this would mean to his future pedagogy, noting, in proleptic terms, that he wanted his pedagogy, “to demonstrate how people have those depths and stories and experiences, that can be really tough and profound, but that aren't going to come up most of the time. And that's just something I want to keep with me.”

The full extent of his travesía became evident on the second to last night of the program, at a community Encuentro (a recursive, open-mic style opportunity for sharing ideas and work, and receiving feedback). This was the first time Steve had shared with the full group, and nervously, he began by announcing that: “You all have been so amazing and impressive, sharing your stories, and that’s why I wanted to share a story, share a part of my identity.” Steve then proceeded to share the story of a close relative’s suicide, describing how this individual had been a major factor in leading him into teaching, and whose memory he was carrying now, and had leveraged in an earlier teatro activity. This story concluded with the following episode, Steve’s closing remarks, and responses from several youth participants, two of which are recorded here:

Steve: To me how it all connects is, that, um, just being here this week, I’ve just been, so amazed at the stories you all are willing to share, and how you’re, um just willing to express yourselves, and uh, y’know, I know, I’m White, that’s obvious…

[Group laughter]
...I don’t know how it feels, I obviously won’t ever identify as Chicano, but I’m tired of fucking oppression, and uh, I just, I hope that when I teach I can bring, um, the type of space, and the types of interactions, and just, um, create opportunities, for, y’know, for students, for youth, to hopefully, um, take, take out some of that oppression they feel, and, uh, be an ally.

_Luis_: You know uh, I noticed you’re a pretty quiet person, you don’t really speak that much, but I want to thank you because that’s touching, it’s not really easy for someone to come up and say such a tragedy like that, and the way you said the heart keeps on beating, that’s, that’s powerful, that’s very powerful.

_Sonia_: I don’t think I could ever imagine [Steve] cussing in my life…

_[Group laughter]_

...It was just like really beautiful, you never really notice that even though a person is quiet and stuff how much they can hold in too, and um, like we come here and then like kind of in a way talk bad about White people because of our experiences and stuff, but the fact that you’re here and you still support us, that means a lot to us, that really does.

As Steve notes, this was a significant moment for him, a moment when we can clearly note a qualitative turning point, a rupture in his own Discourse. Thinking back to the individual who, 10 months prior, had shared his desire to work with ‘Hispanic’ students in a high poverty area that needed his “good work” and expertise, here was an educator foregrounding his own racial positionality, his Whiteness, acknowledging his own relationship to the work of social justice (an ally), and his desire not to save, not to bestow his benevolence upon them, but to “create opportunities” for their voices. Moreover, it is significant to note the shift in Discourse; that Steve now uses the Chicano identity signifier that was salient to and used by those present, and their communities.

It is additionally important to note that the students reach out to validate, not console Steve’s story. This was not a moment of confessional Whiteness, or a claim at an intellectual alibi, as nothing in Steve’s discourse begged for validation. Rather, it was an attempt at
following the deterritorializing line of flight that had emerged for him earlier, and a moment when his participation in the activity system of schooling profoundly shifted. By sharing something important to him while still acknowledging his location and positionality in a systemic, affective economy of oppression, and relinquishing some expertise and privilege, the normative plane of organization in which he had always done school came apart; and in doing so, he shared aspirations for how he might engage with youth like them in his future work begins to map out proleptic hopes and possibilities. Sonia, in her response, confirms this, not validating, but acknowledging the shift, hinting at the discomfort involved in this deterritorialization. She notes the difficulty of being present when the youth, “talk bad about White people,” but her appreciation that “you’re here,” not ontologically distant, but with them in that space. Confirmation of this new relationship to expertise in his work with youth came following this performance. When asked about how he felt about having shared, and the responses he received, he noted that:

“I wanted to wait both because I wasn’t sure what I wanted to say yet, but also because I wanted to give these kids an opportunity to, you know share their stories. I didn’t want to go up there the second day and be like, “this is what it’s all about,” because I don’t know what it’s all about.”

These comments – both the performance and the reflection - are in a fundamentally new Discourse than the one he was operating in when he first expressed interest in working in underserved communities a year previous. In fact his positioning of his own expertise, is desire to “create opportunities” and acknowledgement that “I don’t know what it’s all about”, craft the picture of an individual who has engaged in a *travesia*, a crossing towards another pedagogical identity, breaking the stasis of his normative, comfortable terrain, and striking out into a new direction of engagement with youth, and participation in schooling, inspired by their
transformative interactions with the affect and expertise that historically marginalized youth were able to bring to bear in spaces that welcomed and valued such knowledge.

For Steve and Kirsten, the result of the experiences was generative new ways to think about their praxis and conceptualize how to respond to challenges in the classroom. In reflection following the program, Kirsten noted:

“I think that the stuff that we did…these aren't just procedural things we enact in the classroom. There are ideas, and there are concepts that are bigger than just one-step, two-step. And so, through the readings and understanding student-centered and understanding all different systems, you can recognize that, rather than feeling in the classroom like you need to go back to a book, you need to go back to something else, like referring to the ideas you've had previously.”

This reflection, seeing the act of teaching as being about “concepts that are bigger” than just step by step enactments, shows not just an ethereal pedagogical identity, but a dispositional development, anchored in real classroom work. This is a novice educator who recognizes the complexity, fluidity, and evolving nature of teaching. She is aware that solutions to her problems in the classroom will not be solved not by going “back to a book,” to stasis, and the reductive, technocratic, operant approaches to teaching that are proliferating so problematically. Rather, Kirsten is positioning herself as someone who is prepared to “rise to the concrete” (Gutiérrez & Vossoughi, 2010) leveraging “the ideas,” the robust understandings of culturally sustaining and decolonizing pedagogy that underlie her vision of teaching, and her own ingenuity and reflection that grow from those, to address dilemmas of practice. This does not necessarily show she has solved her earlier dilemma – of being at a loss for what to do, pragmatically, around a particular lesson – but it shows an individual no longer befuddled by that prospect. She is engaged in learning that is process-oriented, dynamic, and situated, rather than object-oriented and static. Having reached some level of comfort with the uncertainty involved in the decolonial line of flight she was now following, its reasonable to characterize her learning as expansive, shifting...
the way in which she participates (or will participate) in the activity system of schooling. Her appreciation for what she saw in practice has bolstered her belief in the possibility of imagining better solutions than those that might be easily offered by normative practice, found in her old plane of organization. The discomfort and instability from before has subsided, and Kirsten rests somewhat secure in the knowledge that reliance on asset based ideological frameworks will see her through.

**Exploring New Lines of Flight**

Steve and Kirsten completed the *Aquetza* program excited and filled with energy to begin work in their own classrooms. Kirsten, who would be starting her first semester as a teacher of record that fall, described what she was most excited and intent upon working on as she transitioned into her classroom:

“I think working with the Third Space, that's huge. That's something that that's gonna be a way that I'm gonna be pushing back a lot because the way that classrooms are constructed, or the way they've been mimicked in my school so far is that whole, the teacher has the power, banking system, I’m entire holder of knowledge. And so, yeah, working with students' conversations and bringing that to the forefront of where we move together, and having it being student centered in terms of [that].”

Such a statement echoes the dispositional action she was already beginning to demonstrate from her previous semester in a field experience, but here, her Discourse is more accurate, more confident in its *telos*. Her own language captures the dynamics at play, the” banking system” and colonial distribution of expertise that is on offer in her school, as well as naming third space as some of the “ideas” that she intends to fall back on, that she will rise to yet-undefined concrete practices from. Connecting to her earlier *travesía* around expertise and social power, we see an appreciation, displayed in her dispositional stance and positioning of her pedagogical identity, as someone who will work intently to ensure that her classroom is a space where youth voices are appreciated, and student-centered is robust and meaningful.
For his part, the *travesía* around identity and expertise that Steve had during the program lingered, as he reflected on the eve of beginning his student teaching semester:

“As a White male, as someone who is part of the history of the U.S. of being the oppressors and being the dominating group, and I’ve benefitted from it, figuring out how to make lessons and interactions that have kids doing the work, and me being the facilitator, because of the identity that I have. And that’s how it should be for like, instructors, teachers, of any racial and cultural identities, but for where I’m coming from, its different because like, I don’t know, I can’t know their experiences…[I’m focused on] figuring out ways for them to get there while I’m still part of the conversation.”

What is significant here is not just his recognition and positioning of his own Whiteness, but his connection between this reflection, and what it means for his pedagogical identity. He notes his interest in foregrounding student agency and expertise, allowing youth to dictate conversations in culturally sustaining directions, while he operates as facilitator, “still part of the conversation,” rather than the expert teacher, monitoring and directing where conversations might go. He went on to note exposure in *Aquetza* to the Critical Race Theory, “idea of majoritarian and counter-story, that to me seems so powerful, and I think that will stick with me. I want to find a way for that to be in my work,” going on to express his specific desires around this with regards to the English language arts curriculum he was due to teach and his hope to be able to bring a decolonial, counter-story lens to his literature curriculum. Significant here is both the prolepsis, envisioning a culturally sustaining approach to praxis, but that this vision of praxis is emerging from a fundamentally new Discourse; his understanding of this work is not as culturally relevant ‘diverse perspectives,’ but as ideologically rooted counter-story. The difference is one of implied definition, and while it may be subtle, it is significant. Moreover, as he imagined these alternative practices, he noted that he was aware that: “…it’s tricky because I’ll have essential questions, and put it in that direction, but I’d still want them to get there themselves.” once again displaying a new dispositional approach and pedagogical identity in relation to historically
marginalized youth – recognizing that even with decolonizing content, his role is not to prescribe a set vision, but to “create the opportunities” he described during his Encuentro sharing. Again considering definition, this is a profoundly differently understanding of what learning is. He positions himself as mediator, not arbiter, and in so doing, constructs a pedagogical identity and telos of learning open, sustaining and nurturing, to the directions of decolonization and liberation chosen by the intersubjective youth voices in his classroom. Such a stance in relation to learning becomes possible expressly because he had, in Aquetza, been part of such collaborative learning, and that process made transparent.

This aspirational data, as evidence of the profound impact travesía experiences had on individuals, was exciting to document. However, the critical component of the travesía is its aftermath - that “after ‘it’ happens,” one can’t stay in the same place and be comfortable; that the individual continues following the new line of flight, accepts the deterritorialization rather than returning to the safety of stasis. Thus to fully assess if this immersive, destabilizing design and engagement with youth in non-normative contexts was effective at cultivating culturally sustaining dispositions and identities and expansive learning requires that we monitor to see longitudinally, in the presence of external pressures, whether these dispositions were robustly cultivated in Steve and Kirsten enough to resist the nomos of schools, and to shift participation in lasting ways.

**Resisting Wash-out**

It was at this juncture that more considerable variance emerged in the data, and in Kirsten and Steve’s trajectories. Invigorated by his experience, his connections, and the relationships with youth he had built during Aquetza, Steve was tremendously excited to begin his student teaching at a school in the Sunrise community he had initially wanted to teach in, but with a new
positionality in approaching that work. He was excited about his curriculum, and about how he might leverage his ELA content to provide spaces for youth story, voice, and affect; the moving line of flight he had begun to follow during *Aquetza*. Yet a month in, he found himself frustrated with the limitations that the context and dynamics of the school itself placed on his realization of these desires, at the power of the nomos worked to enforce stasis and adherence to existing affective geographies on him. He shared during a Town Hall gathering of staff participants that:

“...The kids are great, but the systems that are in place are really... As someone who's just starting, it's hard to... We can't do those interpersonal relationships as much. It takes a lot longer and just... A semester is... That's a few months but there's gonna be some kids who would have taken a year, probably, to really develop that, a sort of relationship where we can work together. Even though I'll try my best, obviously, this semester, but it's just, those classes, that's sort of getting me also. It's hard not to switch into, stand in front of the room mode when there's that many kids in there."

Steve found himself once again struggling with a dilemma he had articulated long ago – fighting the pull that the front of the room, the plane of normative organization in the act of teaching, had for someone occupying the role of teacher. It was hard to shift his participation in these spaces. More significantly, moving from the temporally short, but extremely intensive setting of *Aquetza*, Steve found that the daily rigors of teaching interfered with his ability to forge the sort of generative, meaningful personal relationships that had been so moving and transformative for him over the summer; his pursuit of this line of flight was curtailed. He became increasingly frustrated with the constant negativity he experienced from other teachers towards students, and how this construction of teacher-identity school-wide linked to the breakdown in his own capacity to have positive relationships with youth. He noted that what he was constantly hearing in staff meetings and the teachers lounge, “just represents to me what their classrooms might be like or probably like, and then it's just sort of telling me, well, that's where maybe these things are coming from or where they're going.” Here, the ‘these things’ to which he was referring...
were negative, damaged relationships between youth and the school institution, “a toxic environment” he was eager to repair, but felt constrained to effect in his role as student-teacher, and necessary-association with negative peer-colleagues. It was a considerable tension, and one that left him regularly second-guessing himself. At one point, a flyer with stereotypical, racist imagery of mustachioed Mexican characters was distributed, and though he tried to raise concerns over this with his supervising teacher, he was rebuffed, leaving him isolated, and feeling as though he had failed his Chican@ students; he was no longer able to take comfort in stasis and normativity, but uncomfortable with his inability to adequately pursue decolonial practices and participation, and live a new identity.

Kirsten, however, had a somewhat transposed experienced. Having accepted a position at a rigorous charter-school, Kirsten was almost immediately confronted and frustrated by what she saw as the problematics of neoliberal school-reform for social justice, and the uninterrogated significance of an all-White staff teaching all students of color in exacting and highly disciplined ways. She was frustrated, she said, because while the school’s mission statement ostensibly acknowledged, “what has systematically happened in those communities,” it was, “not following through within the classrooms,” where command and control, assimilationist pedagogy was the norm. Her words capture the claustrophobia of the experience, noting that, “every day is a constant reminder of what's going on within the school systems that are creating detrimental effects with students, and then understanding that you're constantly being pushed to follow in that, to get in line and follow that.” While this is not an ideal experience for a novice critical educator to have, her ability to articulate it speaks to her own process of deterritorialization, of her ability to engage and leverage a new Discourse in understanding and negotiating this plane of organization. Conscious of the affective geography and economy at play, Kirsten is linking and
analyzing what she is seeing, connecting the practices of her school to “systems that are creating detrimental effects with students,” rather than falling into the easy trap of pathologizing youth themselves for their resistance, or internalizing failures herself. In the face of this, the dispositions and identity cultivated by the powerful experience of the travesías in Aquetza shined through, as she noted that:

“That experience of all of a sudden, having to take your [critical] identity and push it inwards ….I don't know if I wanna be able to do that…."

Continuing on to note that:

“…I wouldn't feel okay in what I am doing in a classroom without trying to disrupt things. Plain and simple.”

Despite external pressure, that identity, the disposition to enact positive practice was resistant in powerful ways. In keeping with the travesía, the expansive learning, she cannot go back again, “I don’t know if I wanna be able to do that,” she says, a quality that eventually allowed her to bring some of her culturally sustaining goals to life, and to shift her participation, even in this restrictive environment.

After some initial struggles around classroom management and other quirks of instructional delivery – such as speaking far too rapidly and moving about erratically while giving directions – Kirsten, settled into to her critical-pedagogical identity, and found herself in a position where she was almost quickly building strong relationships with youth, and using her writing curriculum and classroom space to mediate tensions students had with other teachers in the building, and with the affective economy and terrain of the school itself. She noted as much in reflection after a lesson on slam poetry and spoken word had elicited a response from her students to the “No Excuses” sign that was prominently hung on a school wall:

“[the No Excuses wall] definitely created a rift between, I feel like, administration and students. When we talked about "No excuses" in writing class though,... They
came back in later and they're like, "Miss, that's on our wall!" And I was like, "Yup. And what do you think about that?" And having those types of conversations. I think it's illuminated a lot of things that were... I think they've gotten beaten down so much they didn't notice, and then when [it was] brought it to attention, which is a good thing, they're like, "Oh wow! That's bullshit!"

Such work is evidence of Kirsten’s successful deployment of the third space, of creating culturally sustaining invitations to youth, of creating room for youth to engage in critical examination of the systems and structures in which they lived and learned; the line of flight, and decolonial, proleptic goal of fostering critical reflection she had set for herself prior to beginning her semester. So while her year had begun with less optimism, her dispositions and the commitments she had earlier made – to create third space and invite youth voices in – gradually built towards more generative, culturally sustaining praxis, as youth engagement grew across her curriculum.

Elsewhere, despite his frustrations, Steve persisted in working to enact the vision he had articulated over the summer of bringing counter-narrative and at least a “small piece” of affective truth into his ELA curriculum, Three months into his semester, Steve discussed how he had attempted to employ this lens across several texts, with varying success. Though he felt like he, “blew it” at times, he was particularly proud of his approach to the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* as an example of incorporating counter-story, and crafting a culturally sustaining unit that, “challenges what kids might expect about Muslim women, and having them open up to that.” After a successful lesson introducing the text in which youth eagerly engaged with journals and one another around the essential question of ‘how much control do you have over your life?’

Steve reflected that:

“I want that to start, to keep drawing on that question [as the unit moves forward],…I want them to come to it themselves, to make them realize that circumstances, where people come from, and even if they don’t get fully there, they’ll think about how things are shaped.”
Such framing reflects that despite the frustrations and limitations Steve was encountering through his significant lack of agency as a student teacher, the disposition towards culturally sustaining ends remained present, the line of flight active, and new participation present, if constrained. Moreover, even in the face of external pressure, his theory of learning has moved beyond ‘competency,’ and remains a procedural and aspirational one, committed to the belief that “even if they don’t get fully there, they’ll think about how things are shaped,” and generative, culturally nurturing learning will have occurred. That said, as he reflected on the unit late in the semester, he noted that as before, it had been less successful as he encountered limitations in encouraging youth themselves to subscribe to this dialogic object of learning, and participate in schooling in new ways. Due to the context of the school itself, rather than finding youth eager to pursue critical discussions, particularly those about race, he found that this thinking was either avoided, or self-policied by the students. He shared that:

“I would hear occasionally the freshmen talking to one another about it. And then I try and ask, my small attempt to sort of do third space direction or just because I wanted to hear their thoughts, but this sort of goes with the school and what's happening. They'd be like, "Oh, no. It's nothing," as if they're in trouble or as if they were out and cussing someone out, or just saying something they weren't supposed to say. While I honestly wanted to hear from them was, "Well, damn, I guess I don't have that space here," where they feel they can just talk to me about what they said. So, yeah. That's something I wanted to work on, and that was a disappointment.”

While it is significant to note the concerns and limitations to his enactment of critical praxis and a critical theory of learning here, that students quickly dismissed and refused to engage over race, it is also significant to note his discursive and analytical framing of the situation. His language conceptualizes the dilemma through a more theoretically robust lens, framing it as drawing out third space, and Steve identifies and analyzes the source of the tension in enacting this as the dynamics of a school in which negativity about students was prominent. Moreover, his
disappointment is itself significant in the context of understanding how the travesías of the summer impacted him. Even in the face of constraint, minimal agency, and prior stumbles, Steve endeavored to enact the praxis he wanted, to bring to life a space in which more richly conceived learning happened, and participation in schooling was different. He had not resigned to the limitations and contradictions he had experienced, accepting, “just how things are usually done,” to return to his own words from months prior, but was still guided by critical dispositions – beliefs and convictions about the type of pedagogy and pedagogical identity he wanted – just dismayed that this had not been able to fully happen, that “I don’t have that space here”. His travesía, his knowing, will not let him retreat; he instead poignantly feels the tension of a school that he worried was “conditioning” him towards authoritarian practices he didn’t believe in. Essentially, there is hope, and resistance, in his dismay.

Kirsten, though having had more success in negotiating the constraints of the nomos within her classroom, did continually find difficulties in negotiating the contradiction of the space she sought to create, with the one in her broader school. She described this process as feeling “like I'm pushing on more and more, with every step forward then I have five steps back.” One such incident came when administrators initiated a grade level search of students’ belongings for drug paraphernalia, and she was confronted with exactly such a contradiction, when a student asked her, "You said you value our voice, but you're not listening to us right now." In response, she recalled that she: “was like, "Yep, I agree." But I didn't know what to say.” Feeling pressure to hold the administrative line, she reported that she deferred this crucial conversation, and noted that in following up with that youth, “that door [to having the conversation had] just slammed shut.” Her dismay at her own struggle with this tension was obvious as she reflected:
“looking back on this, I'm disappointed that I didn't say something [to the admin, or student] and I just kind of was like, "Okay, this is what they're doing, … now and they have to do this." …That's disappointing in me, and what I know to be right.”

Again, while dismay and disappointment is not ideal to see in our novices, that it appears here, paired with her ability to, in her own words, analyze the situation in the context of her dispositions and beliefs systems around culturally sustaining pedagogy – “what I know to be right” – is in fact positive evidence that her travesía was not a momentary shift in perspective and participation, a temporally short reflection of her immersion in the contextual experience of Aqetza, but a more lasting shift in her pedagogical identity. Indeed, following on the heels of this event, Kirsten enacted critical responses to several other situations later in her semester, including one in which she had to confront a colleague around problematic language, herself contesting discourses of White Innocence. She recounted the event at length:

“She [a fellow teacher] wanted to create, put ICE on the board, and have that as a reference, because she's heard kids talk about that in the past. And while we're engaged in this conversation, I pointed out, I said, "Well, do you know what else ICE stands for?" And she said, "No. What?" And so, I went into that, acronym, …Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and told her that might be detrimental, especially in a testing environment, to see that on the board, especially when you consider what many of our students are going through, seeing that, and she got rather defensive and said, "But they've used this in other classes and I'm just using it to try to help them and I'm really getting sick of people making me feel bad when I'm just trying to help them."

She continued, noting that she explained to her colleague:

“With ICE on the board, you're not acknowledging what students are going through. You're just saying, 'Look. Here is an....Acronym, for students to reference during their test.'

This led to a longer discussion in which Kirsten and her colleague went back and forth, eventually arriving at a point where, through Kirsten’s advice and insistence on a more inclusive, participatory theory of learning, the individual would open the floor for her students to weigh in on the decision of whether or not to use the acronym, rather than it being an externally defined
(and deeply problematic) object of their activity system, yet another thing adding to the affective intensity of the school’s geography. In conclusion, Kirsten reflected that:

“We got through that uncomfortableness. But it was definitely... It was a heated moment, and not intentionally. I kept continually saying, "I'm not saying this to put down your idea of referencing back, or no, that's a great idea, but you also need to be thinking about all these things that are going on within our student community's culture that might be affecting their relationship with your classroom material.”

Here, Kirsten shows that having deterritorialized her own stasis, and herself still feeling in process, frustrated with her moments of failure and contradiction in her critical, decolonizing vision, and decolonial participation in schooling, she was still prepared to advocate for her students, to lay bare the affective geographies of her school, encouraging and insisting that her colleagues, situated in a White innocence frameworks in which this individual was, “sick of people making [her] feel bad,” were prepared to engage with a measure of discomfort in the interest of their students. Not only is this a significant moment in her praxis, in her willingness to make herself uncomfortable, once again, in the interest of her students, but it reflects her own bridging of the ontological distance between herself and her students. Had Kirsten remained in the comfort of stasis, even if she had momentarily appreciated cultural diversity, this conversation, indeed any familiarity with ICE itself, was not something that she would ever have needed to engage with. Indeed there was no obligatory reason for her to do so now, let alone consider the affective significance of that acronym being placed in a classroom. Yet her trajectory of learning, richly imbued with theory and authentic witnessing of youth had produced a travesía, altering her dispositions, shifting her participation, and shaping her pedagogical identity such that engaging in this difficult conversation, deterritorializing affective space, was an imperative; she could not go back, and had to act.

Looking Forward
Steve and Kirsten ended their semesters in considerably different places. Though she had certainly faced her share of resistance and frustration, reflecting that, “I never thought it was gonna be easy, but I thought that I would be better at it than I was, and am,” Kirsten was optimistic about her ability and potential to enact culturally sustaining, critical pedagogy in her classroom. She noted:

“Of course, I feel like it's possible. And the reason I say that is I’ve seen it be possible [this summer]. I've seen teachers also get beaten down, where they were actually making great strides this year. And that's been disheartening, however, they're still making pretty big strides within their classrooms. And so... Yeah. I really... I do have hope. And I think that hope is constantly challenged, but with the help of other teachers and friends and colleagues that have gone through the same critical pedagogy, like class and gone through it, it's... It is... It's an uphill battle, but it's possible.”

Her words draw attention to her dispositional development, but also the lasting impact of the travesía. She has, as she says, “seen it be possible” in Aquetza, even as she had watched teachers succumb to wash-out, and evince comfortable, White Innocence ideologies around her. In keeping with Anzaldúa’s frameworks, even in the face of despair, in the discomfort of knowing, she has hope.

Steve’s semester did not end on the most positive of notes. On one of his last days in his classroom, he had an exceedingly frustrating pedagogical moment, one that left him feeling as though he had compromised his core values, and succumbed to authoritarianism. Constrained by his lack of agency in student teaching, and the manner in which the classroom he was in had been constructed as a community of learners (or lack-thereof), he left his school with fond memories of students, but feeling that his critical pedagogical self had faltered. Despite this, his goals and intentions, his passion for a culturally sustaining line of flight remained firm – he still believed in the possibility of enacting critical pedagogy, somewhere. A few weeks after his semester of student teaching ended, Steve had the prospect of a comfortable few months
substitute teaching on offer, but instead accepted a position teaching English at a youth correctional facility. In regards to this choice, Steve shared that, “I think it’s the right thing to do, to give up that privilege and work with these kids.” He spoke about this position aware that it would be challenging both emotionally and pedagogical, but excited for to possibility of providing these youth with culturally sustaining opportunities in language arts, and a positive teacher relationship, not as a savior, but as an ally. He continued on to say of the position, “I never would have done this if I hadn’t participated in *Aquetza*.” His induction experience had been difficult, and his new position promised more challenges, yet the identity he had wanted to craft for himself, that he outlined on the night of his *Encuentro* performance, his public *travesía*, as a teacher who “creates opportunities” for the affective truth of historically marginalized youth, was still there; a line of flight battered by larger systems and structures, but not washed out, or driven back to stasis and oppressive comfort. Knowing had been painful for him, yet even after a challenging semester, Steve could not go back, and was prepared to move forward, to take on another task, divesting himself of more lucrative opportunities in the hopes of offering culturally sustaining invitations to youth who might need them.

**Limitations**

There were limitations to the methods that should be acknowledged. Due to the challenges of orchestrating both logistics and research, as well as teaching in and remaining emotionally present and available to 45 individuals (youth and staff) across the *Aquetza* social design experiment, data collection around Steve and Kirsten was as systematic and comprehensive as was possible, but not as might be ideal. As such, the reader may notice gaps in the narrative, particularly more detailed descriptions of what their new dispositions and identities looked like in practice. While important to acknowledge, because the focus of this research is on
their nascent pedagogical identities and dispositions, their actual pedagogical performance at this stage is somewhat secondary, barring grossly contrasting practices and self-assessments, which were not the case. Enactment of these dispositions becomes more critical an issue moving forward, and whether as they move beyond the ‘novice’ phase, they are able to bring their visions to life. With this in mind, I continue to work with both Steve and Kirsten, and hope to craft a longer-term picture of how this approach to cultivating novice educators impacts future praxis.

Additionally, it should also be noted that while Aquetza was an immersive experience, Steve and Kirsten were engaged in other methods courses simultaneously with our training efforts, and thus the Aquetza social design experiment can not and should not be thought of as their only site of pedagogical development, though it was an important one. Indeed, the relationships between these courses and the vision of culturally sustaining pedagogy we worked towards in Aquetza generated considerable tension for all the novice educators involved, frustrated and resentful that, as Kirsten said at one time, the work of engaging in culturally sustaining praxis was being actively divorced from what other instructors described as the “nuts and bolts” of teaching. Thus, this simultaneous participation in critical, decolonial work, and praxis in stasis, is both a consideration for the data, and Steve and Kirsten’s development, as well as the grounds for further research exploration.

**Implications and Considerations**

There are several aspects of the intervention and experiences that Kirsten and Steve had that supported expansive learning which have important implications for teacher education more generally, and deserve explication here, those being: (a) (re)defining social justice, (b) richly
engaging theory, (c) seeking witnessing, rather than awareness, (d) making the possible transparent, and (e) embracing discomfort.

Perhaps most centrally, how we defined social justice in this space – both the definition itself, and how it came into being – mattered to the learning outcomes. The training intervention was wholly oriented towards a culturally sustaining, decolonial vision of social justice. Definition matters, for it determines the telos of our identities, beliefs, and practices. If justice remains fixed in a White Gaze, and all we ask of novices who will eventually be working with historically marginalized youth is to consider – not dialectically engage with and contest – their privilege and the affective geographies of schooling, then our lack of meaningful progress in producing culturally sustaining novice educators is to be expected, for our measure is insufficient at contesting a world shaped by colonial legacies of historically marginalized bodies being denied not just equality, but their humanity and history, as well. Here, not only did we revisit the definition of justice and change in decolonial terms, but this occurred in intersubjective fashion, focused on the collective development, rather than individual action or intent (Matusov, 1998). In other terms, determining the telos and definition of social justice was a collaborative process, actively involving the voices and perspectives of the historically marginalized youth in defining what justice and liberation meant to them, rather than something imposed upon them by a benevolent colonizer, transcending the distance between the colonial and the Other (Bhabha, 1994). As such, Steve and Kirsten’s understanding of justice and liberatory practice was much more richly informed, built on witnessing, not just voyeuristic awareness. With this co-constructed notion of justice in mind, Steve and Kirsten were able to depart from the stasis of White innocence, opening themselves to an ontologically jarring interrogation and disruption of privilege and colonialism, and creating the possibility for more imaginative, culturally sustaining
lines of flight to be pursued, possibilities that might otherwise have been foreclosed upon by the pragmatic realities of teaching.

This being said, it should be noted that Steve and Kirsten, though their learning trajectory was significant, began this process receptive to and interested in social justice (albeit a different definition of social justice). How such destabilizing, uncomfortable experiences and interrogations the very definition of social justice might look for individuals who are resistant to troubling their own perceptions, who are “sick of people making [them] feel bad,” is significant. However, as noted, retreating from what we ask of novice educators to confront in the interest of their comfort, when the schooling experiences of historically marginalized youth are so dire, is problematic. This is certainly a concern, but one that merely asks us to further consider questions of design, of how to create spaces for the intersubjective re-mediation of foundational definitions, encourage travesías for individuals in different positionalities, while still ensuring their experiences and interactions with youth are positive for all involved, and asset based.

Connected to this question of definition, the way in which theory was robustly and thoughtfully deployable in and through Steve and Kirsten’s learning trajectories, and their interactions with youth, was critical in order to achieve travesías. Indeed, what made this immersive, destabilizing, experience profoundly different from the sorts of field experiences that have been known to not always have a positive culmination (Aveling, 2006; Boler, 1999), and can indeed entrench deficit notions of historically marginalized communities (Zeichner & Flessman, 2009), was that the interactions were richly imbued with theory that both provided analytical tools, and pragmatic hope. I was not just that Steve and Kirsten better understood Chican@ culture or history, or their own relative privilege, but that even as they became better acquainted with the affective truth of historically marginalized youth, they linked these truths to
alternative ways to conceptualized learning, and participate in the activity system of schooling as educators.

This suggests that rather than presenting historically marginalized youth and underserved settings as some abject reality around which actions and practices might need to be oriented, teacher education needs to find and create spaces which demand witnessing and theoretical reflection, closing the ontological barriers between novices and youth. Across their learning trajectories, Steve and Kirsten had both ample opportunities to engage with you in authentic ways, but to do so while considering and building upon exciting, pragmatic theoretical constructions of learning that had been generated through reading and with peers. A recursive cycle existed that both opened new ways of seeing and doing, and then reinforced these through asset-based interactions with youth, who themselves contributed ideas to the theory building, and prolepsis, that Steve and Kirsten were engaged in. Ontological distances closed not because the novices interacted with a person of color, (mis)recognizing difference (Leonardo & Zembylas, 2013), but because an intersubjective, imaginative space, built on robust alternative theories for participating together in the world had been created. It was this dual-character to the experience that invited *travesías*, and allowed the participants to deterritorialize the economy of power around their participation in schooling, *witnessing* the affective geography of classrooms, and feeling the intensity of their own complicity in oppression without losing hope, or sight of proleptic, actionable ways forward.

What is significant here is that the *travesia*, as juncture of experience and theory, became rather than a purely ethereal, psychic moment, one with deeply grounded, pragmatic consequences; it was a moment of expansive learning. This points towards a further implication, that the work of teacher education needs, in addition to a more robust, intersubjective definition
of social justice, and rich theory to build on, opportunities for novices to imagine practices which, though culturally sustaining and generative, do not yet exist. Steve and Kirsten, participating in a learning process that allowed them to live school differently, if still within the constraints of larger structures, were pursuing expansive learning – learning that followed new, deterritorializing lines of flight, and was imbued with the potential for imagination. They acquired new dispositions and pedagogical identities that bolstered their culturally sustaining visions against external pressures, but also had ample opportunities in the classroom and conversation to develop and hone these visions into practical skills. Following this, it is essential that as we deploy theory and experience, we are transparently naming, and clearly providing space for, as Kirsten said, novices to see and feel that this work “is possible.” With this in mind, I suggest that we carefully consider the orientations our practice based and methods work is taking, and where it locates the source of practices. In keeping with the conceptual vision of the design, rather than present a list of practices for novices to use, we must actively create and encourage opportunities in which novices might use prolepsis to “rise to the concrete” imagining new practices that appear along new, decolonial lines of flight, rather than turning back to those anchored in old planes of organization. Though perhaps a challenging task, if transparently and thoughtfully done, such work can ensure, as it did for Steve and Kirsten, that their dispositions and visions of culturally sustaining pedagogy are robust enough to withstand wash-out, and engage prolepsis, rather than stasis, as a way forward.

With this in mind, we should consider questions of scalability and sustainability, and what a similarly designed space would look like that would be able to serve large groups of novice educators, while protecting youth from being ‘used.’ Scaling this model up without diminishing learning requires thoughtful consideration of how we can ensure, with larger, less
selective groups, that novices are witnessing youth affective truth, and not subtly or overtly imposing their expertise and vision of schooling onto the youth, or space. In short, a key question of design is how to structure a space so that when that moment of rupture occurs, novices are supported to relent to discomfort, and deterritorialize their thinking, rather than find ways to remain in stasis and navigate the affective geography and challenges before them without crossing any ontological distance.

Finally, this design was built to be purposefully and intentionally destabilizing, uncomfortable, and deterritorializing – necessarily both for the novice and the teacher educator. *Travesías* are critical moments, emerging in potential constantly, as rarely taken opportunities to follow lines of flight away from our planes of organization and in more robust, culturally sustaining directions. Part of exploring these opportunities, and thus cultivating culturally sustaining dispositions, is ensuring that our definitions of justice are decolonial, and not assimilationist (recognizing that radically different possibilities are needed). However the other aspect of this work is the need to engage in the uncomfortable, emotional work of deterritorializing, a process of ontological rupture that Guattari (2000, 1995) notes requires support to ensure participants do not have a “catastrophic” deconstruction of their worldview and subjectivity, which can result in the entrenching of the nomos, and stasis. This means that the work is tense, and difficult for both novice and teacher educator, but as Anzaldúa says, “conocimiento hurts, but not as much as desconocimiento,” – knowledge, and the path to it, may be painful, but the oppressive stasis of colonial schooling and its impacts on the affective and ontological subjectivities of all involved in the colonial affective economy and geography of schooling are far more dangerous if we do not boldly push – while remaining supportive – for an active embrace of the discomfort that leads to liberation.
Conclusions

In a moment when it has become increasingly clear that solutions to closing opportunity gaps and preparing novice educators that emerge from old planes of organization, no matter how equity oriented, are insufficient; new pedagogical approaches are required. If we are committed to preparing novice educators who are well positioned to close achievement and opportunity gaps in historically marginalized youth learning, than we must account for the ontological gaps in their learning; the distance and affective dimensions that exist between the way they see and understand schooling, and the affective truths of their students. Closing these ontological distances which lie at the heart of colonial Otherness requires pedagogies that do more than prepare effective, culturally responsive, academically ambitious practitioners; they must be culturally sustaining, nurturing, and decolonial, rupturing the limiting tracings of educational praxis that continue to fail historically marginalized youth, and map out new ways of learning and being. With this in mind, our pedagogies and approaches to novice educator must also see learning as a process of transformation and expansion; an opportunity to invite them to cross borders, become witnesses, close the distance between teacher and student, and, as Anzaldúa says, “become nos/otras without the slash,” (Anzaldúa/Keating, 2000, p. 255).
Works Cited: Manuscript C


Chapter VII:
Final Thoughts: Revisiting Decolonial Teacher Education

Given that each of the constituent manuscripts carries with it its own conclusion, I will not trouble the reader with too lengthy an epilogue here. Rather, taking a bit of a non-traditional path, my purpose in these last few pages will be to discuss my plan for research from here, make a few notes about the Aquetza program, and then return briefly to a few overarching themes.

Next Steps for Manuscripts & Research

While these manuscripts are representative of the research that I completed, and the arguments I wished to make for each topic, there is work to do on them prior to publication. Indeed, through the drafting and revising process, different directions and possible framings arose that I am considering as possible alternatives, pending fairly complete revisions and re-writing.

Manuscript A needs either tightening, or to be broken in two. The theories involved all relate and interconnect, but looking forward towards submittal, discussions of identity and subjectivity, and learning theory, while crucial to understanding one another and interrelated, might do better living separately. Pushing on conceptions of subjectivity and robust learning in the decolonial project seem to each warrant their own, dedicated publication. As noted, I plan to submit some version of this to the journal *Race and Ethnicity in Education*.

Manuscript B similarly needs tightening and shortening, but also needs a slight reframing; I remain unsure if the organizational approach to bringing practice-based teacher education approaches into conversation with decolonial and poststructural themes does justice to either of the literatures as well as I would like, and the introduction of culturally sustaining pedagogy perhaps confuses the issue some. While CSP was a central part of my thinking en
route to the development of this manuscript, and quite present in the design of more affectively-robust, decolonial practice-based and rehearsal strategies in Aquetza, in retrospect I am unsure if it needs to be present at all in the discussion. Moreover, while the more theoretical, early parts of the manuscript were necessary to thinking my way towards decolonial practice-based pedagogy rehearsal, the way in which they are set up in the manuscript are lengthy, and might feel disconnected. A reorganization of the paper to either distribute this explication throughout the analysis, or at least better situate it in relation to the purpose of the argument, is likely in order. Additionally, I wonder if a pure focus on rehearsal, rather than engaging with practice-based literature more broadly, and the presence of additional data (I have several other teatro cases that could be used), would be more generative, and accomplish similar ends to what this manuscript was meant to do: push on what counts as ambitious instruction, and practice-based teacher education pedagogy. My target for a final version of this piece is the journal Pedagogies.

As with the other manuscripts, Manuscript C needs tightening. Notably, much of the preamble, while representative of my iterative thinking in the construction of the arguments and analyses, does not necessarily need to be included here. I would like, in a next revision/rewrite, to more selectively focus my choice of data, perhaps using longer conversational turns (micro-lines and stanzas), that allow Steve and Kirsten’s voices to do more of the work. This might involve a reframing and reorganization from the longitudinal picture constructed here to be more selective and focused on particular moments. I hope to submit this piece, when tightened and finished, to the journal Teaching and Teacher Education.

Beyond these manuscripts, as noted, Aquetza produced an incredible amount of data, most of which I have been through, but not all of which I have been able to thoughtfully analyze and engage with. As noted a bit in chapter 3, I have extensive and significant data around the
specific experiences of novice teachers of color, and around youth in the space, as well as some additional, interesting ensemble data. Beyond the work shared here, the next topics I intend to take up in writing around this data set include:

a) **The significance of creating spaces for witnessing youth, and inviting visceral literacy practice:** During the course of just a week, youth who in other contexts were constructed as low performing and below-grade level in terms of literacy skill, were able to produce incredible syncretic projects that appropriated high level ethnic studies and critical discourse. Due to witnessing along both peer-to-peer and youth-to-instructor lines, and encouragement for youth to include affective and vulnerable experience in their work, the development of visceral literacies was a significant, profound effect.

b) **Teachers of color navigating critical commitments from theory to the community:** In the Aquetza space, while considerably more adept at many of the tasks that Steve and Kirsten struggled with (e.g. the visceral content and cultural diversity were not jarring to them), the instructors of color struggled to extricate their constructions of identity and definitions of social justice and critical work from their curriculum. In other terms, they regularly fell into didactic and prescriptive practice, unintentionally imposing a version of identity and social narrative onto youth through their curriculum. I am interested in detailing and examining this process, the balancing act it took for them to at once include the salience of their shared experiences, and leave room for self determination and new assemblages to form, without falling themselves into stasis of the sort Anzaldúa notes unintentionally “enforce our own subordination.”

c) **Decolonial pedagogical rehearsal as collaborative intergenerational practice:** One of the most significant episodes not included in this dissertation was a teatro enactment in which both youth and teachers participated, working through several layers of classroom oppression, and giving multidirectional feedback on what it would mean for certain actors to ‘break’ the oppressions, and what different actors would hope from in regards to others choices. Notably, novice educators were given feedback, from youth, about how they would like to see their instructor handle affective moments. This was a rich and interesting episode, and I look forward to writing about it as an extension of the ideas of manuscript B.

Finally, in regards to research and data, as noted briefly in chapter 5, the timeframe in which this work took place did not allow me to use all the data analysis tools I would have liked. This was an oversight on my part, as I should have anticipated the value of using qualitative research software with this extensive of a data set, but with the ongoing logistics of Aquetza 2015 as well, it simply did not happen. That said, moving forward, I will be working with Nvivo.
to more systematically analyze data, and construct more coherent codebooks and indexes. Indeed, While I am satisfied with my coding processes, and the rigor of the research analyses in regards to the teatro and Steve and Kirsten data included here, I may re-code this data both as learning process, and to potentially draw out the longer segments of discourse around the key data already included to bring Steve and Kirsten’s voices more to the fore.

Aquetza, Moving Forward

As noted in chapter 3, Aquetza was a collaborative project, which I was honored to be a part of. As much as I am interested and concerned with next steps for this research, supporting Aquetza as a sustainable program is as vital an outcome of this research, and indeed the development of the Aquetza program along with Jasón, Magnolia, Josie, KT, Kevin, and many others was as significant an accomplishment as finishing this document, and the most rewarding experience I have ever had. I will continue to work with Aquetza this coming summer, handing off responsibility to a graduate student peer. Moreover, I have forged considerably deep relationships with both CU students and youth attendees, and look forward to remaining a support for both undergraduate students and youth on personal and academic levels moving forward, as well as to UMAS organizationally, so long as they choose to continue running the program. At my next institution, it is my hope to create a similar program for teacher and youth learning, and I look forward to connecting once again with student groups, pre-service teachers, and the local community to create a similar, social design experiment/change laboratory program that serves the needs of all involved.

Revisiting Decolonial Teacher Education

The title of this dissertation, as the reader undoubtedly knows, is “Decolonizing Teacher Education: Explorations of Expansive Learning and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy in a Social
Design Experiment.” With that in mind, I wish to return to a few themes introduced early on, summarizing the links I hope that became apparent throughout the manuscripts.

As I noted in chapter 1, I see decolonization as the work of insurgent relinking, of radically revising our participation in the world, and striving to break away from planes of organization and affective geographies that constrain subjectivity, and limit or deny coevalness. Moreover, I come to this work from a place where breaking from this stasis, locating new subjectivities and connecting with affective truth and the multiplicities of our selves as immanent, evolving assemblages, feels, personally and professionally, crucial. And as much as decolonization is about new practices, participation, and subjectivities, central to the work of enacting these new practices, participation, and subjectivities is for ontological distances between individuals to be closed. This is, I hope, the argument that the reader will have understood to carry across the entirety of this work.

In the context of teaching and teacher education, these can seem like substantial and high bars to strive for, given the diversity and complexity of the profession, and the demands on novices stepping into classrooms in the present, neoliberal context of schooling. But the need for decolonization – not just equity, not just responsiveness, not even sustaining – but decolonization, and the opportunity to engage in a process of insurgent relinking and creating new worlds, is so crucial to youth and communities who have been struggling with persistent interpellation and stasis within painful affective geographies for so long. In the context of the struggles historically marginalized youth are facing, is it so much to ask that we engage our novices in robustly understanding the world in new ways? I think not, and do not mean to say this in a dismissive way. The work of destabilization involved is challenging, uncomfortable. Yet I follow St. Pierre (2004) in believing that engaging new tools and concepts will allow us to
think, and do the world differently. *Travesías*, or the possibility for them, occur constantly in our lives, and in the lives of our novices. The challenge is to envision new takes on practices, our own process of *insurgent relinking*, that will allow us to see these moments for what they are, and engage them as meaningful, generative *travesías* across ontological distances, and into new planes of consistency. Anzaldúa (2000) is instructive in this regard, noting that:

> We are experiencing cognitive dissonance, hit by discordant stimuli on all sides. We no longer know who we are and what our lives are about. It’s hard to come to terms with change and new ideas if they make us doubt and distrust our sense of self. And change always threatens our identity. We have a choice: We can retreat back to our comfort zones, prisons of familiarity, habitual thought patterns and behaviors rather than risk changing; it’s easier to remain in entrenched systems and erect defenses to keep out new ideas. Or we can learn to navigate through the whirlwinds. (Anzaldúa/Keating, p. 279)

Yes, it is easy to retreat to *stasis*, to “entrenched systems” and ways to approach schooling, to revert to *pedagogies of tracings*. But it is also possible to resist this, to learn to “navigate through the whirlwinds.” This seems a less daunting, and wholly possible way to frame and think of the task for the teacher educator and the novice. To understand the complexity of our work in decolonial terms, and to recognize that what is being asked is not wholesale, iconoclastic revolution, not the catastrophic falling apart of the self, but an approach to teaching and learning that will allow us to navigate the whirlwinds, to move purposefully towards and through *travesías*, embracing these moments as opportunities to close the affective and ontological distances between colonized (youth) and colonizer (teacher), and, to use Anzaldúa’s (2000) words once again, “become nos/otras without the slash,” (Anzaldúa/Keating, p. 255). This to me is the core of decolonial teacher education, and while complex, not at all unreasonable, or impossible.
References


## AQUETZA Staff Training Schedule: 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Date &amp; Time</th>
<th>Topic &amp; Key Concepts</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td><strong>MANDATORY – Orientation &amp; Overview</strong></td>
<td>EDUC 231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3:00pm-4:30pm</td>
<td>- What is Aquetza all about?</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- What are our recruitment commitments &amp; tasks?</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- Who do I want to be as an Aquetza educator?</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td><strong>FLEX – Encouraging Inquiry</strong></td>
<td>TBD (EDUC 330)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7:15pm-8:15pm</td>
<td>- What does inquiry mean? How is it different than next-step-assistance?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- What is our theory of learning at Aquetza? How do I live that?</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td><strong>Flex – Putting Youth First</strong></td>
<td>TBD (EDUC 330)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7:15pm-8:15pm</td>
<td>- What is my role &amp; position in the Aquetza community?</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- What does it mean to use a light pedagogical touch?</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td><strong>FLEX – Supporting Literacy</strong></td>
<td>TBD (EDUC 330)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7:15pm-8:15pm</td>
<td>- What literacy practices will we use at Aquetza? What’s the SYNCRETIC?</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- What interventions should I use to support youth reading &amp; writing?</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td><strong>FLEX – Mediating Conflict</strong></td>
<td>TBD (EDUC 330)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7:15pm-8:15pm</td>
<td>- What should I do if youth are in conflict (intellectual or social)?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- How can I approach problematic ideas through inquiry &amp; revolutionary love?</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td><strong>FLEX – Witnessing Trauma &amp; Difficult Moments</strong></td>
<td>TBD (EDUC 330)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7:15pm-8:15pm</td>
<td>- What do I do when a student is in crisis?</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- What do I do with the rest of the community when another student is having a moment?</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td><strong>FLEX – Research Methods</strong></td>
<td>TBD (EDUC 330)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7:15pm-8:15pm</td>
<td>- What is Social Design research? How does research function in Aquetza?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- What research practices will we be using during Aquetza?</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td><strong>MANDATORY – Authority &amp; Authoritarianism</strong></td>
<td>TBD (EDUC 330)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10:00am-11:30am</td>
<td>- What are my responsibilities as leader &amp; disciplinarian at Aquetza?</td>
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<td>- What are the expectations at Aquetza I must enforce?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- How do I engage authority from a place of revolutionary love?</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>--</td>
<td><strong>MANDATORY – Pre-Aquetza Final Training</strong></td>
<td>EDUC 231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10:00am-3:00pm</td>
<td>- What do I need to know to start tomorrow? What are our shared core ideas, values, &amp; beliefs as we begin?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Review of key pedagogical concepts &amp; epistemology/philosophy</td>
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Aquetza Staff are expected to attend ALL Mandatory Trainings, and 4 of 6 flexible training sessions. It is our responsibility to be adequately prepared in order to provide our youth with the best possible intellectual, social, and cultural experience.

If for some reason you must miss a Mandatory training, or will be unable to complete the required number of flex trainings, contact the Directors (Mike/Jasón) at least one-week ahead of time to make alternative arrangements.

All trainings will be approximately 1 hour in length (excluding the mandatory trainings). You are expected to come with your binder to all trainings, and to hold onto all notes, reflective writing, and handouts for use and reference during the summer program.
Appendix B: Instructor Training Syllabus

EDUC 4840: Critical / Decolonial Pedagogy, YPAR, and Designing for Expansive Learning
Spring 2014
Meeting times: TR, 6:00-7:30pm

Contact Information
Email contact: mido1813@colorado.edu
Phone contact: 703-851-6671
Office location: EDUC 433, EDUC 140
Office hours: M, W, F, By appointment

It is my intention to be as available for you as is possible, within reason. For meetings and communication outside of office hours, please feel free to set up an appointment. The best way to reach me is through email, so that I have a record of our correspondence. I check email thrice daily, with the last time typically around 9:00 PM. For anything urgent, pressing, or for emergencies (particularly in regards to practicum attendance), please do not hesitate to text or call me.

Course Overview

What does critical pedagogy mean? What does it mean to be a transformative, decolonial educator?
What does emancipatory, critical, culturally sustaining education praxis, actually look like?

These are the central questions that guide this independent study course, based on the assumption that critical pedagogy involves both deeply examined and explored political and personal commitments, as well as extensive pragmatic skillsets. In short, our aim is to recognize how critical pedagogy is something you must both believe in, and live.

Over the course of the semester, participating students will have the opportunity to explore and study the intersection of curriculum design and critical pedagogy, with a deep and specific focus on what it means to design and construct culturally sustaining pedagogy that is actionable and academically rigorous, both in out-of-school environments, and in in-school contexts, complete with the constraints of present-day education reform. Students will examine the foundational literature on critical pedagogy, asking what the philosophical and ideological underpinnings are, and how they translate into classroom practice. They will evaluate current research literature on learning theory, culturally sustaining pedagogy, YPAR (youth participatory action research), and Ethnic and Cultural studies curriculum design, exploring the affordances and constraints, as well as the contradictions in the ideas and practices, that are present.

This work will allow students to expand their understanding of how sophisticated notions of learning and well developed practices connect to and inform how critical pedagogy and revolutionary education might be presented to youth in culturally sustaining, yet academically rigorous and coherent, ways. In addition, students will have extensive opportunities – through conversations with scholars, teaching sample lessons, observations of a variety of learning environments, reflective writing, practice-based pedagogical activities, and examinations of current-events and issues related to critical pedagogy in the U.S. – to discuss and consider the ethical and social implications of engaging a variety of different students and colleagues in difficult and courageous conversations around social issues in classroom settings to achieve productive, safe, and emancipatory outcomes.

As a final note, no course could address every situation a person might encounter in teaching. As students’ needs and questions evolve, so to may the topics we take up, and the readings we engage.

Required Texts
The following books are required for this course:

• Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Paulo Freire
• Relationship Driven Classroom Management, Vitto, J. (Optional, but recommended)
• All other readings will be available online, or via email
Course Objectives

By the end of this semester and this course, you should be able to speak with some confidence about the following central themes/ideas/instructional topics:

- What is critical/decolonial pedagogy? Who are some major thinkers in this field, and what are the assumptions, windows, and walls of their philosophical perspectives? What are the major goals for learning?
- What theories of learning underlie critical pedagogy? How do these theories connect the political ideas of critical pedagogy to practice and enactment with youth in the classroom?
- What practices and designs build towards a praxis of critical/decolonial pedagogy? What does transformative learning look like within the confines of colonized systems, structures, and expectations of learning and schooling?
- What might critical/decolonial pedagogy look like in in-school environments? In out-of-school environments? How can critical/decolonial pedagogy co-exist with current school reform practices and pressures, such as high-stakes testing, the Common Core standards, and mandated/scripted curricula?
- What is YPAR? How does/can it function as a high-leverage learning practice? How can it be leveraged as a decolonial practice? What limitations and concerns accompany it?
- How do socio-cultural, emotional, and historical factors, such as race, culture, sexual diversity, class, and gender, impact the work I will do as a teacher? What are respectful and responsible ways to engage with these topics with youth in dialogic fashion, and with less critical colleagues?
- What is culturally sustaining/revitalizing instruction? What might that look like?
- How do I make sense of contradictions in classrooms between ideology and practice?
- What does thoughtful, goal-based, long term planning in the critical/decolonial tradition look like? How can I develop differentiated, intensive plans for both individuals and the entire class that meet learning, as well as cultural-political goals?
- What is my informed, research-backed, philosophical stance on instruction and pedagogy? What practices and skills will allow me to live this stance as I move forward as a community educator?

Mandated Reporters

Mandated reporters are individuals who are obligated by law to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. Any person who has contact with children in a professional capacity is a mandated reporter. Mandated reporter laws are designed to catch child abuse in its early stages, so that children do not suffer long-term damage. Though not all of us are teacher licensure candidates, we fully expect that we will act as mandated reporters should we see something concerning in our field observations. For additional information, please consult the following resource: CDE (Colorado Department of Education) handbook, Preventing & Reporting Child Abuse & Neglect: Guidance for School Personnel [http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprevention/download/pdf/child_abuse_manual_2002.pdf]

Course Assignments & Grading

Your course grade will be based on the following assignments and scale, descriptions of which follow:

- Final Paper/Project (30%)
- Weekly Response to Reading (15%)
- Learning Context Observations (15%)
- Mid-term Check-Up (15%)
- Participation (25%)

Grading Scale: A = 100 – 94%  
A- = 93 – 90%
B+ = ≥ 88%
B = 87 – 84%
B- = 83 – 80%
C+ = ≥ 78%
C = 77 – 74%
C- = 73 - 70%  Etc.
With this in mind we are looking forward to lively discussion and participation in a variety of formats. By this we mean that we recognize many forms of participation — you need not feel compelled to speak or participate in dynamic repertoires of practice. Expect to teach sample lessons, and engage in the theories and ideas behind the strategies they use through extensive practice in order to have vast, rich, and theories, and practices that we will be reading about. Becoming a skilled critical pedagogue is not something that happens through passively absorbing or collecting strategies. Excellent critical educators must have internalized the theories and ideas behind the strategies they use through extensive practice in order to have vast, rich, and dynamic repertoires of practice. Expect to teach sample lessons, and engage in teatro. With this in mind we are looking forward to lively discussion and participation in a variety of formats. By this we mean that we recognize many forms of participation — you need not feel compelled to speak or participate in weekly responses to reading. These weekly assignments are your opportunity to deeply engage with and make sense of what we have and are reading, and ensure that you fully comprehend and internalize the ideas and theories under consideration for practical use.

Final Paper/Project (30%)  
Due: May 6th, 2014

Over the course of the semester, you will be immersing yourself in the literature surrounding critical pedagogy, decolonial education, expansive learning, YPAR (youth participatory action research), and culturally-sustaining pedagogy. Moreover, our explorations of literature, observations of learning practice, and classroom discussions, are all steps towards exploring what it means to ENACT critical, decolonial, and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy.

For your final assignment, you will a) **choose one or more of the central course questions to explore**, drawing on our course readings, observations, and experiences, and dig into this question in a 10 page paper, and b) **create a lesson/unit plan**, exploring some content decided upon in conjunction with the instructors, that shows how you would bring your critical pedagogical praxis as discussed in the paper around your chosen central question to life (For instance, if you chose the question, “How do I make sense of contradictions in classrooms between ideology and practice?” you might write a paper exploring this question, then craft a lesson that very intentionally seeks to avoid, and question, any of its own internal contradictions in its work with youth).

In one of the last weeks of class, you will teach a part of this sample lesson for feedback, which should be incorporated into the final paper and lesson plans that you turn in on May 6th. Complete details will be provided about this assignment later in the semester.

Learning Context Observations (15%)  
Due: Ongoing

Throughout the semester, in addition to class, I will ask you to use various reflective and observational tools to observe the practices in different in and out of school learning environments. After completing these observations, you will write short reflections on how the ideas we were discussing in class were lived and not-lived in these settings, what the strengths were, and what the constraints were, and report back to the group on what the implications of this learning environment are to our classroom work.

Our goal will be to complete one visit to an in-school learning environment, and another to an out-of-school space, choosing from a menu of different options.

Weekly Responses to Reading (15%)  
Due: Wednesdays, prior to class

An essential part of this course is intensive and thoughtful engagement with all course readings. Most weeks, we will send you a question online focused on that week’s readings by Thursday at 3:00 PM, and will expect a response by the following class. Exemplary responses will ground themselves in the readings, and deeply explore the topics, ideas, and theories attended to in a particular week, as well as to make connections across weeks, and to share reflections on how this thinker’s ideas could be lived in in- and out- of school settings. The prompts will take various forms, including requests for pointed questions about that week’s material, summaries of arguments, drafts of lessons, and compare/contrast prompts. These weekly assignments are your opportunity to deeply engage with and make sense of what we have and are reading, and ensure that you fully comprehend and internalize the ideas and theories under consideration for practical use.

Mid-term Check-up (15%)  
Due: March 4th, 2014

Roughly half way through the semester, you will complete a short mid-term check-up, writing a 3 page paper exploring the most compelling questions, ideas, and conversations we have engaged in from your perspective, and what your present understanding of critical pedagogy in-practice is. The specific prompt for this assignment will be decided upon collaboratively with the instructor(s).

In Class Participation (25%)  
Due: Ongoing

Your development as a critical/decolonial educator depends heavily on your active engagement with the ideas, theories, and practices that we will be reading about. Becoming a skilled critical pedagogue is not something that happens through passively absorbing or collecting strategies. Excellent critical educators must have internalized the theories and ideas behind the strategies they use through extensive practice in order to have vast, rich, and dynamic repertoires of practice. Expect to teach sample lessons, and engage in teatro.
teatro every class, but it will be noted if you are with us or not, and we hope you will compensate in other ways (i.e. electronically, etc.). Pulling out phones, staring into computer screens, or otherwise zoning out will result in a loss of participation credit, as well as potentially being asked to leave the classroom.

**General Policies**

**Formatting details for written assignments:**
All assignments should be submitted double-spaced, in 12-point, Times New Roman or Calibri font, with 1 inch margins. All citations should be complete and in APA, MLA, or Chicago format.

**Attendance Policy:**
Attendance is vital. As a professional expectation, you are requested to be present for meetings with the instructor and other students (as arrangements are made), and to arrive on time. While we are understanding of extreme circumstances, simply letting me know that you won’t be there does not count as an excused absence. Except in the case of serious illness or a family emergency, our attendance policy goes as follows.

1st unexcused absence – no impact on final grade
2nd unexcused absence – no impact on final grade, mandatory check-in with instructor
3rd unexcused absence – a deduction of at least a full grade from your final grade (e.g., from A to B, B to C, etc.) depending on the quality and consistency of your work.
4th unexcused absence – You cannot earn a grade higher than a C and depending on the quality and consistency of the work, may receive a failing grade.

*In all cases, if you are absent, it is your responsibility to get in touch with me (or another student) before the next class to find out what you missed. Repeated lateness will lead to a grade reduction.

**Cell phones, Computers, etc.:**
When you arrive to class, be sure to silence your cellphone. Your phone ringing or beeping about a text or call is highly disruptive to our class’ community.

As noted in the ‘Participation’ section, when you are in class, you need to be with us. **This means that being distracted by cell phones, email, computers, etc. is not acceptable.** While you are welcome to take notes on your computer in class, please be aware that this is NOT an invitation to check your phone, text, go on Facebook, check or answer emails, catch up on other work, etc. There will be breaks during which you may do these things. If your device has more of your attention than our community of learners, you will be asked to leave.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic(s)</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Supplementary/Optional</th>
<th>Central Questions</th>
<th>Assignments Course</th>
<th>Readings (subject to change)</th>
<th>Week</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WK 1</td>
<td>1/16</td>
<td>Context of Course, Critical Pedagogy basics, and Logistics</td>
<td>• What are the goals of this course?</td>
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<td>WK 2</td>
<td>1/23</td>
<td>Core Values, Founding Principles, and Purposes of Critical Pedagogy</td>
<td>• What are the core principles and values of Critical Pedagogy? • How did Freire's core principles and values evolve over time and across contexts? • What do McLaren and Giroux have to say about the current state of U.S. schooling? What are their core principles for critical pedagogy in the U.S.? • How are cultural studies and feminist conceptions of pedagogy similar to the core principles of critical pedagogy? • How are cultural studies and feminist conceptions of pedagogy similar to the core principles of critical pedagogy?</td>
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<td>WK 3</td>
<td>1/30</td>
<td>Evolving Values and Perspectives on Critical Pedagogy and the Crisis of Public Values</td>
<td>• What is Feminist Pedagogy? • What are cultural studies and feminist conceptions of pedagogy similar to the core principles of critical pedagogy as we've seen thus far? How do they vary? • What do multicultural diversity and feminist conceptions and perspectives for critical pedagogy add to our critical pedagogical praxis?</td>
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<td>WK 4</td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>Feminist and Cultural Studies Views on Critical Pedagogy</td>
<td>• How are cultural studies and feminist conceptions of pedagogy similar to the core principles of critical pedagogy as we've seen thus far? How do they vary? • What do culturally diverse and feminist conceptions of pedagogy add to our critical pedagogical praxis?</td>
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<td>WK 5</td>
<td>2/13</td>
<td>The Conservative Tradition: Opponents and Critics of Critical Pedagogy</td>
<td>• What are the central arguments against critical pedagogy as an approach to teaching and learning for youth? • How do we speak back to arguments dismissive or dissenting to critical and social justice perspectives?</td>
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Supplementary/Optional

Central Questions

Due

Assignments

Readings (subject to change)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Central Questions</th>
<th>Course Assignments</th>
<th>Supplementary Readings</th>
<th>Due Assignments</th>
<th>Central Questions</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Week 6: What do we need to know about learning Psychology?</td>
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<td>3/20</td>
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<td>Week 7: What are the central features and features of a school that works?</td>
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<td>3/13</td>
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<td>Week 8: What are the core ideas of critical and transformatory pedagogy?</td>
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<td>3/27</td>
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<td>Week 9: What are the central features and features of a school that works?</td>
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**Readings**
- Ayers, 10 Features of Schools that Work
- Cruz, Making Testimonio From Scratch
- Wang & Burns, Psychology from Drop that Knowledge

**Course Assignments**
- Week 6: Create the Testimonio from Scratch
- Week 7: Create a 10-feature paper
- Week 8: Create a 10-feature paper
- Week 9: Create a 10-feature paper

**Supplementary Readings**
- Wang & Burns, Psychology from Drop that Knowledge
- Cruz, Making Testimonio From Scratch
- Ayers, 10 Features of Schools that Work

**Due Assignments**
- Week 6: Create a 10-feature paper
- Week 7: Create a 10-feature paper
- Week 8: Create a 10-feature paper
- Week 9: Create a 10-feature paper

**Weeks**
- 3/7
- 3/20
- 3/13
- 3/27

**Topics**
- Critical/Decolonial Pedagogy
- PPR: -Arendt, PPR as Critical Pedagogy
- PPR: -Arendt, Psychology of Learning and Development
- PPR: -Vygotsky, Intervention Review
- PPR: -Engeström, From Expansive Learning Theory to Critical Pedagogy

**Central Questions**
- What do we need to know about learning Psychology?
- What are the central features and features of a school that works?
- What are the core ideas of critical and transformatory pedagogy?
| WK 12 | 4/3 | 7 P.M. UNION 8 | Critical/Decolonial Pedagogy in the Content Areas - Acosta, Chicano Literature Teaching - Moses, Selections from Radical Equations |
| WK 13 | 4/10 | -none/individual readings |
| WK 14 | 4/17 | -none/individual readings |
| WK 15 | 4/24 | -none/individual readings |
| WK 16 | 5/1 | *Last Class Curriculum Workshop and Presentations - None/individual readings |
| WK 17 | 5/8 | -none/individual readings |

- Central Questions
- Readings
- Assignments
- Course

- How might these issues look in practice in your workplace or school?
- What are the functions of culture circles? What are their purposes and effects?
- How might these options look and function in your workplace or school?
- In what ways can critical pedagogy approach our classroom, learning, and evaluation?
- How does the critical pedagogy approach fit into your classroom? In what ways can critical pedagogy approach our curriculum, learning, and evaluation?
- How does critical pedagogy fit into your classroom? In what ways can critical pedagogy approach our curriculum, learning, and evaluation?
- How does critical pedagogy fit into your classroom? In what ways can critical pedagogy approach our curriculum, learning, and evaluation?
Appendix D: Training Artifacts
Border/Transformative Pedagogy

- identities dependent on one another, entangled
- Delgado Bernal: identities not static, fluid instead
- shy away from what could be pigeon-holed as "nationalist" less ignorant reaction w/ the multiple groups vouched for
- people coming up w/ the pedagogies for themselves → creating

Transformative space

Marginalized youth as producers and holders of knowledge

- giving validation to student knowledges & experiences, ensuring development of knowledge from these communities
- legitimizing the experiences of the youth of the community as issue from which knowledge can be drawn

Validating experiences through open dialogue

opportunities for the voices traged silenced
COLONIZING SCHOOLING

The institution of school
Banking Model of teaching
Poc Students not being taken seriously by teachers.
The “right way” — the white way
No flexibility in educational curriculum
Division of student bodies/Tracking
Subject limiting standards
Standardize testing
leading questions
Surface level school performing

a community created way to do school

EDUCATIONAL SANCTUARY

- Safe space to learn and develop knowledge
- An environment where one can connect the personal to knowledge to empower others

Viewing oneself and others as capable of teaching and learning
Principal Values

Dialogue
- Knowledge both ways "with"
- Love
- Faith
- Hope
- Critical Thinking
- Trust - Humility
- Power of Word
  - deconstructing power dynamics

Liberation/Humanization
- Social Justice (activism)
- Creation & Recognition of knowledge
  - Proving the space
Appendix E: Interview Protocols

Preliminary Interview Protocols

Pre-program Base Prompts, Counselors/Staff (Administered April & May, 2014)

During Phase 0, we will ask undergraduate counselor/staff members for individual interviews. Though these will take place individually, they will be reflexive and grow from the conversations and discussions that emerge during training, simply giving participants the opportunity to dig into their thinking and sense-making. Some questions/frames that will likely be asked are:

- What interested you in the Aquetza program?
- What brought you to the field of education? Why are you interested in teaching?
- When you think of a strong, supportive classroom, what are some features you think are essential?
- If you reflect on your previous experiences with/in schooling, what are some key contradictions and concerns that come up for you?
- How well do you think current school arrangements and curriculum serve students?
- What’s the relationship between teaching/teachers and the community? Education and the community?
- In training, you mentioned the idea of……… can you tell me more about this?
- You agreed/disagreed with the idea of ……….can you elaborate on why you feel this way?
- You raised the idea of………..can you explain more about what you mean by that?
- When we were discussing ……….you had some interesting things to say. What do you see as the most challenging/most easy part of implementing these ideas?
- How do you see the idea we discussed of ………….arising in our work with youth during the Aquetza program?
- If you were to imagine how you would use what we are learning today/this week in this coming year, what would you say? Over the next five years?

During Aquetza Base Prompts, Youth (Administered July, 2014)

During Phase 1, we will ask youth for interviews. Some of these interviews will be reflexive and grow from the conversations and discussions that emerge during Aquetza, and will allow participants to elaborate on ideas that we do not have time to fully explore in our established schedule, giving participants the opportunity to dig into their thinking and sense-making, while each participant will also be interviewed separately from activities. Some questions/frames that will likely be asked include:

- Tell me about your education history.
- What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of your home school?
• When you think of a strong, supportive classroom, what are some features you think are essential?
• If you reflect on your previous experiences with/in schooling, what are some key contradictions and concerns that come up for you?
• How well do you think current school arrangements and curriculum serve students like you?
• What’s the relationship between students and the community? Education and the community?
• Do you feel like you can make change in your school if you wanted to? In your community?
• In our session, you mentioned the idea of …….. can you tell me more about this?
• You agreed/disagreed with the idea of ……… can you elaborate on why you feel this way?
• You raised the idea of ………….. can you explain more about what you mean by that?
• When we were discussing ………….. you had some interesting things to say. What do you see as the most challenging/most easy part of implementing these ideas?
• How do you see the idea we discussed of …………… arising in your life beyond the Aquetza program?
• What are the 3 most powerful lessons you learned over the course of this program?
• If you were to imagine how you would use what we are learning today/this week in this coming year, what would you say? Over the next five years?

Post-Aquetza Interview Questions  (Administered August, 2014)

• How did the class go? Were students learning, and in what ways? What evidence did you see of this?
• How dialogic/Freirean/critical do you feel your pedagogy in the module actually was? Did the implementation and reality live up to our plans?
• How did you see the ideas from your module translated into/come up in the final Encuentro? Were they effectively understood and synthesized?
• What contradictions and tensions did you face in this implementation and in thinking forward with this work?
• Do you feel the program overall was successful? What worked for kids? What did they still struggle with? Why?
• What evidence did you see that we were engaged in culturally sustaining pedagogy?
• What do you make of the nature of student-staff/teacher relationships during the program? How would you characterize them? What were key moments? What were the implications and outcomes of these relationships?
• Thinking back on training, what did this process tell you about implementing Ethnic studies focused pedagogy? What were the biggest challenges, tensions, and contradictions you saw in what we were trying to do?
• How do you feel the readings and discussions we had in the spring prepared you for the instructional task? How do you feel like you were prepared for the academic challenge of leading instruction, such as asking the right questions, scaffolding things, not giving next step assistance, and having kids do the heavy lifting?
• How about the emotional/relationship building task? How do you feel the teatro activitives helped both of these challenges?
• If you are teaching in the fall: How do you see this being applicable/feasible to your classroom next fall? What challenges do you think will emerge in implementing this sort of pedagogy there?
• If you are NOT teaching in the fall: How do you see this being applicable/feasible to your future career goals and planned community involvement? What challenges do you think will emerge in implementing this sort of pedagogy and ideas in other spaces?
• Looking back at the program as a whole: we set out to create a full week of a critical, dialogic space. Do you think we succeeded? How or how not?
• What do you think are the strengths of this sort of pedagogical space – not the program, but this type of learning? What were our greatest learning accomplishments for those kids?
• What were our limitations?
• What did you learn from this whole experience? What was most intriguing from the program experience to you?
• What questions arose that might be worth exploring in the body of the data (for CU LEAD, NCTE, Free Minds, Free People, etc.)?
• Anything else to report or say?

Post-Program Interview & Town Hall Discussion Protocols, Youth (Administered September, October, & November, 2014)

During Phase 2, the post-program project phase, interview protocols will be used twice, once during August/September following the Aquetza program, and once during the winter of 2014/2015, focusing primarily on how participant’s sense-making and social imagination is continuing to develop. Additionally, questions beginning and continuing lines of thematic interest for each participant will be asked. Reflexive and idiosyncratic questions based on the experiences of each participant will be asked as well. These same questions will also be used to guide Town Hall discussions.

• Tell me about 3 major successes you have had since we last talked? What lead to these?
• Describe your community to me? What do relationships and routines look like right now? What contributed to this? What would you like to see changed in them?
• Looking back, is this the community leader you planned to be? Are you ok with this? Or would you like to see it intentionally changed?
• Tell me what has remained most memorable about the Aquetza program?
• Do you feel as though you are able to effect change in your school and community? Are you able to see the lessons and skills we developed during Aquetza in your everyday actions?
• How would you imagine your community? What would be your ideal version of it?
• What needs to happen to move it towards this imagined ideal? What can you do to make that happen? What are you doing?
• If you were to imagine how you would use what we learned at Aquetza in this coming year, what would you say now? Over the next five years?
• What has been the biggest struggle returning from Aquetza? What obstacles have you faced?
• Have you found that the lessons and ideas about education and the community we discussed in Aquetza have been helpful to your school work? Have they been a hindrance?
• How are you placing yourself back into the community and school you previously inhabited? Are you the same person? Are you different? How so?
• Has it been difficult being the person you were after the Aquetza experience in your former school context? Do you feel as though you’ve forgotten or lost any of the insights or changes you underwent during Aquetza because of these difficulties?
• How has the community been supportive of your new self and ideas?

**Post-Program Interview & Town Hall Discussion Protocols, Staff (Administered September, October, November, & December, 2014)**

*These questions operated both as conversation prompts for Town Hall discussions, and the base for periodic check-in interviews, as well as end of semester interviews.*

• How have some of your understandings/visions of critical and culturally sustaining pedagogy been challenged or been difficult to bring to life in your current placement?
• Has it been challenging fitting your critical-educator self into the world and community of your school?
• What have been the most striking points of dissonance for you between what you know we should be doing with kids, and what you are seeing done with students daily? How about the most unexpected or surprising points of tension/dissonance?
• Considering that we want to think of our work charitably, what are some SMALL disruptions you have been able to find or create in your praxis?
• How have the lessons of the summer, etc., translated into your ELA praxis? By this I mean, specifically as it relates to teaching English language arts curriculum, not just teaching in general?
• How do you see race functioning in your school? Is it addressed? Discussed? Appropriately? How have you taken it up?
• How do you see language diversity/bilingualism function in your school? Is it addressed? Valued as an asset? How have you taken it up?
• Have you found any spots for adding in Ethnic Studies content to your curriculum? How has engaging with ethnic studies /students funds of knowledge/ being experts changed your pedagogy?
• Having now seen ___ of a semester’s worth of your school’s learning ecology, what will Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy look like for you long term?
• Finally, being charitable to ourselves, have you lived the pedagogy you hoped to? What would you do differently?
### Appendix F: Overview of Major Codes

#### Overview of Major Codes

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<tr>
<th>Core Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sample Evidence</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>(a) decolonial turning points (travesías) in participant’s Discourses and discursive constructions of identity</em></td>
<td>Significant moments that represented distinct shifts in the big ‘D’ Discourses being used by candidates to construct their understandings of pedagogical identity and object of the work of teaching</td>
<td>“To me how it all connects is, that, um, just being here this week, I’ve just been, so amazed at the stories you all are willing to share, and how you’re, um just willing to express yourselves, and uh, y’know, I know, I’m White, that’s obvious… …I don’t know how it feels, I obviously won’t ever identify as Chicano, but I’m tired of fucking oppression, and uh, I just, I hope that when I teach I can bring, um, the type of space, and the types of interactions, and just, um, create opportunities, for, y’know, for students, for youth, to hopefully, um, take, take out some of that oppression they feel, and, uh, be an ally.”  ~ Steve, Encuentro 4</td>
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<td><em>(b) evidence of ruptures in their instantiation of pedagogical identity, or positioning of themselves</em></td>
<td>Sense-making around new understandings of how to participate in activity systems in new ways, and navigate resulting tensions</td>
<td>“I’ve started to think about [my identity] more… for me, my identity as a White guy… when I speak with the whole class, with a group or whatever, I’ll try to make sure that it’s a point that needs to be shared, and it’s because of realizing the point that the voice of my identity is heard all the time, and I’m not going to change who I am, but I can be deliberate about when I speak, that I’m not taking over the conversation…”  ~ Steve, post-program interview</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>(c) deterritorializing analyses of their work, identity, or the activity systems of schooling</em></td>
<td>Participants engaging critical, decolonial, or poststructural analyses to understand and negotiate experiences, systems, and phenomena in their school lives</td>
<td>“So, every day is a constant reminder of what’s going on within the school systems that are creating detrimental effects with students, and then understanding that you're constantly being pushed to follow in that, to get in line and follow that....... It is such a militaristic, the way that we engage with students when it is in a large group format, that it... You have to do a refresher in the evening of what it is that you're working for and why you're in education.”  ~ Kirsten, End of semester interview</td>
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<td><em>(d) proleptic discourse regarding pedagogy or pedagogical identity</em></td>
<td>Future-oriented thinking about praxis and pedagogical identity</td>
<td>“Even just with the journalism piece, there's a journalism unit, and involving it, so it has pieces from the community rather than just reading like the Denver Post, like whatever, bilingual newspapers. Like having it so it rolls around that. But then, also, taking it so students understand who is that news for. Like, who's the audience? Like how the framing and everything? Who's in charge of... what's the trickle down? Where are the systems and structures that are making it so we have this piece of paper now?.”  ~ Kirsten, post-program interview</td>
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