

Applying Critical Discourse Analysis in the Classroom: A Guide for Educators

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In this conceptual article, we provide a guide for educators to use Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to: (1) critically examine their teaching and behavioral support practices, (2) guide future interactions with students and families, and (3) teach students to empower themselves through critically analyzing texts, media, and society. To do this, we leverage the CDA frameworks provided by Rebecca Rogers (2011), James Paul Gee (1999), and Norman Fairclough (1989). CDA is a tool that can disrupt cycles of oppression and power in classroom settings and school communities. It makes oppressive systems of institutions visible in order to intentionally interrogate and dismantle them rather than unintentionally reproducing them in educational spaces.

Key words: Critical Discourse Analysis, Literacy Instruction, Media Literacy Instruction, K-12, Higher Education, Critical Studies

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Educational spaces reproduce oppression, power, and inequality. This is illustrated in vast research confirming academic and discipline discrepancies between youth of color and White students, as well as the discrepancies for LGBTQIA+ youth and students with disabilities (Schiff, 2018; Mallett, 2016; Welsh & Little, 2018; Taylor et al, 2011). Frameworks such as Critical Race Theory and Critical Law Theory point out that law is never neutral in an oppressive world (Hiraldo, 2010), and authors such as Zinn highlight that individuals' actions cannot be neutral (Zinn, 2002). Therefore, educational policies and practices cannot be neutral: "People in society make up the education system, and thus education research and practice are also infiltrated with matters of race and racism" (Milner, 2007, p. 391).

Within a national and global culture of racism, xenophobia, ableism, homophobia, and misogyny, if we as educators are not constantly analyzing how systems of oppression are perpetuated in classrooms, then we will naturally reproduce them. Nothing teachers do in schools can be neutral; we either actively disrupt power differentials or passively reproduce them. While one teacher cannot account for all implications that come with education's effectiveness of marginalizing certain groups of people, teachers do have additive effects, which have the potential to positively influence the culture of the students and their classrooms (Roychowdhury, 2017). Many teachers are currently working hard to disrupt systems of oppression in classrooms and make curriculum accessible to all learners. We can use the framework of CDA to strengthen our efforts and hold ourselves accountable to continuously implement and improve anti-oppressive action in schools.

The Power of Critical Discourse Analysis for Teachers: Why use CDA?

CDA provides teachers with a tool to analyze power imbalances, oppression, and inequalities in classrooms: “educational practices are considered communicative events; it therefore stands to reason that discourse analysis would be useful to analyze the ways in which the texts, talk, and other semiotic interactions that learning comprises” (Rogers, 2011, p. 1). CDA should be leveraged by teachers worldwide to disrupt systems of oppression in the classroom, and should be used in all educational spaces, from K-12 to higher education institutions. While research and implications surrounding CDA are currently aimed towards higher education and social affairs, we intend for teachers globally to access this tool to build capacity for discussions that address power, privilege, and inequalities. Across contexts, settings, and geographic locations, we internalize these oppressive discourses and power relationships to the extent that they are often deemed “natural” and go unquestioned (Public Broadcasting Service, 2016). The power of CDA is that it gives us a way to make these discourses and systems visible; through it, many practices that are taken as the “norm,” often consenting to the “white mythical norm,” are questioned and can be recognized as oppressive and discriminatory.

Fairclough (2013) reminds us that “changing the world for the better depends upon being able to explain how it has come to be the way it is” (p. 10). CDA opens us to alternative, more equitable, ways of teaching that increase the accessibility of education to all students. It is a framework that can be used to analyze teaching and behavioral support practices, to guide interactions with students and families, and to teach students to critically examine the world around them. It gives both teachers and students a shared sense of ownership over how we, and our communities, can build better realities: “It is important to note that while critique is an important part of the ‘critical project’ it is not the end goal. The end goal is to hope, to dream, and to create alternative realities that are based in equity, love, peace, and solidarity” (Rogers, 2011, p. 5). The remainder of this article is broken into four sections and answer the following guiding questions:

- What is CDA?
- How can teachers use CDA?
- How can students use CDA?
- What resources exist on CDA and power and oppression?

Critical Discourse Analysis: What is CDA?

The purpose of CDA is to deconstruct power and its role in replicating, or disrupting, systems of oppression (Rogers, 2011). Van Dijk (2007) argues the perpetuation of oppression in common discourse is the ability of those in power to control political and media messaging to the public. CDA is an approach to interrogating such messages of power and inequality; it examines ways in which inequalities are constructed and perpetuated (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). It does so through making power relations, and how power relations reproduce through language, visible: “Power is a central concept in critical discourse studies. It tends to be defined in terms of negative uses of power, articulated through and within discourses and resulting in domination and oppression” (Rogers, 2011, p. 3). CDA breaks down how language and discourse reinforce oppressive systems through positioning power. Discourse within CDA is defined as “social practices, processes, and products” that consist of everything “from language use, to statements that assign meanings to an institution, to social identities, relationships, practices, and categories” (Rogers, 2011, p. 4). While CDA can be a multi-faceted tool, “approaches to CDA share a set of core assumptions. Those assumptions include an interest in uncovering and transforming conditions of inequality; analyses that transcend the interpretation of language and, instead, aim to explain the work that language performs in society” (Mullet,

2018, p. 118). This expanded view of discourse illustrates “the ways in which social grammars and ‘language bits’ (to use Gee’s term) interact and build identities, relationships, and narratives of a social world” (Rogers, 2011, p. 6). In this way, teachers can leverage CDA to highlight the ways power differentials are perpetuated in classrooms (Åberg & Olin-Scheller, 2018; Fairclough, 2010; Rogers, 2011). Furthermore, Fairclough offers flexibility to how CDA can be used: social theories, political campaigning, explicit textual analysis (Fairclough, 2002). We assert that CDA can also be used with students to help them uncover hidden messages of power and oppression within the classroom and in greater society.

Fairclough breaks the deconstruction of power into ‘the power to’, ‘power over’, and ‘power behind’ (Fairclough, 1989). Janks (2009) argues that readers need to be able to decode, make meaning from, and interrogate text, while Gee separates the word choice and the explicit language use, or the Little “d”, with the societal and historical beliefs, values, and contexts, or the Big “D” (Gee, 1999). We leverage the notion of Big “D” and Little “d” discourse as a tool that simultaneously infuses decoding with context. We apply these notions in our guide for educators in questions such as, ‘Who holds the power?’, ‘Who is being dominated?’, and ‘Is power supporting one group over another?’. As scholars, educators, and lifelong learners, we assert that CDA is a tool for all humans to use in their anti-oppressive, anti-racist journey. This article provides a guide for educators to use CDA to analyze the ways in which our teaching, behavioral practices, and interactions with students contribute to the perpetuation of exclusionary ideology; through interrogating ourselves and our actions within school spaces, we learn how to do and be better.

Applying Critical Discourse Analysis: How can teachers use CDA?

CDA gives educators a structured way to uncover and transform conditions of inequality in order to intentionally create classrooms that interrupt the status quo (Mullet, 2018). In helping teachers zero in on what language and actions in their classroom perpetuate the ‘isms’ in our society, it gives educators a sense of agency over those disrupting oppressive systems that often feel too big to disrupt. The power of CDA is that it can be used anywhere that language and discourse lie. We encourage educators to use CDA in analyzing their teaching and behavioral approaches (examples: lessons, assessments, class discussions, behavior logs, behavior referral forms, behavior plans, student support plans), their daily interactions with students and families (examples: transcriptions of family teacher conferences, teacher team meetings, interactions with students, phone calls with families), and as a teaching tool to help build students’ critical media literacy.

While “there exist no comprehensive ‘guides’ for frameworks for conducting CDA” (Mullet, 2018, pg. 138), we build on Gee’s (1999) idea of closely attending to language while simultaneously examining power ideologies to create a step-by-step guide for educators and students to use CDA. The guiding questions of “How is it [power] being produced, reproduced, and consumed?” and “What is the social and historical context?” were central to the construction of our guide and its prompting questions (Reyes, 2021). Figure 1 is the step-by-step educator guide to CDA. Then, below the figure, we use the CDA guide to deconstruct and analyze an education policy from Vermont, United States as an example on how to use the guide.

Figure 1
Step-by-Step Educator Guide to CDA

Step	Guiding Questions
Step 1: Choose the Artifact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Does this artifact have potential for us to uncover messages of power and inequity in this artifact? -Who is the author? -Who is the audience?
Step 2: Leverage a Critical Framework (Examples: Critical Disability Studies, Critical Race Theory, DisCrit, Critical Feminist Theory)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What is the context of my artifact? Will that help me choose a framework (s) to leverage? -What lens, or lenses, do I want and/or need to take to analyze?
Step 3: Discourse Analysis: little “d”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Are words repeated throughout the text? Which ones and how often? (Word cloud) -Is there a pattern among repeated words? -Are there words that show possession, or ‘us’ v ‘them’? (our, their, mine) -Are there words that show the opinion of the author? -Is there use of subjective language? - Is there evidence of author separation? (they, them versus we, our)
Step 4: Discourse Analysis: Big “D”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What is the societal and historical context of this artifact? -What historical events and eras connect to your theoretical framework and your artifact (example: for CRT, Civil Rights, Slavery, Jim Crow Era)? -What current events connect to your theoretical framework and artifact (example, for CRT, killing of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, Black Lives Matter protests being seen as violent despite being mostly peaceful (Kishi & Jones, 2020), Police Brutality)? -Is power supporting one group over another? -How does this lead to inequality? -Is there evidence of constructed power? -Who has the constructed power? -Who holds the power and who is being dominated? -Is the power being shared? -How is power being produced, reproduced, and consumed?

Step 5: Implications for Reconstruction and Action

-Where is there space for anti-oppressive language?

-Where is there space to use language of inclusion rather than language of separation (our, we)?

-How can I incorporate more inclusive language?

-Where is there space to intentionally share power? -How could I share power?

-Where is there space to eliminate evidence of hierarchy? How could that happen? What actions do you need to take?

-Where is their space to empower the group that has been historically dominated? What can I do to empower those groups?

Step 1: Choose the Artifact

The first step is choosing the text or discourse that you are interested in deconstructing. This can be an excerpt, a literary piece, a transcription of speech, or any other form of language. For teachers, this may be a rubric, a lesson plan, an email, a transcription of conversation, lecture notes, or a piece of curriculum. For our example, we are using a model policy written by the Vermont Agency of Education (2016). We choose this artifact specifically because of the content, "Roles and Responsibilities in Vermont School Systems." This content has historical implications of power in governance, and we predict will have clear messages of inequities upon deconstruction.

Figure 2

Vermont Agency of Education Sample Policy

Teachers

Purpose: Instructional Development and Delivery

Teachers are responsible for:

- Maintaining a strong, safe and supportive classroom climate that is conducive to learning
- Knowing expectations for student learning, and developing and implementing high-quality opportunities to learn that engage learners and move all students systematically towards ambitious goals
- Maintaining fidelity to supervisory union action plan, and make decisions with consideration for system goals

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- Using data to inform teaching and to make teaching responsive to individual needs (personalization), based upon what is best for students (as opposed to adults)

Teachers are accountable to the superintendent.

Sample Indicators of Success:

- Student survey data indicates students feel teachers are invested in their safety and learning
- Students indicate they feel challenged
- Student outcomes suggest continuous improvement and progress towards goals
- Teachers play a leadership role within schools and across schools, sharing expertise and providing mentoring in service of systems goals
- Teachers engage in ongoing professional collaboration around improving teaching and learning, both within schools and across schools in the system, and within grade levels and across grade levels

Teachers are invested in staying in the school and working to make it strong.

Step 2: Leverage a Critical Framework

After choosing our artifact to examine, we then explore the frameworks that we have chosen to leverage. We encourage educators to use critical frameworks, in that the “critical” nature aligns with the interrogation of power messages that we aim to explore. For this step, we encourage educators to lean on the Little “d” and Big “D” concept (Gee, 1999). These two focus on discourse, the Little “d”, as in the explicit language use (grammar and words), and the Big “D” as messages or cues of societal and historical beliefs and values (Gee, 1999). Critical Disability Studies, Critical Race Theory, Dis/ability Critical Race Studies, and Critical Feminist Theory, are critical frameworks that can support educators in making invisible walls visible, and in beginning to break down these barriers for students and society. Note that multiple frameworks can be leveraged simultaneously while performing CDA on a specific artifact.

We begin the process by examining the context of the written policy to guide our lens. Given that Vermont is a predominantly White state with predominantly White schools, indicating hypersegregation, we utilize Critical Race Theory (CRT) when interrogating this policy. CRT acknowledges how engrained racism is in the fabric of our society, so much so, that racist discourse is normalized (Ladson-Billings, 1998). The five tenets include the notions that: (1) racism is ever present and widespread, (2) racial progress is only allowed when it benefits Whites, (3) race is a social construct created by people, (4) validating, believing, and honoring counter-narratives is crucial to disrupting oppression, and (5) Whites have been benefited from law, including Civil Rights legislation (Decuir & Dixon, 2004). In our CDA example, we leverage CRT to give us a resolute picture of the Big “D” context: the current and historical objectification of Black and Brown students in schools. (Not sure why this part is in red?) Therefore, as we begin to deconstruct the language of this policy, we will look for examples of counter-storytelling, the permanence of racism, Whiteness as property and/or as desirable, the ‘mythical norm’, interest conversion, and the critique of liberalism.

Step 3: Discourse Analysis - Little “d”

Now we begin our analysis! We begin with analyzing the words and grammar, or the Little “d” (Gee, 1999). Figure 3 represents a word cloud, a tool that aims to quantify the verbiage by using larger size font to represent words that were found more often in the artifact, and smaller font for words found less often. We encourage educators and students to use word clouds to visually quantify how certain words hold power through repetition. Figure 2 (I think you mean Figure 3, but not sure?) gives space to ‘teachers, goals, students(s), learning, within, across, levels, towards, schools, engage, invested, data, system, strong, towards, make’. Many of these words, such as ‘strong, goals, towards, across’, historically symbolize strength in our society. We also note that words such as, ‘invested, data, goals, engage’ are often used as portrayals of success. The word ‘maintaining’ is used to assert dominance, or power, over the classroom, or students. In a school with a predominantly White teaching force, we connect this to “Whiteness as property,” or predominately White teachers asserting their power over students.

The phrase “knowing expectations” is another example of hierarchy represented in schools. This signifies that teachers need to respond to the expectations formed by someone in power, such as an administrator. This phrase also can imply that teachers are called upon to enforce expectations, rather than co-create expectations with students. Additionally, the word ‘students’ (as opposed to adults) indicates a separation of students versus adults, which implies the students cannot be classified as adults, and therefore are inherently subordinate to adults. Finally, ‘individual needs’ messages that there is a deficit or need of the individual students, rather than a deficit or need in the system. This leads

us to the deconstruction of the Big “D,” or localized and globalized messaging of power and inequality.

Figure 3

Word Cloud of Sample Policy



Step 4: Discourse Analysis - Big “D”

Next, we dive into the societal and historical context surrounding the artifact, or the Big “D” (Gee, 1999). First, the entire policy, “Roles and Responsibilities in Vermont School Systems,” encompasses school board, superintendent, principal, teacher, and advisory committee roles. We noticed the size of roles and the order of roles, with teachers and advisory committees at the bottom of the policy taking up the least amount of space, compared to the school board, and superintendent positions that are the first two roles listed in the policy, and take up the most amount of space. When thinking about the Big “D” or the societal messaging, this serves as evidence as a hierarchy of importance, or significance of specific roles within the public school system.

While racism is arguably the most oppressive construct that impacts education today, there is no mention of race or racism in the policy. This is evidence of interest convergence, where White people say they are committed to anti-racism yet show no evidence of that in their actions and discourse: “The most threatening racist movement is not the alt right’s unlikely drive for a White ethnostate but the regular American’s drive for a ‘race-neutral’ one. The construct of race neutrality actually feeds White nationalist victimhood by positing the notion that any policy protecting or advancing non-White Americans toward equity is ‘reverse discrimination’” (Kendi, 2019, p. 20).

While the document does address the need for data informed teaching, there is no evidence of using data to close the opportunity gap, or to support students who have been and currently are disenfranchised in school. In continuation, the sentence “make decisions with consideration for system goals” shows us the prevalence and sustinment of a system that has been historically built on racist ideology, or the permeance of racism and

White Supremacy. This leads us to the possible implication of reconstruction of this role, with an actively anti-racist stance.

Step 5: Implications for Reconstruction and Action

Finally, we move to our implications for reconstruction of the artifact (if possible) and action. We begin by looking for space to call for anti-oppressive action and language. As stated, this artifact has no mention of historically disenfranchised groups of students, which indicates a level of color-blindness. We advocate for a shift of the first bullet, from “maintaining a strong, safe, and supportive classroom climate that is conducive to learning” to “empowering a strong, physically and emotionally safe, and supportive classroom climate that is conducive to learning, especially for students who have been historically marginalized.” Note, we take out “maintain” which is a word that indicates power of the beholder, to “empower” which indicates a share of power. We also use the tenets of CRT to explicitly call attention to anti-racism and to name the system of oppression.

For the second bullet, we suggest an alternative verb to “knowing” that indicates power, to “co-construction,” which indicates a share of power. We also offer an alternative for “move all students systematically towards ambitious goals.” We use counter-story telling as a tenant to frame our suggestion of “progress for all students, specifically those who have been historically failed by the education system towards a successful academic agency.” Again, we acknowledge the systemic effect that racism has had on students, and ultimately, the systemic failure that students have had to face. Below is a visual to display the shift after completing CDA for each of the bullets in the artifact:

Figure 4

Step-by-Step Guide to CDA

Original Artifact	CDA Analysis	Reconstructed Artifact
(Teachers are responsible for) maintaining a strong, safe, and supportive classroom climate that is conducive to learning	Evidence of Whiteness as Property Evidence of interest convergence Possessive Language Evidence of power	(Teachers are responsible for) empowering a strong, physically and emotionally safe, and supportive classroom climate that is conducive to learning, especially for students who have been historically marginalized.
(Teachers are responsible for) knowing expectations for student learning, and developing and implementing high-quality opportunities to learn that engage all learners and move all students systematically towards ambitious goals	Evidence of Whiteness as Property Evidence of interest convergence Evidence of counter-story telling Possessive Language	(Teachers are responsible for) co-constructing expectations for learning and developing and implementing high-quality opportunities to learn that engages and progresses all students, specifically those who have been historically failed by the education

	Evidence of power	system towards a successful academic agency.
(Teachers are responsible for) maintaining fidelity to supervisory union action plan, and make all decisions with consideration for system goals	Evidence of Whiteness as Property Evidence of interest convergence Evidence of permanence of racism Possessive Language Evidence of power	(Teachers are responsible for) fidelity to supervisory union action plan, and collaborate in decision making that are inclusive, anti-oppressive, and goal oriented.
(Teachers are responsible for) Using data to inform teaching and to make teaching responsive to individual needs (personalization), based upon what is best for students (as opposed to adults)	Evidence of Whiteness as Property Possessive Language Evidence of power	(Teachers are responsible for) Engaging in data-informed cycles of inquiry that are collaborative, interdisciplinary, and holistic in order to reduce barriers for student success.

Applying Critical Discourse Analysis: How can students use CDA?

CDA can be used as a media literacy instructional tool, as well as a literacy intervention; it can be explicitly taught to students to encourage them in making meaning of oppressive discourse, and to interrogate text and conversation as critical thinkers. Critical scholars argue that there is a call for educators to offer spaces to students to critically examine texts, media, and the world around them in order to deconstruct roles of power and its role in oppression (Moje & Lewis, 2007). Therefore, we encourage educators to use current events articles, history excerpts, close readings, songs, poetry, commercials, television shows and movies, and other literary work to guide students in exposing power structures.





When we clearly see and articulate oppressive structures, we know that racism, xenophobia, ableism, homophobia, and misogyny, and their effects on our lives, are not about us as individuals. We are not the problem, the system is the problem; CDA can offer students a structured way to explore that theme. Specifically, CDA enables students to see how the “mythical norm” is constructed, and therefore how to resist it. The “mythical norm” is “defined as white, thin, male, young, heterosexual, Christian, and financially secure” (Lorde, 1984, p. 13). Deconstructing and confronting the notion that this dominant identity is the ‘ideal,’ ‘normal,’ and ‘successful,’ as well as making its role in recreating power and oppression visible, helps prevent students from internalizing the thought that they are broken if their identities do not align with it. It clarifies that power and exclusion are at fault, not them, and empowers them to question and resist the perpetuation of violent oppressive systems.

Below is a step-by-step guide for students to learn and leverage CDA in the classroom. It mirrors the one above in that the steps remain the same, but the language has been slightly altered to make it more accessible for a wider range of individuals. While we changed some language, we believe continuing to use words such as “power,” “oppression,” and “inequity” directly with students is crucial to helping them build a critical lens. We

encourage educators to use this as a resource or use this as a baseline to adjust for your specific context and students:

Figure 5

Step-by-Step Student Guide to CDA

Step	Guiding Questions
Step 1: Choose the Artifact 	<p>-Are there messages of power and inequity in this artifact?</p>
Step 2: Pick a Context 	<p>-How are some peoples' rights being excluded?</p> <p>-How are some peoples' rights being included?</p> <p><i>*Consider BIPOC, people with disabilities, people living in poverty, LGBTQIA+ communities</i></p>
Step 3: Hunt for Words 	<p>-Try a word cloud!</p> <p>-What patterns do you notice?</p> <p>-Are there words that show the opinion of the author?</p>
Step 4: Think about Deeper Meaning 	<p>-What current events are connected to our artifact?</p> <p>-Is power supporting one group over another?</p>

Step 5: Decide on Next Steps



-Where is there space to eliminate evidence of hierarchy? How could that happen? What actions do you need to take?

-Where is their space to empower the group that has been historically dominated? What can I do to empower those groups?

Through the step-by-step guide for students, we can use CDA to teach students how to critically engage in texts, media, and society to become co-conspirators in positive change. Through the guide for educators, we can leverage CDA to critically deconstruct our own teaching practices, decisions, and interactions to intentionally disrupt the perpetuation of power imbalances, oppression, and inequality.

Additional Resources: What Resources Exist on CDA, Power, and Oppression?

As life-long researchers and our commitment to such, we never aim to deem ourselves experts of anything. We believe that to develop and strengthen critical thinking skills, one must have multiple modes of information. In addition to the example we provide in this article, we provide two examples of using CDA in “Leveraging The Braided Approach: An Anti-Oppressive Framework For PBIS.” Below are four resources that have helped us develop our capacity to use CDA to deconstruct and interrogate oppressive systems:

Åberg, M., & Olin-Scheller, C. (2018). Wolf cries: On power, emotions and critical literacy in first-language teaching in Sweden. *Gender and Education*, 30(7), 882-898. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2017.1376041>

Flores, N. & Rosa, J. (2015). Undoing appropriateness: Raciolinguistic ideologies and language diversity education. *Harvard Educational Review*, 85(2), 149-171. <https://doi.org/10.17763/0017-8055.85.2.149>

Janks, H. (2013) Critical literacy in teaching and research. *Education Inquiry*, 4(2), 225-242, <https://doi.org/10.3402/edui.v4i2.22071>

Rogers, R. (2011). *An introduction to critical discourse analysis in education* (2nd ed). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203836149>

Authors’ Positionality

The power of CDA pushes us to continuously reflect on our own bias and gives us a framework to confront them and better ourselves and our writing. As authors, we aim to be transparent within our learning and our identities. Through studying CDA and performing CDA analysis on our own discourse (written, verbal, gestured), we have learned to do better. A symbolic example is the phrase “our students.” We often used this phrase in writing to show that we believe in a culture of inclusion. However, through

learning CDA, we uncovered the power that is portrayed within “our students,” showing possession of students. This is an example of how Little “d,” “our” or possession and hierarchy, feeds into the Big “D,” how students have been historically positioned under the authority of educators and scholars. Do we have the right to claim possession over another human being? Absolutely not. Therefore, we shifted our discourse to refer to students as “the students” giving students ownership of themselves. We have been perpetrators of using possessive phrases such as “my class,” “my students,” “my math lesson,” “my expectation.” Through CDA, we have learned to shift language that reproduces inequalities and authoritative power. Below are brief descriptions of how we come to the table of education and writing.

Monica: I identify as White Latina; therefore, I have experience with the dynamic of intersection of identity and ethnicity in White America. I am a heterosexual cisgender woman which translates to freedom around my gender and sexual orientation that others have historically not had. I have also had the privilege of a higher education journey and that adds to the limitations of my understanding of poverty and educational oppression. Being the daughter of an immigrant, I show up to this work with a lens of social justice, a passion for empowering underrepresented populations of students, and a fire within me to bring difficult conversations to the table.

Jessica: I am White; my race is a deficit to understanding racial oppression. I am a cisgender woman; while I have experience with gender oppression, I have privilege of being able to fit into gender norms. I identify as queer and have experienced oppression due to my sexual orientation. I was born with a cleft lip and palate and received Title I services as a child. I grew up in a working-class family and I am a first-generation college student and have experienced economic and educational oppression. My hope is that, over time, I can support myself and others to see through a lens of social justice, recognize how oppression self-replicates, and understand how we can see, and treat, all as fully human.

Author Note

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As co-authors, we commit ourselves to researching, analyzing, and dismantling systems of exclusion within public education. Grounded in anti-oppression, we leverage our experience in public schools to ensure our work is impactful and useful for all educators.

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