



**Navigating Middle Grounds: Transforming Educational Spaces through Collaborative Pedagogy
inspired by Puerto Rican's Battles Against 'Juvenicides'**

Tayna Mía Rivera Rodríguez

MSc in Education (Comparative and International Education), 2023

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University of Oxford
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MSc. In Education (Comparative and International Education)

St Antony's College

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Dedication

You have the full right to enjoy these places and these things, even when knowing that they should be for everyone, and that you will end up with a student debt that is never paid off: ***the debt to all the people who helped you get there, and with all the people who didn't get a chance to decide if they wanted to be there.*** It is paid for with a lifetime of effort and commitment, but with the right to rest and delight, never think otherwise. (Words of Jimmy-James Seale-, my secondary school teacher, when I arrived at Oxford)

To all the people who helped me and to all the people who did not get a chance

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Como diría pá: ¡Gracias vida, es inmerecido!

Abstract

This Participatory Action Research (PAR), led by a group of students and teachers from Puerto Rico, explores the pressing issue of juvenicides and how schools can serve as a space for collaborative reflection on broader social issues. Most academic studies of PAR and Collaborative Pedagogy concentrate on working with students or teachers individually. Rather than focusing solely on students or teachers, this research proposes and implements a collaborative pedagogy where we work together to transform educational spaces.

Through critical dialogue and online group meetings, the concept of middle ground (the in-between spaces) that we navigate while conducting research and navigating our schools is analysed, shedding light on the importance of questioning the spatial dimension of our educational practices. This study is part of the ongoing transformation we aim to see in our education system.

The validity of this research is not in its replicability but in how it produces a praxis (reflection and action) of the co-researcher, and its implications for our practice in schools and research. As an outcome of our critical dialogues and vivencias, the “Guide for a Collaborative Pedagogy: transforming our learning spaces” emerges, providing a roadmap for transforming the educational spaces we inhabit.

Keywords: collaborative learning, teacher-student relationship, spatial structure of schooling

All translations quoted from Spanish (our conversations) are my own.

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Glossary and acronyms

Words in Spanish:

- Vivencia: “lived experience”. Defined as an indivisible unit between the environment in which the person lives and what the person experiences. It cannot be observed; it can only be lived and felt (Glassman & Erdem, 2014; Guzmán & Saucedo, 2015).
- Desprecarizar: Eliminate inequalities (precariousness) and build a dignified and quality life.
- La junta: Refers to the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) that controls Puerto Rico’s finances.
- Confianza “trust”: “A feeling of mutual understanding, respect, and emotional closeness” (Soto-Santiago et al., 2015, p.11).
- Desahogar (verb conjugations: desahogarse, desahogo): “Desahogar translates to vent, but if you break down the literal translation, it means to undrawn. As if letting go of the burdens and secrets you are holding on will save you from drowning” (Ita, 2020, para.1).

Words in English:

- Juvenicide: the process that begins with the precariousness of life and the reduction of options that bring young people closer to death (Valenzuela, 2019).
- Epistemic justice: “Enquire about “who” generates knowledge and how certain perspectives and forms of knowledge can be negated or marginalized by dominant conceptions of valid knowledge. [...] In education is not limited to the recognition of multiple forms of knowledge, but it also applies to how knowledge is accessed and taught” (Balarin et al., 2021, p.2).
- Academia-splaining: addresses situations where an explanation of the quotes is unnecessary; understanding the quote itself is sufficient, and situations where the researcher condescendingly addresses the participants.
- Middle ground: in-between spaces fostered to create meaningful interactions and non-hierarchical spaces.

Acronyms

- PAR- Participatory Action Research
- PRDE- Puerto Rico Department of Education

- PROMESA- Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act
- CUREC-The Central University Research Ethics Committee

Introduction

sigue aprendiendo que la colonia te necesita (mami)
keep learning that the colony needs you (mommy)

Coming to Oxford has made me feel uncomfortable throughout the entire process. Not because I felt I did not deserve to be here but because I believe many people should have these opportunities. As a teacher, student, educator, and researcher, I constantly feel part of a system that reproduces and perpetuates inequality. As a young Puerto Rican woman (that believes in the power of the communities), I intend to look at academia through a decolonising lens because it is a space that has been denied to us for a long time and is a space that is still inaccessible for most of our youth/people. In this Participatory Action Research (PAR), I acknowledge the participants and myself as co-researchers collectively forming a ‘research group’ (engaging in critical dialogues and problematising together), in recognition of the authorities of our knowledges and vivencias (Camarota & Fine, 2008). At the same time, I understand my responsibility and positionalities in this individual narration and analysis of a collective process. Throughout this piece, I utilise “I”, “we”, and “our” reflecting constantly on the various individual (‘I’) and collective (‘we’, ‘our’) identities that I navigate as a researcher. I make meaning out of a collective knowledge production exercise so at times ‘we’ would refer to the research group (me and the co-researchers). However, at other times ‘we’ is an invitation to the reader to immerse themselves into this process of meaning making and reflect on their own positioning too.

While conducting my undergraduate research (Rivera-Rodríguez, 2021), I visited Vieques, an island municipality in Puerto Rico. In a conversation with a teacher, she told me that more than 13 of her students had been killed. Since that moment, the possibility of losing one of my students became and is still one of my biggest fears. I started thinking: What role do I play in their lives? How can I better approach and impact adolescents? How can I improve my educational philosophy and strategies? Above all, how can I prevent this unfortunate outcome from happening? How can we eradicate juvenicides? Even though this question may never be answered, it is the question that inspired me and moved my work. More than a question is the goal that I want to achieve.

Juvenicides is a term created by Jose Manuel Valenzuela that describes the process that begins with the precariousness of life, criminalisation, and the reduction of options that bring

young people closer to death (Valenzuela, 2019). It is the phenomenon and the concentration of acts of violence that land on the bodies of young people. Young individuals who, for the most part, have become subject to precarious conditions of life, cultures, and identities (Rivera-Rodríguez & Hernandez-Repollet, 2023).

The global average homicide rate in 2020 was 5.6 per 100,000 inhabitants, while the average in Latin America and the Caribbean was 20.1 per 100,000 inhabitants (Zavala-Zegarra et al., 2022) and 16.99 per 100,000 in Puerto Rico (Herre et al., 2023). The male population in Puerto Rico between the ages of 15 and 44 has a higher risk of death by homicide than any other population in the United States except the African American population (Zavala-Zegarra et al., 2023). Even though restrictions to legally access a firearm in Puerto Rico continue to be stricter than in many US jurisdictions. In neighbouring states like Florida, the purchase of guns is less restricted, so the accessibility of these weapons extends to Puerto Rico, often illegally (Zavala-Zegarra et al., 2022), which is a demonstration and representation of our colonial relations. Although drug trafficking as an activity in Puerto Rico has indeed been notorious for a long time on a daily basis, the statement that the archipelago is submerged in the logic of a drug state is taking away responsibility from the State, the neoliberal capitalist system (Cintrón-Gutierrez, 2019) and the colonial system.

Last year, I met Jose Manuel Valenzuela, who reaffirmed the importance of addressing this topic. I told him about my fears of perpetuating a discourse about Latin America and Puerto Rico as centres of crime, and he responded with:

“Es más grave que estén matando a la gente”-that translate to
 “It is more serious that people are getting killed.”

He reminded me that we must start thinking about “How to *desprecarizar*¹ life?”. I took this question and began to think about how to answer it through education. Specifically, what role does education play in preventing or perpetuating juvenicides, and how can we transform that? The analysis, conceptualisation and vivencias of juvenicides could take multiple forms. In this work, we engage in a critical dialogue about juvenicides, looking to problem-solve and problematise the educational spaces. As Engely (one of the co-researchers stated):

¹ Eliminate inequalities (precariousness) and build a dignified and quality life.

Juvenicides, I believe, are not necessarily about death but can also refer to the failure of students. There has been much discussion about this, emphasising the need for students to have the motivation to continue their studies.

When I decided to study Secondary Education and work in public schools as an educator, numerous people told me how hard it would be and how difficult and disrespectful adolescents are. I realised that many people had created a notion of the youth as criminalised and unworthy, specifically those from marginalised and impoverished communities (Reguillo, 2000). In 2022, I started to work in a public school in Puerto Rico, teaching 10th-grade students, and it was one of the most amazing experiences of my life. It reaffirmed to me that adolescents are much more than what we believe they are, that they constitute differentiated spaces, and that by stereotyping, criminalising, and imposing an imaginary on them, we are only perpetuating the epistemic violence inflicted upon them, making their possibilities impossible. I realised it is essential to discuss what is happening with our youth, engage in dialogues and co-construct our possibilities.

I decided to create a collaborative space between teachers and adolescents where we could have critical dialogues and share ideas about the mechanisms, we have used to transform our classroom and educational spaces to create a guide to help prevent juvenicides. In this research, I conceptualise classrooms as oppressive spaces but also as spaces that have the potential to be transformed through collaborative learning/pedagogy (between teachers and youth). This project seeks to challenge an educational system that reproduces social inequality. Nevertheless, I constantly ask myself:

Can the radical educator use the classroom to break down the hierarchies that have created that classroom? Can liberatory education theory provide something concrete to the struggle and not just supply university graduates with a more nuanced vocabulary to justify their privilege? (Spoto, 2014, p.83)

I know this research is part of the “knowledge production” of an institution and academia built to reproduce systems of oppression. I do not expect this research to be a “magic bullet for a society rife with inequity (Giroux, 2001, p. 237)”. However, I expect to challenge myself, the systems in which I exist, and how I interact with them. Furthermore, I aim to engage in a praxis (reflection and action) with the co-researchers. This collaborative pedagogy will allow us to contribute to the eradication of juvenicides and to imagine the educational spaces we want to forge. As Alex Rodríguez Joglar, one of the co-researchers, stated:

To the extent that we can make our education more participatory, we can create a more participatory society. To the extent that we can have a fairer education, we can create a fairer society. Because at the end of the day, what is school if not the collection of all our social aspirations. Or at least, that's what school should be.

This work was inspired by the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* of Paulo Freire (1970), the reflection of Jose Manuel Valenzuela about juvenicides in his book *Trazos de Sangre y Fuego* (2019), the guide "*Desde el suelo*"² ("*From the Ground Up*") from CARIBANA Collective and the vivencias of all the co-researchers.

Dissertation Overview

In the following section of this work, I introduce the historical-cultural context of the educational system in Puerto Rico. This is followed by the literature review exploring existing studies and theories related to teacher-student relationships and the spatial structure of schooling, highlighting the need for a collaborative pedagogy in research and classrooms. The methodology of this research focuses on the use of PAR and an iterative-research approach conducted through critical dialogues. The findings and discussions are divided into two chapters: First, an analysis and a discussion of collaborative Pedagogy and PAR as educational processes within this research group. Second, a presentation of the findings on how teachers and students transform schools and classrooms. The dissertation concludes with a general discussion, recommendations, and a reflection on collaborative pedagogy.

² "From the Ground up" is an exercise guide and resources created to accompany processes of reflection, discussion and construction of alternatives to educational institutions and their roles in perpetuating systems of oppression in Puerto Rico (CARIBANA, 2023).

Educational Context of Puerto Rico

As Freire (1970) explained, "the process of searching for the meaningful thematics should include a concern for the links between themes, a concern to pose these themes as problems, and a concern for their historical-cultural context. (p.108)". To contextualise this work is essential; to start by summarising the historical-cultural context of Puerto Rico's education system.

Puerto Rico's central government and agencies are moulded after the United States government. In that sense, Puerto Rico's educational system reflects its long colonial relationship (Brusi, 2022a). The Department of Instruction (now the Puerto Rico Department of Education) and the position of Commissioner of Instruction were created under the Foraker Act (1900-1917) when the United States introduced the first civil dictatorial regime (Torres González et al., 2017). The curriculum imposed by the United States had an Americanizing vision that emphasised the teaching of English and loyalty to its ideals, symbols, and institutions (Torres González et al., 2017). However, as a result of the colonial policy of Americanising Puerto Rican children through education, schooling started to become more accessible (Rubiano et al., 2020).

Furthermore, in the 1950s, with the first local government elected and the aims for industrialisation of the archipelago, education started to grow (Torres González et al., 2017). Puerto Rico had one of the most substantial records of educational development in the world, alongside the Republic of Korea (Ladd et al., 2006). Between 1960 and 2000, the average schooling of Puerto Rican workers doubled from 6.2 years to 12.2 years (Ladd et al., 2006). Despite this accomplishment, a consensus among policymakers, the PRDE itself, and the population is that the public education system on the island has been in crisis for more than 15 years (Brusi & Godreau, 2021; Ladd et al., 2006; Puerto Rico Education Reform Act, 2018). Public schools in Puerto Rico are criticised for low performance and graduation levels, parental dissatisfaction, and centralised bureaucratic decision-making (Ayer, 2018). Even though the PRDE has transformed its laws on multiple occasions, it is rooted in coloniality³.

Historically, the continuous increase in federal funds has resulted in a growing interference of the federal government in Puerto Rican education and loss of autonomy (Torres-

³ Coloniality refers to the power that emerged as a result of colonialism (our relationship with Spain and the U.S), but that define culture, labour, human relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administration (Maldonado-Torres, 2007).

González et al., 2017). As a combination of colonial measures, governmental corruption and the mismanagement of public funds, the Puerto Rican government delved into an unpayable debt and defaulted on its loans in 2015 (Seale-Collazo, 2023). Due to our colonial status, Puerto Rico has no right to extend the Title IX bankruptcy proceedings that cover other US jurisdictions. Given this situation, the US Congress imposed la la Junta and PROMESA⁴. Accordingly, the process of progressively defunding public education (and school closures) was imposed by the highly paid technocrats and bureaucrats committed to implementing the decisions recommended by la Junta and by PROMESA stakeholders (Brusi & Godreau, 2021).

School closures over the last decade, specifically in 2018, after Hurricane María, weakened parent involvement and democratic governance in schools and communal spaces. (Rubiano et al., 2020). The decision-making process of the PRDE rarely involves families, teachers, students, and social workers, among other actors (Rubiano et al., 2020). This sums up the students' historical lack of representation in decision-making. On an island where over 40 per cent of the population and over 50 per cent of children live under the poverty line, and approximately 40 per cent of the students are part of the special education program, the students affected most by these cuts and decisions are precisely the ones with the greatest need (Brusi & Godreau, 2021).

In 2018, former Secretary of Education Julia Keleher⁵ and the government of Ricardo Roselló⁶ (the candidate of the party that supports statehood for Puerto Rico) created the current law of the Department of Education, the Puerto Rico Education Reform Act that promotes the privatisation of education and creation of charter schools (Brusi, 2022b). However, as an oxymoron, the philosophical framework of the PRDE, as established in Puerto Rico Education Reform Act (2018), is grounded on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the following postulate based on the ideas of Paulo Freire and Eugenio María de Hostos:

Education is essential in the process of human liberation (Freire, Hostos). It is necessary to understand the term 'liberation' within the framework of a conception of the human

⁴ the bill created and imposed by the U.S Congress and signed into law in 2016 to create la Junta and imposed a dictatorial regime in Puerto Rico.

⁵ She was indicted for several federal charges, including theft of government funds and wire fraud. Before she was appointed secretary of education, she had a position at the United States (US) federal Education Department, where she oversaw the PRDE and its relationship with the US federal government, including financial management of federal funds and compliance (Brusi, 2022b).

⁶ overthrown of his position during the manifestation of “Verano del 19” Summer of 2019

being as rooted in their society and culture. Liberating human beings requires them to comprehend their interaction with the culture and society in which they live, to acquire the diverse tools that their culture offers them, and to develop both the capacity to be critical of their own culture and the imagination to create a space within society. (p.6)

Additionally, the Education Reform Act cite educators, psychologist and sociologist like Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, John Dewey, Siemens y Downes, Albert Bandura, Howard Gardner, and Daniel Godman and states that "For the Educational Foundations and learning theories to be producers of knowledge, it is necessary to create and implement a consistent and coherent service structure for this new educational system"(p.12-13). Is the PRDE consistent and coherent with the structure and strategies implemented compared to their philosophy and goals?

Furthermore, in the report created by the Commission for the Study and Recommendation of the Educational Philosophy of Puerto Rico (CERFE-PR), it is established that:

The purpose of the Department of Education is to provide ethical and moral education, to humanise and facilitate students' knowledge, and to promote their interconnection with society. (P. Del. S. 1264, 2019, p.5)

As stated by Freire (1970):

[Person] who proclaims devotion to the cause of liberation yet is unable to enter into communion with the people, whom [they] continues to regard as totally ignorant, is grievously self-deceived. (p, 61)

If we want an education for liberation, we must implement communion (Freire, 1970) and collaborative pedagogy at the centre of our education, not only in words but in action. This work analyses the potential of collaborative pedagogy and critical dialogue in transforming our classrooms and educational spaces. It does not focus on analysing the influence of the teacher-student relationship on academic achievement; it analyses the social dimension and relationships fostered or not fostered by the school system and its potential for social transformation.

Literature Review

Building a Collaborative Pedagogy

Collaborative Pedagogy encourages interaction between individuals or groups working towards a common goal (Omodan, 2021). Most of the time, collaborative pedagogy is used interchangeably with the term collaborative learning. In this work, I will mainly focus on collaborative pedagogy (and the transformation of teaching). However, I will also use the term collaborative learning, understanding that the learning process should be considered an analogous teaching and learning process. The broadest definition of collaborative learning is a situation where two or more people learn something together (Dillenbourg, 1999).

Collaborative learning and pedagogy are umbrellas for various educational approaches involving joint work by students, teachers or students and teachers together (Smith & MacGregor, 1992). However, most literature about collaborative learning and pedagogy focuses on student-student collaboration (Watkins, n/d) or teacher-teacher collaboration (Miller & Burdem, 2007; Vangrieken et al., 2015). Additionally, it mainly focuses on higher education (Marantz & Mule, 2019; Power O'Mahony, 2017; Zhou et al., 2019). Education research mainly focuses on one actor, and combining the teachers' and students' perspectives and vivencias is less common (Frelin & Grannäs, 2014). Furthermore, the study of collaborative pedagogy in educational spaces (e.g., classrooms and research) with secondary school students and teachers has been understudied and requires more attention, presenting a scope for inquiry.

The importance of the teacher-student relationship

The student-teacher relationship has been identified as a critical factor impacting students' social and educational success (Agyekum, 2019; Fredriksen & Rhodes, 2004). In a study conducted in Puerto Rico, where teachers and students from both public and private intermediate and secondary education levels participated, it was found that 88% of teachers reported aggression from their students (Fundación SM, 2008). The students reported that almost half of the teachers ridicule them, and more than 50% of the teachers have witnessed other colleagues ridiculing a student (Fundación SM, 2008). Additionally, the study showed that 65% of the students do not believe that school teaches them how to handle problems that may arise between people. The students understand that despite the importance of topics related to

coexistence in school, they are not taught how to address interpersonal problems (Fundación SM, 2008)—showing that the PRDE is not achieving their stated vision.

Students who experience a close and emotional relationship with their classroom teacher tend to demonstrate improved self-regulation skills and lower levels of conflict (Merritt et al., 2012). From the student's perspective, relationships with teachers are essential and can turn a difficult high school experience into a successful one (Bernstein-Yamashiro & Noam, 2013). Additionally, it can lead to more future relationships with teachers and other nonfamiliar adults (Bernstein-Yamashiro & Noam, 2013). Adolescence presents itself as a crucial stage in which two opposing phenomena co-occur: student-teacher relationships tend to become less close, but teachers' potential to become influential adults in the lives of their students either remains unchanged or intensifies (García-Moya, 2020). The lack of connection with adults at school is a significant variable for student alienation, failure and disaffection from school, and dropout (Bernstein-Yamashiro & Noam, 2013). Students are less likely to drop out of high school, where relationships between students and teachers are consistently positive (Lee & Burkam, 1992). Acknowledging the significance of building relationships between teachers and students involves engaging in a conversation about power dynamics.

Navigating power relations

Pedagogy is a moral and political practice that is always implicated in power relations because it offers particular versions and visions of civic life, community, the future, and how we might construct representations of ourselves, others, and our physical and social environment. (Giroux, 2013, p. 29)

Constructing a Collaborative Pedagogy requires looking at the social, moral, and political practices that develop our human relations. When individuals work together, they can encounter barriers that may be institutional (e.g., disciplinary divisions), physical (architectural, geographical, virtual) and interpersonal (e.g., Roles, gender, race, age) (Romer & Whipple, 1991). In the classroom space, as it has been constructed, a degree of power is always present (McCroskey & Richmond, 1983). Power, like knowledge, is a social construct; like all social constructs, it is not static (Romer & Whipple, 1991). Although the different roles of learner and teacher have been established, collaborative education transformed this relationship where everyone concerned is both learner and teacher (Romer & Whipple, 1991). As a consequence of the construction of most educational spaces, the task of collaboration involves the creation and

continual redefinition of authority structures among the participants (Romer & Whipple, 1991) and going to the roots of long-held assumptions about teaching and learning (Smith & MacGregor, 1992). When navigating power relations, we should also question the role that the structure of schooling plays.

Temporal and spatial structure of schooling

School's temporal and spatial structure is one of the main challenges to collaborative pedagogy at the classroom level. The classroom is compounded by the traditional structures and culture of the academy and schools, which continue to perpetuate the teacher-centred, transmission-of-information model of teaching and learning (MacGregor, 1990). The PRDE promotes student-centredness (Puerto Rico Education Reform Act, 2018) but does not reinforce or demonstrate that vision inside educational spaces and classrooms.

To reflect on this process, we must question the spatial structure of our classrooms and educational spaces to understand the possibilities of a collaborative pedagogy. The traditional ecosystem and spatial division of learning is based on the separation of home, the institution (school, college) and the neighbourhood (Cuthell et al., 2011). The temporal and spatial structuring of schooling restrains and facilitates teachers' work of creating and sustaining educational relationships with students (Frelin & Grannäs, 2014). In Puerto Rico, most students take classes from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (but some schools start at 7:00 a.m. and finish at 4:00 p.m.) (Ramos Parés, 2022). Most students take six or seven subjects (periods of 50 minutes) throughout the day, with only one free period for lunch. Additionally, students have an optional extended academic reinforcement program between 2:45 p.m. and 5:45 p.m. or from 3:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m., depending on the school period in each campus (Metro, 2021).

Furthermore, in most schools in Puerto Rico, students take all the classes with the same group of students, most of them from the same age group. Even between their grades, they stick to one group of 25-30 students throughout the school year, sometimes throughout the whole years of intermediate or high school. The administration of time and space has established limitations on what teachers and students can do and how they engage with each other and navigate the spatial and temporal structure surrounding them. Schools in Puerto Rico represent a community core (Rubiano et al., 2020). They serve as shelters during hurricanes, centres for emergency response during health crises, places with access to food, and polling stations (Rubiano et al., 2020). Understanding our school dynamics requires a recognition of the wide-

reaching meaning and web of relationships schools hold. Schools play an essential role in the community's social, economic, and cultural life as a centre to foster relationships. Furthermore, Rubiano et al. (2020) established that schools in Puerto Rico are places of intergenerational relations, where children are connected with elders who often attended the same schools.

Looking to address the time-space dimension of schooling and educational spaces, I will use the term middle ground created by Frelin and Grannäs (2014) “to denote the space in which it will be possible for individuals to emerge in ways that extend beyond the given teacher and student roles (p.58)” and to address the in-between spaces that we create to navigate the imposed structures. In schooling, the organization of time is often taken for granted (Frelin & Grannäs, 2014), despite its influence on the school dynamics and the development of relationships. Breaktimes are some of the most valued times and experiences students have in schools, and it has an essential role in social development (Baines & Blatchford, 2019). By looking at the time-space dimension, we can look at the power dimension of teacher-student relations and the potential of collaborative pedagogy. “Achieving education that is humane is a worthy cause, and knowledge about how to create middle ground and educational relationships with all students is vital for successful teaching” (Frelin & Grannäs, 2014, p.65). I proposed engaging in critical dialogues to transform these structures, navigating middle grounds, and achieving a collaborative pedagogy.

Critical dialogue as a medium for collaborative pedagogy

Critical dialogue describes the discursive work of praxis that involves constructing, deconstructing, and reconstructing knowledge of status quo discourses by identifying and challenging oppression and creating opportunities for transformation (Laman et al., 2012). Critical dialogue is key to collaborative learning (Martínez-Torres & Rosset, 2014). Constructing collaborative learning requires collective and reflective practices among teachers, learners, and community members in a non-hierarchical manner (Armstrong and Tsokova, 2019; Gough et al., 2022). Collaborative pedagogy requires looking at knowledge as continuously evolving and reforming “through dialogues with the self, other and the world” (MacGregor, 1990, p. 30). This process of collaborative sharing of knowledge multiplies the possibility of critical discourse (Marantz & Mule, 2019). It is important to reaffirm the power of learning together through the dialogue of knowledge and diverse languages, to generate transformative experiences, using experiential, individual, and collective actions (Centro de Desarrollo Cultural de Moravia, 2020).

Most studies that have focused on dialogue in high school classroom focus on dialogue between students (Halter et al., 2022) and does not engage in the teacher-student dialogue. Wennergren & Blossing (2017) engage in an analysis of the collaboration of student-teachers and its dialogues. However, the participation of students in the study was assessed based on teacher statements. Tanner & Corrie (2016) is the first piece I have encountered that portrays the dialogue between a student and a teacher, narrating their story as once. It is a beautiful academic piece of work that engages in their critical dialogues and experiences. As they stated: “High school students rarely are given the opportunity to share power with teachers or researchers, and our choice to write together hopes to problematize that condition (p.5)”. Sam and Cristina’s work acts as an inspiration to initiate discussions that have the potential to evolve into academic research.

This dissertation addresses the imbalance in qualitative literature that engages and explores the relationship between teachers and students (together) and the potential of these critical dialogues for collaborative pedagogy and the transformation of educational spaces. However, it is essential to recognize that dialogue is often imperfect, considering that all human interactions are shaped by issues of power (Laman et al., 2012).

Research Questions and Objectives

The main research question is: How do teachers and students (youth) transform learning spaces to address social issues? I answer this by looking at (1) relationships between the co-researchers (students and teachers) and the spaces fostered as part of the PAR. (2) Examining the mechanisms teachers and youth enact (educationally, politically, and socially) to transform their classrooms and other educational spaces from oppressive to liberatory.

The research project has three specific objectives. First, to reflect on and facilitate epistemic justice through an engagement with the praxis of our vivencias, creating a space for teachers and youth to engage in critical dialogue and to develop collaborative pedagogy. Second, to understand the process, challenges, and benefits of conducting PAR. Third, to create a guide and document mechanisms that could inspire a praxis for other teachers, youth, and other members of our society in their educational practices.

Methodology

This study used a PAR approach inspired by critical dialogue and carried out based on our (co-researchers') *vivencias*. By exploring how teachers and students co-create pedagogy that addresses juvenicides, the project aims to deconstruct education as a purely negative space discourse (stifling students' and teachers' potential for reflexivity and creativity) while recognising the oppressive aspects of schooling in Puerto Rico. In the following sections, I explain the methodology in more detail. The research process itself acts as a critical finding of the study, fulfilling the first and second objectives of the study, thus it merits a chapter (illustrated in Chapter 1).

Participatory Action Research

“We must design research that asks questions and seeks knowledge at the intersections of everyday lived experience and intricate social systems...questions that frequently demand to be answered collectively through research and action” (Torre, 2009, p.118). Looking forward to implementing collaborative pedagogy, PAR was the path that better aligned with my objectives for this research. PAR starts by challenging the political nature of knowledge production and “what constitutes knowledge, who is allowed to define it, produce it, decide how it’s produced, or determine the quality and method of its dissemination” (Torre, 2009, p.112). It intends to produce a critical and decolonial pedagogy that challenges knowledge regimes, pedagogical traditionalism, and intellectual colonialism (Mota Neto, 2018).

The epistemology of PAR revolves around validating and understanding that people have immense knowledge about their lives. Furthermore, as an extension of PAR, Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) looks to dismantle the hierarchical relationship between adults and youth, students, and teachers. PAR and YPAR represent a radical effort in educational research to take inquiry-based knowledge production besides the academic institutions and include the youth who directly experience what scholars endeavour to understand (Cammarota & Fine, 2009; Caraballo et al., 2017).

In the face of vertical and antidialogical relationships, it affirms the horizontality of dialogue. Against the competition and individualism, it assumes solidarity and collective work. Confronting the belief that culture and popular wisdom are inferior, it chooses

them as the foundation of a different epistemology, focused on social transformation. (De Castro et al., 2020, p. 276)

When fighting systems of oppression, PAR and YPAR are essential, serving as formative praxis for everyone participating (De Castro et al., 2020). PAR explores, changes, and theories practice, provides a platform to critique ideology and incorporates a moral and epistemological dimension to research (McAteer, 2013, p.13). Additionally, in this research, PAR constitutes social activism. This project has the fundamental function to “keep the conversation going” (McAteer, 2013, p.23) about our practices, realities, and aspirations. PAR transformational aim places immense responsibility on the impact and applicability of the research. It demands an impact within and beyond the academic spaces (Manzo & Brightbill, 2007). PAR emphasises the production of different outputs besides journal articles (Kindon et al., 2007) that directly impact the community. The impact and applicability of this project will be addressed by looking at the transformations this process has made on me, the other researchers, and the contributions we look forward to making in our society (including the guide).

Iterative research approach

It has been established that while conducting action research, the approach should be conversational rather than operational (McAteer, 2013). I had this in mind when I started the research process; however, I thought that having the guide as a goal would motivate and move forward the group dialogues and serve as a form of reciprocity for the other researchers and Puerto Rico. Nonetheless, this research was carried out with an iterative research approach. This means that the initial focus was constantly reviewed to a repetition of the plan, act, observe and reflect cycles (Efrat & Ravis, 2013), where the outcomes of each cycle (meeting) informed the next one (Carr and Kemis, 1986).

Methods

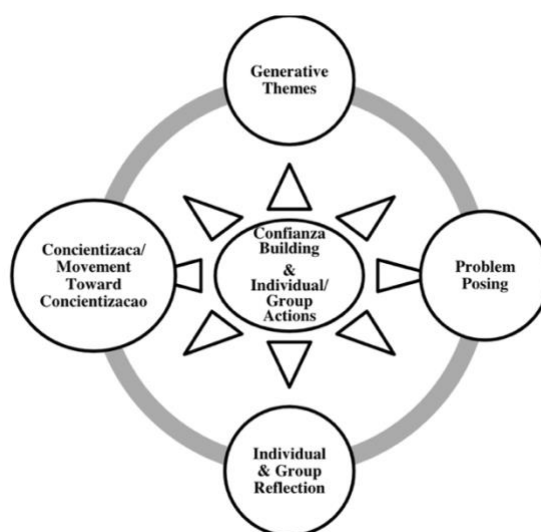
Critical dialogue

This study uses group discussions and dialogues to explore and look for solutions to previously identified problems, specifically juvenicides. The dialogue of knowledge is a principle, an approach, a methodological reference, and a type of action characterized by the recognition of the subjects who participate in the processes (Fuentes Pino, 2021). This research

follows the critical dialogue cycle presented by Perez-Da Silva (2016), where the generative themes and the problems would be drawn from the dialogue (Figure 1).

Figure 1.

Critical Dialogue Cycle (Perez-Da Silva, 2016, p.130)



Critical dialogues and pedagogy are built around a praxis. Praxis evokes change and transformation. It is an act of engaging, exercising, and reshaping ideas into action (practicing ideas) (Glassman & Erdem, 2014). This research intends to be a praxis of our vivencias, testimonios and aspirations, understanding that our lives, intentionally or unintentionally, are always a praxis (Fals-Borda, 1987). In the pursuit of challenging research in academia, I agree with Freire’s (1970) idea that “the discovery cannot be purely intellectual, but must include action, nor can it be limited to more activism, but most include several reflections, only then it will be a praxis (p.65).” By embracing critical dialogue as a method and action, we gain reflexivity about processes, activities, histories, and territorialities (Fuentes Pino, 2021) that condition our relationships.

Virtual setting

The meetings were carried out through video and audio calls on Zoom. Carrying out the research in a virtual setting has a series of limitations. First, it is a space that is not accessible (affordable) for everyone, creating unequal access for participation. Additionally, connectivity

problems were carried out throughout all the meetings. Furthermore, it eliminates the connections built in an in-person setting. However, the virtual setting had one significant benefit. Considering that the researchers were from different parts of Puerto Rico, and I was in Oxford, the virtual setting allowed us to meet weekly.

Validity

An essential validity component in PAR is conceptualising, investigating, and presenting the problems authentically to all the researchers (Rodríguez & Brown, 2009). I address the principles of reflexivity and dialects explained by Heikkinen et al. (2007), which I look forward to reflecting on in this work. The principle of reflexivity, employing transparency, questioning my relationships and assumptions throughout the research process. The principle of dialects and how to present other voices within this work. I do not want to idealise the power-sharing dynamics, and I must recognise my role as the space facilitator in significantly influencing the dialogues. I intend to demonstrate the validity of this work by narrating the research process with its benefits and challenges. I do not claim or look up to neutrality; I account for my position in practice and action (De Castro et al., 2020). In achieving the principle of dialects, I make an active effort not to fall into what I call in previous work, *academia-splaining*.

Academia-splaining addresses situations where an explanation of the quotes is unnecessary; understanding the quote itself is sufficient, and situations where the researcher condescendingly addresses the participants. This term is an adaptation of the neologism mansplaining that addresses the problem of a man explaining something condescending and patronisingly or understanding that her words require some clarification without regard to the fact that the other (a woman) knows more about the topic (Johnson, 2020; Rivera-Rodríguez, 2023).

Ethics

Value everyone's contributions

One of my biggest concerns was 'extracting' the other researchers' (co-researchers and my participants in the study) ideas to make claims on "knowledge production". In academic

research and explicitly filling the documents for CUREC⁷, I was encouraged to tell the other researchers that their information would be protected by anonymising them. PAR invites us to reconsider the formulas of ethical responsibility. Many times, institutions ask us to move away from our aim towards what is “safe” or “attainable” (Ayala, 2009), acting as a constraint for PAR. I did not want to feel I was taking the other researchers’ ideas to benefit myself without giving them the credit they deserved. PAR takes ethical obligations seriously and understands that the university does not solely determine them. The commitment to ethical action and change extends and belongs to the group of participant-researchers (Ayala, 2009). Because of this, anonymising the data (our stories) was discussed in the meetings and individually with all the researchers. In my CUREC form, I clearly stated the option that if someone wanted to be named, they would be (Appendix B, C, D, E). One person preferred a pseudonym; all the other names will be mentioned. For me, it was essential to have a humanistic approach to what can be an intrinsically systematic process.

In the end, respecting the person was my priority. Moreover, the use of “I” and “we” reflect the collaborative process and the value of everyone’s contribution. Lastly, as explained previously, the idea of creating a guide was born out of the responsibility for reciprocity and giving back in some way. A small token of appreciation for their time, passion and contributions, a keepsake of the beautiful co-creation from the labour of love, considering that the publication of this dissertation would be under my name.

Gatekeeping of information

“Accessibility is about power, gatekeeping is founded on the protection of power, and to all that I say: fuck that, because information that can changes lives should never be hoarded.” (Mojica-Rodríguez, 2021, p.1). One of the major issues I want to address in academia is the problem with accessibility—specifically, the gatekeeping of information. Unfortunately, I am uncertain that I will be able to achieve this. Because of the nature of my degree, by design, my work is already inaccessible to non-English readers. Additionally, it is hard to make accessible a dissertation valued and measured by academic standards. That means it includes complicated terms (academic jargon) and citations in the middle of sentences, making the reading harder

⁷ The Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) that has overall responsibility for the development of the University's Research Ethics Policy, and for the University's ethical review process. (University of Oxford, n/d)

(APA format). I will use footnotes in this work to provide additional information and explanations in arroz y habichuelas⁸ (rice and beans), trying to make the reading more accessible. Prisca Mojica-Rodríguez (2021) inspired me by reminding me that “refusing to use academic jargon, which was designed to confuse and obscure, is a decolonial practice (p. 214)”. I have been in academic spaces long enough that I have come to normalise the use of confusing and complicated terms. I will consciously try not to fall into this trap of gatekeeping power dynamics.

Research group (Demographic/participants)

The research group had ten members, including myself. Six of the members were teachers, and four were students. All of us have worked or studied in the public school system. The guide (Appendix A) includes small autobiographies of eight of the members. The two other members decided to participate anonymously, and the other one only participated in one meeting and did not send her autobiography for the guide. Further information on all the co-researchers can be found in Table 1.

Table 1.

Research group information

| Name | position | School Municipality | Type of school | subject/grade |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Alex Rodríguez Joglar | teacher | Rio Piedras (San Juan) | Projecto CASA | History |
| Carlos Betancourt Castro | student | Las Piedras | Vocational | 11 th grade |
| Clifford Hourston Morales | teacher | Trujillo Alto | Traditional | History |
| Engely De La Rosa Rodríguez | student | Puerto Nuevo (San Juan) | Vocational | 11 th grade |
| Jose Betancourt Castro | student | Juncos | Montessori | 9 th grade |
| Jose Ramón Cuadra | teacher | | | History |
| Nicole Ramirez Serrano | teacher | San Juan | Traditional | Special Education (Resource room) |
| Paola Marrero | teacher | San Juan | Traditional | Special Education (Resource room) |
| Yambiel (pseudonym) | student | (Anonymising data) | Montessori | (Anonymising data) |

⁸ To explain things in arroz y habichuelas is a well-known saying in Puerto Rico that you use to explain things in simple ways.

| | | | |
|--------------------|---------|--|------------------------|
| (Anonymising data) | teacher | | Social studies/history |
|--------------------|---------|--|------------------------|

The research collective was a group that shared a common concern about juvenicides. The recruitment process was carried out through a flyer on social media (Appendix C) and sent to my alumni, friends, and other teachers that I already knew from Puerto Rico. The people interested completed a Google Form (Appendix D) with their information to be contacted. Afterwards, I contacted the people interested and explained my idea for the project. I offered the students that I would sign off their community service hours for school as an incentive. However, in the end, none of the students asked me to sign the hours. It is important to note that I knew five of the members before starting the research project. This means the *confianza* (trust) building had started before conceptualising this research. In this research process, I do not look at myself as an outside researcher and expert; I look at myself as a collaborator who, like all the co-researchers, brings particular skills and knowledge (Rodríguez & Brown, 2009). In the introduction, I talk about myself and my concerns. In this research, I claim my inside-outside positionality (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). I am a researcher and a student at the University of Oxford. However, I am also a Puerto Rican woman who has studied and worked in the public and private education sectors.

Data analysis

In preparation for the analysis of our dialogues, I followed the guidelines proposed by Efrat and Ravid (2013). First, I transcribed the data (audiotapes and notes). Second, I sorted the data into files and created a data file organiser with all the members' specific information (name, school, city, and additional information.). Following this, I immerse myself in data reading and rereading the data. It is important to note that I was also doing this through the data collection process. After each meeting, before the next one, I transcribe the data, reflect on it, and sort ideas for the guide and the next meetings. After the fifth meeting, I started coding all the information into emerging categories. I used NVivo⁹ for organising, sorting and doing a preliminary analysis (code the data, organise the codes, and regroup to identify central themes). I re-arranged the information and themes during the process but was careful not to decontextualise information.

⁹ Qualitative analysis software that allows researchers to import, organize, explore their data (their information) (Nvivo, n/d).

As Freire (1970) explained, “the process of searching for the meaningful thematics should include a concern for the links between themes, a concern to pose these themes as problems, and a concern for their historical-cultural context (p.108)”. Additionally, it is essential to note that the analysis of the data is a continuous process before the data collection (preparing for the meetings), during the data collection (a collective analysis in each meeting), and after de data collection and during the writing process (thematic analysis).

I would have wanted to engage in a thematic analysis involving the entire group. Nonetheless, most individuals within the group had other commitments. As mentioned by Paola in one of her comments on the draft:

It's great that people like you express what perhaps we as teachers might not be able to due to various reasons (time, energy, taboos...).

Chapter 1: Collaborative Pedagogy and PAR

The main research question is: “How do teachers and students (youth) transform learning spaces to address social issues?” This chapter delves into the analysis of collaborative pedagogy in PAR by looking at the main question. It explores the creation of an educational space within a virtual setting. In this chapter, I discuss the first two main objectives: (1) reflecting on and facilitating epistemic justice through an engagement with the praxis of our vivencias. (2) Understanding and discussing the challenges and benefits of conducting PAR. This chapter portrays the process before the group meetings started and of each of the five meetings. The chapter concludes by presenting a brief discussion and reflections about Collaborative Pedagogy and PAR.

Research Process

Before the first meeting:

In preparation for the meetings and as part of the research process, I identified the general idea (to recruit other people) but, simultaneously, had to leave space for the generative themes to emerge. PAR starts with a general idea (the situation or problem) one wishes to change and transform (Elliot, 1991). However, the extent to which one can transform or engage with it is a question PAR addresses rather than assumes an answer. Our general idea was the problem of juvenicides, yet we had to figure out how to address it. Even though problematising juvenicide was established as the general idea, the research was open to generative themes that initiated the transformation of our idea. Our views on this phenomenon differed; therefore, our vivencias were central to the generative themes. In the words of Freire (1970):

We must realise that the aspirations, motives, and objectives implicit in meaningful thematics are human aspirations, motives, and objectives. They do not exist "out there" somewhere, as static entities; they are occurring. They [generative themes] are as historical as human beings themselves; consequently, they cannot be apprehended apart from them. (p.107)

To investigate the generative themes is to research people's perceptions and actions upon reality, which requires everyone to act as co-researchers (Freire, 1970). Identifying these themes opens the space to move from looking at the problems to problem posing, problematising and problem-solving (Efrat & Ravid, 2013).

The first part of the research process was to design a module with my preliminary ideas for the research. The preliminary module (shown in Table 2) worked as a guide for the research process.

Table 2.

Preliminary Module goals

| | | | | | |
|--|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Main Goal: The idea is to create a guide at the end together on mechanisms that young people and teachers use to create safe spaces in their schools and communities. | | | | | |
| Meeting | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Goal | Confianza-Building | Define important terms | The mechanisms we have developed | Making connections | Complete the guide-reflect on the process |

Meeting 1: Confianza (trust) Building

The goal of the first meeting was confianza building, to get to know each other and to start looking for generative themes. To have a critical dialogue that allows the construction of praxis, we need to put the confianza building (figure 1) in the centre and understand that confianza is an ongoing process throughout the entire research (Perez-Da Silva, 2016).

“Telling stories is one of the ways that we can begin the process of building community” (hooks, 2010, p.49). We started the meeting by introducing ourselves and narrating our favourite vivencia in schools. After that, we did an exercise of complaining. In Puerto Rico, and this is similar in many contexts (Alicke et al., 1992), one way to connect is by complaining. When I told the group that we would start by complaining, everyone started laughing. Having that space to complain allowed us to (1) raise generative themes that allowed me to organise the following meetings, (2) start buildings closeness and confianza (trust), and (3) as explained by Ahmed (2021), “to hear complaint can be to hear that silence: what is not being said, what is not being done, what is not being dealt with (p.7)”. Complaining allowed us to understand better each other views and vivencias in our school settings.

One important instance of the confianza-building was when Carlos said a “bad word” and quickly apologised. I could see everyone laughing and engaging in the conversation. No one scolded him; on the contrary, Ramón advised Carlos and the rest of the group that we should not feel ashamed for saying a “bad word” and that there are no bad words; we have to think about how we say them and the story behind the word. By doing this, the group fostered a middle ground that was being built in confianza.

Between laughs and desahogo, we continue building confianza and closeness as a group. “Desahogar [or desahogo] translates to vent, but if you break down the literal translation, it means to undrawn. As if letting go of the burdens and secrets you are holding on will save you from drowning.” (Ita, 2020, para 1). Ramón was transparent in his complaint and *desahogo* when sharing the following testimony:

I have done so much work about sexual abuse in schools that personally, my sexuality at one point was affected [...] Because there was so much abuse that I said: ‘I do not want to be around students’ [as a trigger for them]. It affects you.

I saw everyone’s faces engaged, listening to his vivencia and testimonio. This transparency and openness started shifting the formal dynamics fostered in classrooms between teachers and students. After an hour of complaints, we finished with reflections on why we study or teach. This first meeting was planned for 1 hour but lasted 1 hour and 40 minutes. However, nobody ‘complained’ about the time taken or left the meeting before the end.

Collaborative Pedagogy and the virtual setting (The middle ground)

As part of the literature review, I introduced the term middle ground to address the spaces in which teachers and students emerge beyond their given roles. The virtual context creates a middle ground; it is not inside our educational settings (school and classrooms), but it could be, depending on where the person is when joining the meeting. Some people joined from their houses, others from their schools and others in their cars. All the members of the group embody a social role (either student or teacher) where our identities stayed:

“we are representatives of our roles” (Clifford)

“speaking as a teacher” (Paola)

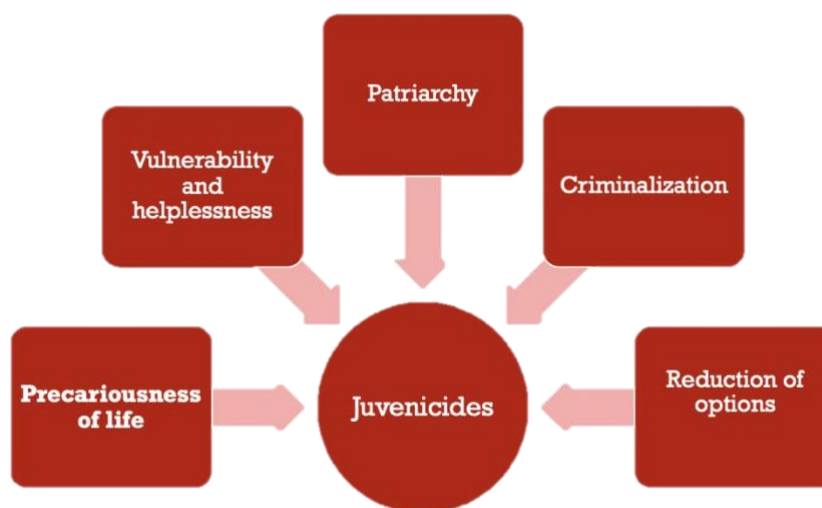
However, in this middle ground space, we were not the teachers of those students and vice-versa. This produced a space where we constantly negotiated our positions but also a space that fostered conversations inside and outside of our “roles”.

Meeting 2: Define Juvenicides

Initially, the goal for this meeting was to define different terms: education, violence, and juvenicides, among others. However, after conducting the first meeting and going through the transcription, I understood the necessity to discuss our general idea, juvenicides. Additionally, I realised that going in-depth about juvenicides would require the whole hour and ideally more time. This meeting focused on juvenicides, exploring what it means for everyone and how it relates to their vivencias. This meeting transformed my initial idea of juvenicides (Graph 1) through a more collective perception of it (Graph 2).

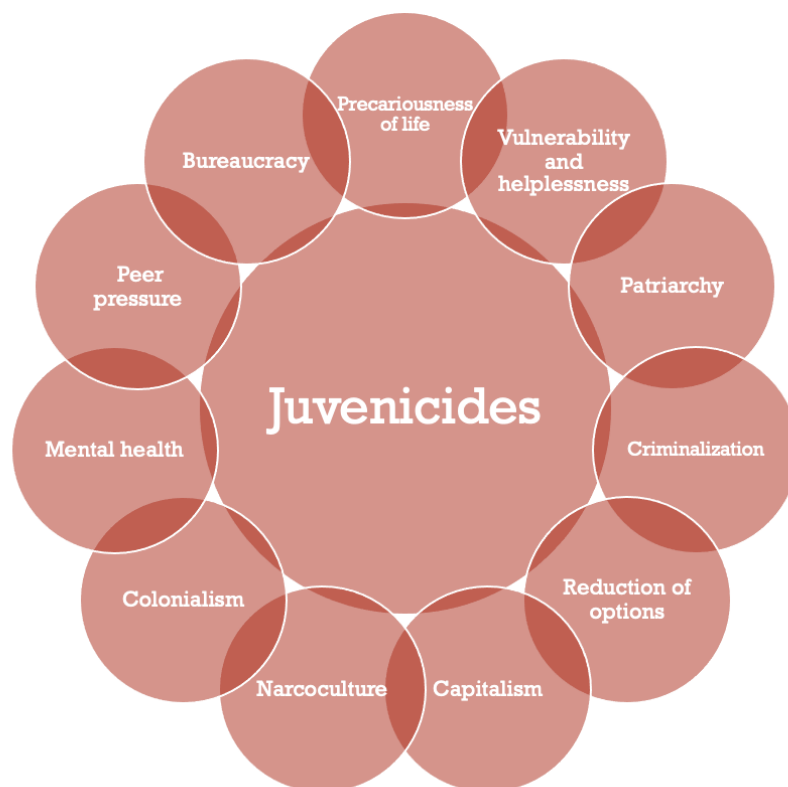
Graph 1.

My adaptation of Valenzuela's (2019) conceptualization of juvenicides



Graph 2.

Collective conceptualization of juvenicides



Challenges of collaborative Pedagogy: Moving toward a critical dialogue

When analysing and comparing this meeting to the first one, it shows a shift between the approach and engagement of the other researcher in the space. In this meeting, a critical dialogue started to take place. After spending weeks looking at the transcriptions, I did not realise that the first meeting was not a dialogue; it was more a question-answer space. I posed some questions to the other researchers, and they responded, but after every comment from someone, I had to intervene to cue the next person to go. In my reflection on the first meeting, I noted how I felt more like a moderator and not part of the group (neither as a student nor a teacher), which I tried to change in the second meeting. In the second meeting, I presented the graph and opened the space for conversation about juvenicides. I had thought starting the conversation would be more complicated, but the other members understood and embraced my idea of discussing juvenicides

quickly. In this meeting, the teacher and students started to interact more without my intervention. The main themes of these critical dialogues are presented in Table 3:

Table 3.

Generative Themes and Critical Cycle Components: Second session

| Themes Generated | Problem-Posing (Problematising) | Individual/Group Reflection: Links to education |
|------------------|--|--|
| Capitalism | <p>How capitalism has evolved from an economic system with countless opportunities that you have to take advantage of[...] but you have to look for them, and you have to self-manage, and you have to be your own boss or brand or all those things; to the extent that we turn the individual into a company... The capitalist hegemony tries to give new meaning to capitalism according to what we have and do not have available. (Joglar)</p> | <p>It is a production for The World, not to be with the world, turning to Freire [...] But along this line, why what is relevant is what generates capital, why what is relevant cannot be the person's integral development? (Joglar)</p> <p>It cannot be that because, obviously, you must exploit people so that someone can have more capital, and that is the reason, and that is what they want. (Nicole)</p> <p>***</p> <p>When I think about how we create a guide to prevent juvenicides in this case, how we qualify the question of educating yourself and growing up is not simply making yourself as fit as possible to have, to make you, in quotes, a productive person. To what extent are we allowing our students, as long as they can produce on a larger or lesser scale, to come out with that 12th grade diploma, which ends up being a ribbon of thanks for coming here and converting to some degree? (Joglar)</p> |
| Narco-world | <p>In the absence of opportunities and the failure of that promise of ascension and social mobility, capitalism provides you. We have to resort to other types of capitalism. Because we are not going to say that the narcoworld is a world that is super socialized, it is also profit-oriented. (Joglar)</p> <p>***</p> <p>Getting on the street is not very difficult for a person, getting drugs, or whatever, even getting guns. (Jose Adrián)</p> | <p>To be able to attack this, they must start in the schools. [the story of el Burro]. We have first to attack the schools because that is where all the children are, where the next generation is. (Jose Adrián)</p> |
| Social media | <p>Right now, you enter [social media], and what you see, what people are looking for, is the artist or singer who is "popular" or the Tiktoker who went viral... this supply and demand of who</p> | <p>The influencer is this archetype of what you should be in your individual character and hence the fact that if 'I could, you can' as if there was a universal mould. Today, the student wants to be an archetype, a different archetype, because invariably, in a certain way, we have always wanted to fulfil an archetype within this</p> |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| | has likes, of who achieves what, whose is more. (Clifford) | capitalist order. But today, it is no longer necessarily the doctor and the lawyer- this country loves to deify doctors and lawyers, whether mediocre or not.- But today, I want to be an influencer, rapper, or someone with a particular type of connection with narcoculture, which is not necessarily narco. (Joglar) I listen to him, and I say he is correct, but at the same time, I say there are many young people whose archetypes are farmers, who are planting crops, who have orchards in their homes, and who really want real change. (Nicole) |
| Bureaucracy | This goes hand in hand with diminishing options. But I also see it from a teacher's point of view. It is the bureaucracy, the paperwork, and the processes. If I am aware that a problem is happening, why do I have to do horrible paperwork for the social worker so that the social worker can make her interventions, which can take God knows how long? [...] I do not feel there is direct action when there should be. (Paola) | They told me this [talking about sexual abuse] was out of the curriculum and a problem for the parents. What if they did not trust their parents? [...] That has been my experience, deaf ears; they do not want to work on it. What I do now is that I do not care; I look for an alternative and work on it. (Ramón) |
| Education failure and curriculums | I have always thought that the Academy is not for everyone. In other words, studying is not for everyone, so we got stuck into the curricular maps of the department where everything is Academy. (Paola) | For me, education failed years ago. The education system failed because we do not know how to meet the needs of our students. (Nicole) |

In this meeting, the space fostered critical dialogue about many topics and their relationship to education and juvenicides. I was thinking about doing something similar in the next meeting. However, as part of the final comments of that meeting, Joglar stated:

“Something that, as a volunteer in this research, might prepare me a little more for future conversations is knowing what we aim to discuss, looking ahead to the next meeting. Perhaps, from there, I can align my thoughts more in that direction and gain a broader perspective. The conversation has been very constructive, right from the first meeting. Ramón, I appreciate it; I’m learning a lot from the things you mention. As a teacher dealing with populations somewhat similar to the ones you have worked with, I’m already connecting with some of the things mentioned in that first meeting. The other day, while reading Fernando Picó’s work on prisoners, I unexpectedly found myself reflecting on what you mentioned—how you feel about working on that curriculum

before starting the semester with your students. What are your interests as a history teacher? And sometimes, how can we go beyond the usual approach? [...however] what do we want to discuss? What we have in mind for the future? We already have an outline of those influences of juvenicides, but we need to figure out where we are headed.”

This question brought back an uncertainty that I have had since conceptualising the research project. Should I delineate the purpose of the meetings to give direction to the discussions or foster a space of open critical dialogue? Furthermore, after the meeting, I realised teachers engaged more in the space than the students. I texted the students to ask them for feedback. One of the students, Jose Adrián, responded by telling me:

The conversations have opened my mind a little more about what teachers think and how difficult that profession is. [...] Something I would like you to do is to make your questions a bit more direct and individual, and I will answer them. This way, you will get everyone’s opinion.

During the following meetings and research process, I tried to balance asking more questions (considering Jose Adrián’s feedback) and giving more direction to the research group (listening to Joglar’s feedback) but avoiding taking control of the whole meeting. If I want to foster a collaborative pedagogy, a central part is listening to the input, and the feedback was telling me that the group wanted something more specific. As stated in the literature review, dialogues and human relations are embedded in situations of power (Giroux, 2013). Because of my position as “main researcher”, facilitator and the person who contacted everyone, even when I was trying not to be in complete control of our meetings, the group was expecting me to do it. This situation created a space that needed to be navigated in the middle ground space of my inside and outside positionality and multiple identities.

Meeting 3: The mechanisms we developed

The goal for this meeting was to start talking about the mechanisms the teachers (including myself) and students have developed and implemented. However, while transcribing the second meeting, I realised that many ideas had been shared already, and I started adding them to the draft of the guide as quotes from the participants. It is important to note that since the first meeting, everyone had access to a Google Drive with some resources and a Google Doc to work on the guide. For this meeting, I proposed two options.

- Option 1: Talk openly about the tools we have developed within our school community to deal with juvenicides and situations that concern us.
- Option 2: Go through the things I have added to the guide and start elaborating (based on the group dialogues), editing, and adding more.

The group decided on the second option. I emphasised a lot that nothing in the documents or that I was saying had to stay like that, that it was more an idea of how I conceptualise it in my head, but that I would love for the group to take it wherever they wanted. Most of the findings (teachers' and students' mechanisms to transform the school structure) that I present in the second chapter of this work, were discussed in this meeting.

Collaborative learning, disagreeing:

Even though I wanted this space to be as democratic as possible, I cannot hide that I was leading the discussions and making the technical decisions (including dynamics and following questions) in most instances. I tried to reduce this influence by inviting everyone to ask questions to each other and to give any recommendations in the process. A moment that I enjoyed and that it was a demonstration to me of the continuous process and the importance of confianza building was when I was explaining my thoughts on the improvements I perceived in the youth-youth relationship. Jose Adrián stopped me to say: "I feel that what there is, is more trust between the students. It is not as you say". He then explained his position, and Clifford agreed with him. Without falling into idealising the power dynamics, this interaction allowed me to see that people (or at least some) were comfortable enough to disagree with me and share their thoughts on different matters, not what I wanted to hear.

Disagreeing demonstrates the confianza building dismantling hierarchies that allowed us to engage in critical dialogues. Additionally, dissonance and disagreement invite the consideration of new perspectives and ideas (Stewart & McClure, 2013). However, it is essential to note that I was uncomfortable disagreeing with the other researchers because I did not want to make them feel uncomfortable. This is something that I must work on for future practices in PAR and the classroom to enhance a collaborative pedagogy.

Meeting 4: Making connections

The initial idea of this meeting was to engage in a dialogue by connecting the graph we created about juvenicides and the mechanisms we added to the guide. In this meeting, only four

people (including myself) showed up. The other teachers and students notified me that they had events and other responsibilities, as it was the last week of classes in Puerto Rico. As Caraballo et al. (2017) explained, the workload of the people involved in the project can create challenges that prevent the PAR from being fully collaborative. Table 4 presents some of the main discussions and dialogues of this meeting. The meeting was supposed to focus on making connections; however, the conversation shifted into problematizing other school dynamics and our society. In this meeting, Nicole and Jose Adrián discussed people's rights in the school community, specifically students. Nicole told Jose Adrián about the laws and guidelines he could use to protect himself and learn more about school students' representations. After a continued dialogue, Jose Adrián responded:

It's good to know that there are laws that will be able to support me. Thanks for the information (laughs). Now I need to learn more myself.

Table 4.

Generative Themes and Critical Cycle Components: Fourth session

| Themes Generated | Problem-Posing (Problematizing) |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Student representation in school | <p>Nicole: In your school, because in all schools there is a School Council, there must be a student representative.</p> <p>Jose Adrián: There are none at my school.</p> <p>Nicole: Look for it; there must be a student because if not, they are in violation.</p> <p>Jose Adrián: Oh well no. Well, they are in violation, unfortunately.</p> <p>Nicole: Well, then, if you want, I can guide you on how the process is</p> |
| School Uniforms | <p>Nicole: But they start to demand too much when they know that our parents do not have the money to buy specific clothes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">...</p> <p>Jose Adrián: I think that is very, very wrong because having white shoes and black shoes has nothing to do with my education. I can even come in a <i>camisilla</i>, and it won't do anything literally; it won't, it will be the same. I will go sit down, listen to the teacher, and study. Clothes have absolutely nothing to do with it at all.</p> |
| Social Responsibility | <p>Tayna: Is it Daddy Yankee's responsibility, or is it the municipality's responsibility or?</p> <p>Nicole: [...] Look, the responsibility always belongs to the State; that is the reality. But what happens is that you are an influential person who became rich on account of the people, and the least, the least that you can do as community work is to fix a basketball court [...] we teachers can do a lot of initiatives. But then we go to the question, does it only correspond to the teachers? No, the State has to do a part; we all have to do it because we are a group and we live in</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| | society. People can't go into their mansions and go on and on and look away. I mean, it's not that they can't; they've done it (laughs), but it hasn't worked. |
|--|--|

Even though this meeting did not follow the guide I created or conceptualised for it, this is part of PAR, collaborative pedagogy, and iterative research approach, being open to shifting the conversation and letting the group dynamic lead the ideas. Furthermore, in Jose Adrián's reflection on the research process, he quoted the discussions of these meetings as the most meaningful.

As shown in Table 4, we engage in more horizontal conversations in this meeting. Two main factors that influenced this evolution were (1) the confianza building and (2) the small group fostering a space to create these relationships because everyone had more time to talk. In the other meetings, I always considered everyone getting a chance to talk and participate. In this meeting, because it was a small group, I was able to join the conversation more and let the role of facilitator on the side. In a dialogue with Nicole (shown in Table 4), I disagreed with her and questioned her position, which led to a more in-depth discussion of the issue and a shift in my perspective.

Meeting 5: Reflecting on the process

The initial goal of the last meeting was to complete the guide and reflect on the process. However, the discussion focused more on reflecting and proposing new ideas (outside the guide) to eradicate juvenicides and transform our practices. In this meeting, after how the discussion was brought up in the fourth meeting, I decided to divide the group into two small groups for 20-25 minutes. One of the limitations of this was that I could not stay in one group because I was helping with some technological problems.

In one of the groups, while waiting for Carlos, Clifford and Joglar converse about their salaries, benefits, and opportunities, comparing their experiences in *Proyecto CASA* and a traditional public school. This conversation shows how space has the potential to foster dialogue about professional development and questioning our individual experiences with the system. When Carlos arrived, they talked about the temporality of juvenicides and the importance of contextualising our work.

In the other group, after a dialogue between Engely, Jose Adrián, Nicole and Ramón, Nicole proposed an idea:

It would be nice to use technology in our favour and perhaps have these types of meetings or dynamics, obviously with the parent's permission, but also with students from other countries. So that they also have another perspective.

Engely responded:

It sounds very good. In fact, I am here imagining that students from other Latin American countries, or Spain or Europe, are included. That would really expand our knowledge of other countries, of other educational systems, how they work, and how they operate. For example, let's say an association was created, a collective of these Latin American students for the improvement of education in Latin America. So many things can start from this. For me, what they are saying is a very good idea.

After the small session, they returned to the main room and presented it to the whole group.

When everyone returned to the main room, the discussion was vibrant. Before leaving, Ramón invited us to join a project he is working on with Villa Cañona, a community in Loiza. He explained:

The youth in the community were trying to clean up the areas because the municipal government was not doing it, and it was affecting them. But when they start to clean, people begin to pass that they recognise as enemies. They are afraid that they will get caught, which often happens in the communities, so they avoid it. But they let it continue to get worse; they cannot clean the areas. Sometimes, when we see impoverished communities very ugly, it is many times that they want to try to clean it up, but they cannot because they are risking that their enemies will assassinate them. They gathered and contacted me with one of the community leaders to do an activity. I negotiated with the contrary group to clean and work with the community that day. The community is going to be giving food to the people who participate. This way, we implement the ideas of the community that sometimes cannot be achieved, as I told you, out of fear, fear of murders. Of what we are talking about, fear that juvenicides occur [...] and I wanted to invite all of you.

I could not attend the event because I was in the U.K. However, the day after I arrived in Puerto Rico, Ramón invited me to have lunch to talk about some projects in the community, and he invited me to visit the community that weekend, where I was able to join. Nicole, Joglar and Engely wanted to assist but were not able for their individual reasons.

After finishing the fifth meeting, I felt happy and felt it was a fulfilling experience. I sent all the researchers a Google Form (Appendix E) for them to review and comment on the process. Additionally, like in every meeting, I messaged everyone who attended the meeting to remind them how grateful I was for their collaboration.

Collective reflection of the research process

The process of dismantling hierarchies and achieving epistemic justice was one of the main objectives of this work. I asked everyone in the group what they liked about the process (In the last meeting and through a Google form). Everyone, except Paola and Yambiel, explained that having teachers and youth working together was one of the most enriching parts. This is shown in the following statements:

I liked that we are not only working with educators but also having students[...]it is vital to consider both characters in the teaching-learning process. (Joglar)

I really liked these weeks that we could, as they were students and teachers, speak the truth and enrich each other. And like the dynamic, that we're the same and what we're trying to build. Reconstructing what the school is, building ideas (Ramón)

[I liked] That we all listen to and treat each other respectfully. I take with me what the students think and new questions to ask and improve our teaching-learning spaces.

(Nicole)

Carlos expressed that getting to know the other researchers' perspectives motivated him to join the group:

She [Tayna] told me that they were different ages. I was interested in knowing how the teachers here saw it; my brother, who I often don't ask how they see the school or anything like that.

Clifford mentioned how he appreciates having people from around the island outside the metropolitan area.

"It does not end here" (Ramón)

As part of the objectives of this research project, I was also looking to provoke a praxis (reflection and action) about our educational practices. I thought the action part would be

portrayed only through the guide. However, Jose Adrián and Clifford established what they learned and are looking forward to implementing:

Next year, if in the school I'll be attending, there is no committee [School Council] and no student [representative]. In that case, I can say, "Who is the student [representative]?" (Jose Adrián)

I have learned several things from the notes taken in past meetings[...]I plan to implement them in the upcoming academic semester to see how the students react and to conduct this exercise in one of the classes to observe the students' responses. (Clifford)

However, Engely brings up an interesting point that opens a reflection about most of the elements of the guide. She said:

As a senior, I am unsure what I will put into practice because these things seem more applicable to teachers. However, I believe that I can bring ideas from here to the school. For future work, we could think about directing more elements directly to the youth and not only to the teachers. Additionally, Joglar shed light on the temporality of juvenicides in his own words:

In the future, we could talk with people who were teachers or students in other generations and see how those aspects, not so "cool" that we have been talking about, manifested themselves and see what changed and what stayed the same. If, indeed, the structural causes remain the same or, it is simply the manifestation of that violence that has transformed.

As Nicole and Cuadra remind us:

One leads by example; I think that beyond the fact that we can do many guides. But what if we do not do it? (Nicole)

And we keep working. Leaving it here is useless. We must give life to things. (Ramón)

Joglar concludes with a reflection on the process. He said:

Thank you all for the opportunity; it has truly been a privilege to share experiences, vivencias, and reflections with each and every one of you. Undoubtedly, one continues to learn; that is the goal for me always as an educator, to continue learning to continue transforming lives. I hope that guides like this can help the school be what we want it to

be, which is the set of all our aspirations as a society, right? If we want to transform, we have to prepare ourselves to transform. If we want to change lives, we must prepare ourselves for such. You have to be up to the moment. Spaces like these make it possible. So, thanks to everyone, both teachers and students. I am truly grateful and, especially to Tayna, who gave us the opportunity to participate in this space and to contribute to a project that is undoubtedly important.

Brief discussion: PAR and collaborative pedagogy

The research process portrayed here engaged with many challenges, questions, and doubts about the potential of PAR and my approach as a researcher. As established in one of my previous works, PAR presents epistemological and methodological challenges. However, this should not be a reason to condone it (Rivera-Rodríguez, 2023). The critics should aim to produce a continuous praxis and continue developing spaces of confianza and collaborative pedagogy that would help us disregard practices of the knowledge regimes, dominant cultures, and systems of oppression. PAR provides an opportunity to occupy/claim spaces (e.g., academia) from which most communities are forcefully removed.

It is important to emphasise that the research process needs continuity to foster the changes we want to implement in our communities. Even more so, considering that we had five meetings with many generative themes, creating a scope of topics waiting for further dialogues. As expressed by Ramón: “I like how we started with complaints. Not just complain, to think, what are we going to do with it?”. The complaints in the first meeting helped us to think about what we want to change. However, this process serves as a reminder that we will initiate the development of solutions by engaging in an ongoing cycle of critical discussions and collaborative efforts. PAR is built on the idea of transformation. It is an ongoing process emphasising co-learning, participation, and system (practice/organisation) transformation (Morales, 2016). PAR values the processes of research as much as the products; the success rests not only on the information generated but also on the research experience and the praxis in this process (Kindon et al., 2007). Even with doubts about the process, I value this research in terms of the relationships built and the pursuit of future collective actions. In this process, I have come to understand that there is not a sole way to conduct PAR, that the positionalities and dispositions (for instance, time availability) held by those constructing it are diverse, and that this demands an ongoing dialogue to nurture collaborative spaces.

Chapter 2: Teacher and Students transforming schools and classrooms

In the first chapter, I presented the findings on how teachers and students transform learning spaces to address social issues by navigating our relationships as co-researchers. In this chapter, I also address the main research question. However, I do it by examining the mechanisms teachers and youth enact to transform their classrooms and schools from oppressive to liberatory. Furthermore, this chapter addresses the third objective of this work. It documents the mechanisms that could inspire a praxis for other teachers, youth, and other members of our society in their educational practices.

The chapter will present: First, the problems identified within the spatial and temporal dimensions of schools in conversation with the literature. Second, the findings about navigating middle grounds on schools, emphasising the dialogues about the curriculum (what we teach) and dismantling hierarchies (how we teach). Third, it presents the solutions/recommendations proposed by the teachers and students. In the discussion of this chapter, by looking at the spatial structure of schooling in Puerto Rico, the vivencias of the co-researcher and the literature, I argue that classrooms are not safe/encouraging spaces for naturing relationships and address social issues; however, teacher and students create middle ground spaces and transform them in their own ways.

The importance of this chapter is portrayed in the words of hooks (1994) as “the classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy” (p. 12). In this space, we question what we teach and how we teach. “Teaching [Pedagogy] becomes a way of questioning power dynamics and social structures that exist both within and outside of the classroom” (Wånggren & Sellberg, 2012, p. 543).” Additionally, the debates around educational justice mainly focus on access and resources rather than on the dimension of knowledge and how it is produced and accessed in schools (Fricker, 2007).

Spatial and temporal dimension of schools

Each school is a theatre. This system of oppression is already prepared. We have to enter the room and do something else. Because if you don't, if we follow their rules, everything is a straitjacket, so that we can do as little as possible. (Ramón)

We must start from the premise that the temporal and spatial structure of schooling has its limitations. However, the spatial structure becomes a straitjacket that goes unquestioned on many

occasions, and we need to realize its integral connection with our educational achievement and social development. As Engely explained:

The environment is very important in terms of education [...] my English teacher of 10th grade, I enter her classroom, and it feels “friendly”, as the room accepts you. She has students’ works taped all over the room students’ photos. It is a room that makes you want to learn. It is a really nice room. On the contrary, now let’s say that I enter the 11th grade Spanish classroom and its four grey walls, because my biggest complaint is that everything in my school is grey, everything grey, grey grey, grey and I don’t like that. Four grey walls, we are all sitting, all of us are silent, and the teacher is explaining, explaining, and explaining.

Clifford furthers the dialogue about spatial structure by explaining how his students feel:

When a student enters a classroom, and my own students have told me this, they feel like they are in a cage. The environment is sending them a signal that they will be confined by authority. They feel their freedom will be taken away as they enter the classroom.

To reflect on the structural spaces and the nature of schools, Ramon sent me a famous quote attributed to Michel Foucault¹⁰ on WhatsApp: “Schools serve the same social functions as prisons and mental institutions — to define, classify, control and regulate people”. In this sense, our school structures and spatial organization also serve the social function of control and regulation and do not foster spaces to forge relationships where students feel trapped between four grey walls.

Furthermore, one of the problems identified within the group was the need for more time and space to connect (teacher and students) and desahogarse. In Engely’s and Carlos’s schools, students only have one free period (lunchtime). This is similar in most public schools in Puerto Rico, with some exceptions. Engely explained how she has to cut class, and Carlos explained how he does not cut class but leaves the classrooms for long periods to have conversations with his teachers about other things besides the class subject. These temporal and spatial restrictions are part of the straitjacket that schools implement.

¹⁰ Even though this quote presents the ideas of Foucault and is commonly attributed to him, I have not been able to localise it in his texts. Furthermore (Vucic, 2019) presents it as a contribution of Janusz Korczak (1905), but I was not able to localise his original texts in English to corroborate this claim.

As further explained in the literature review of this work, teacher-student connections have been proven to be a meaningful part of student development. Close and empathetic bonds that demonstrate a genuine interest in one another, where loving and respectful dialogue is encouraged, will benefit the development of students, educators, and families (Fuentes Pino, 2021). Studies that promote positive teacher-student relationships have demonstrated the importance of acknowledging the person beyond the student (Krane et al., 2016). In constructing those relationships, it is essential to establish inclusivity, where students know the importance of their presence and where each voice is honoured (Jaime-Diaz & Méndez-Negrete, 2021). This is portrayed in Carlos' statement about the reasons for choosing his favourite teacher:

He talks to you and asks about you. It is not like everything is about class. Every time we go into his room, everyone sits down, and then he takes the lead and tells us all to stretch. He has a very dynamic class, and one feels comfortable with him. Then he goes like, no, he cannot go to each of the students, but like, "Oh and you, how was your day? What did you do yesterday and during the weekend? and how is your family?" [...] one feels very comfortable with him.

Even though classrooms in Puerto Rico have a ratio of no more than 1:30 teacher for student (Ramos Parés, 2023) and the overall ratio of teacher and students (including special education programs) is 1:12 (NCES, 2022). As Carlos said, "he cannot go to each of the students."

Classroom spaces are not built around socialization and do not foster these interactions. "Students are optimally motivated and engaged when they connect to 'who' the teacher is, 'what' the teacher is saying and 'what' tasks and activities are being administered, and 'how' the teacher administers these messages and tasks" (Martin, 2014, p. 17). However, teachers and students in Puerto Rico do not have the space to engage in conversations about the 'who', 'what' and 'how'. Smith and MacGregor (1992) explain that in academic spaces, because of how classrooms are designed, the load curriculums, classes limited to fifty minutes and arranged lectures; the hearing out of multiple perspectives and the development of intellectual communities are hard to accomplish. It's important to recognize that space, time, and social relations are interconnected and should be analysed together (Dixon & Janks, 2019). By considering how these elements relate to each other, we can better understand issues of transformation in education. "Space is not neutral. It produces us as embodied subjects and it shapes our sense of self. It affects who can speak and who can be heard. It enlarges some and

diminishes others. It includes and it excludes” (Dixon & Janks, 2019, p.15). If the system of oppression is already designed, we must take a role to transform it actively.

Middle grounds: What we teach and how we teach

What we teach: Following the curriculum or not?

As established, time is limited, and teachers and students operate in the middle ground of following the standards and curriculum imposed, making relationships, and fostering spaces to address social issues. Even though the teachers and students in the group had similar views about curriculums, their approaches differed in navigating the middle ground of following and not following it. Engely was the only student to talk directly about the relationship between her teachers and the curriculum, and she explained that:

I don't want to hear you explaining all the time; I feel that classes should be more dynamic, and many teachers, avoiding deviating from a curriculum, restrict themselves to certain ways of teaching.

However, Engely also stated how many of her teachers go outside the curriculum to help cultivate relationships with students. For Ramón:

The curriculum and plans are straitjackets. Let me tell you; I'm 51 years old, don't be afraid of the monster¹¹. These are traps they set for us to limit our capabilities, and that's part of the dichotomy we experience as a colony. They want to educate, but with limited knowledge, and we cannot set limits for ourselves. We must not fear what they will try to impose. I am always very honest; I tell them I will work with it, and if it bothers them, I can last one or two years in school, and then I'll go to another school. Regardless, I stay in touch with the students and continue working with them. I try to work with the students not only to fulfil academic functions but also to engage with the community.

The curriculum within a specific timeframe creates limitations that interfere with the aims of social change and teachers' and students' performance and emotional well-being. As Nicole explains:

Unfortunately, social changes take time and will continue to be delayed. As long as we don't take a stance, for example, breaking away from the curriculum, they will keep

¹¹ In the research group “monster” sometimes was used to talk about the curriculum but in other occasions was used to describe capitalism. I understand it as a representation of oppressive forces.

dragging on. Like our friend, Ramón said just now, I believe that's his name. Don't be afraid of the monster; we have to keep moving forward, and that's what I have done. I have suffered a lot, but I keep going because I know what my students and the communities I have worked with need.

The decision not to follow the curriculum is a challenging one. Teachers are being held accountable by school administrators for what they teach. However, Nicole reminds us that teachers have academic freedom:

Because the system tells you that you must follow a specific curriculum, you can't deviate from it. But that's false because we have academic freedom, and Law 85 establishes that we must do what is adapted to the needs of our community.

It is also hard for teachers because they are trying to deconstruct all their previous vivencias on how school classrooms should be. Trying to achieve a middle ground is one of the most complex parts of the decision-making process of teachers in schools. As Clifford explained:

I can give them [students] academic freedom as long as they don't abuse it and reach a middle ground, an agreement with a contract between them and me where I can teach the class while they feel comfortable with the approach. It's really challenging to reach that consensus.

On the other hand, Paola also had trouble creating a balance but for different reasons. In her words:

I have been in this discovery phase throughout the year, figuring out what to do, what not to do, and how to handle things because I obviously can't stop teaching to keep scolding. I have academic responsibilities to fulfil.

The following statements should serve as proposals to address the struggle around the curriculum: (1) Contextualise the curriculum: "To what extent are we simply fulfilling academic training requirements, but we are decontextualised, I mean, are we are in the world with the world, following Freire's ideas (Joglar)". (2) Democratise the process, ask the youth: "Instead of having so many curriculum revisions up there with the so-called experts and knowledgeable people, we should sit down with the youth and ask, 'What do you want, or how would you like this to be?' (Nicole)". (3) Deconstruct and construct:

I never use the curriculum from the Department of Education. During the first few weeks, I discuss with them what history is. I talk about my history, and they talk about their

history. Democratically, we construct the curriculum based on these perspectives for the history class of Puerto Rico, the history of the United States, the history of the world, and sociology. That's what I do, and then we begin to deconstruct this world. (Ramón)

Navigating the middle ground of our curriculums requires fostering many conversations between teachers and students. However, we must analyse and discuss the hierarchies and our positions to engage successfully in these dialogues.

How we teach: Dismantling hierarchies in schools

Throughout my years as student and professor, I have been most inspired by those teachers who have had the courage to transgress those boundaries that would confine each pupil to a rote, assembly-line approach to learning. Such teachers approach students with the will and desire to respond to our unique beings, even if the situation does not allow the full emergence of a relationship based on mutual recognition. Yet the possibility of such recognition is always present. (hooks, 1994, p. 13)

I love when they call me from the public or private school for high-risk students or when I teach in jail; I love it because people quickly tell me, 'These people are useless', and people used to believe that about me, and I love it. Thus, I walk into the classroom to say, "our job is to make all these people look bad. (Ramón-first meeting)

When teaching and learning, we have the option to acknowledge each other or merely acknowledge our respective roles. Hierarchisation reminds us of the place we occupy in the system (Mohandas, 2016). In the first chapter, I discuss the middle ground of our hierarchies in the research space. However, navigating the middle ground of our roles as teachers and students in research settings differs from our classrooms. In the following section, I present some of the vivencias of the teachers navigating these hierarchies.

The following discussion between Clifford and Nicole portrays the dialogue around the conceptualisation of our roles in the classroom:

Clifford: I am not a penal guard and do not have to be like a social worker or police officer behind the student.

Nicole: [...] Well, yes, our education, unfortunately, what they taught us is to oppress the students. Consciously or unconsciously, we do it because that is what Freire said: the education of the oppressed.

Furthermore, Ramón presented to the group how he does not use the desk to transform the classroom space to foster more in-depth relationships with his students and dismantle hierarchies. In his own words and praxis:

As I told all of you, I hate teachers. I never use the escritorio (“teacher’s desk”). I also sit in a pupitre (“students’ desk”) with the students, and I turn the pupitre to the front, and we discuss among ourselves. And we construct and deconstruct this society. But I will never in my life sit in a seat and say ‘I am the light, the life, the power and the knowledge’ because many of these things that I am telling here are thanks to the fact that my students have taught me.

Additionally, he further problematise and explains how he resists the colonial impositions in the process:

When we enter the room, we show them that we are enemies of colonial education, from the moment we enter the room. From the way we dress. I do not use a briefcase. Never in my life am I going to use the briefcase. The briefcase it completely divorces me from the students. I use a backpack.

On the other hand, in the following statement, Nicole portrays her way of dismantling hierarchies and fostering collaborative spaces:

I do not believe that the student is less than me, and that is something that I raise from the beginning of classes [...] But I mean, you have to respect me, but I have to respect you, too. And if at any time you feel offended by something that I have told you, if you feel bad, if you did not like it, you are free to come to me and tell me, but with great respect. And if I have to apologise, I’m going to do it.

The constant praxis of the teachers allows us to dismantle these student-teacher hierarchies. The following passage from Nicole presents a manifestation:

I have always been a *justiciera* [avenger], I have always advocated for the whole world, but this is a constant change, every day I am a new Nicole.

Ramón also embraces this process when saying:

Now, since I meet with other people, I am supposedly the teacher. But they teach me so much. Thanks to them every year, every experience they give me, and every piece of information they give me, I am a better person, father, and human being. That is what I am looking for as a teacher.

To be able to dismantle this hierarchy, Ramón reminds us of the importance of listening to the people with whom we are working:

Listening is the first process of the scientific method. To develop a theory and what we will work on, we have to listen a lot. After we listen, we can make a work plan. But what we do is that we listen to that patriarchal, sexist, xenophobic, racist system. And we pay attention to them, so the answer that they give us about what we can do with some parameters that they give us is not an answer to the population that we want to work. And the population sincerely tells us, “This is a Shit, I don’t want to be in the room, I don’t want to be here”.

Furthermore, he said:

The bourgeois, patriarchal system gives you a title and tells you ‘you are the truth and the life’. But there, you really have to re-educate yourself. The best way to re-educate yourself is in direct communion with the people with whom you will work, obviously with the students.

In this section, we delved into the challenges that teachers and students face when determining what to teach and how to deliver it within the constraints of educational institutions. Having established that schools exhibit structural limitations, we delve into potential strategies that could

be implemented. The content presented in this section and the following one comprises a significant portion of the guide provided (Appendix A). Nevertheless, concerning the guide, it is important to grasp that it is a work in constant change and evolution.

Solutions/Recommendations: Approaches to the school structures

This section presents some findings on transforming classrooms and schools into spaces that promote connections to address social issues. It presents new ideas but also mechanisms that have already been implemented.

Moments to connect “an hour of the day”:

Engely presents a proposal for the lack of time to connect, and she understands that the connections and confianza building between the students and teachers are vital to improving mental health and attacking juvenicides in our schools. In her words:

I believe that with the same trust you have with a teacher with whom you desahogar [vent]. Sometimes, it helps a lot; if you don't have a psychologist, it can help. In other words, we will say that you have a class or a moment, an hour of the day for that. So that you can desahogar and form a bond with the person, be it a teacher or a psychologist. Because a workshop would be something like once or sometimes, but it should be something you implement every day, like a routine. I think it would improve mental health a lot.

Community meetings

In Puerto Rico, there is a movement to transform public schools from traditional schools to Montessori education (INE, n/d). Both Jose Adrián and Yambiel were studying in two of these schools that are being transformed. Even though Jose Adrián has some critiques and explained some things, he would like to improve. He recognized the power and impact of community meetings. The community meetings are held every school day in the morning from 8:00 am-to 8:30 am. Everyone must be able to see and hear everyone else in the community (classroom). In the centre of the room is a little table; everyone sits around and lights a candle (see Image 1 for reference).

Image 1

Example of Community meetings (Escuela Intermedia Montessori Luis Muñoz Marín Comerío - La Mora, 2022)



First, the candle passes, and everyone responds, “What is your intention today?”. Second, someone brings a reflection; when someone presents it, a space is opened for people to discuss it. Third, they introduce the agenda for the day. Fourth, news from outside the school is presented and discussed. Lastly, thanks are given. Everyone must express, “What are they grateful for?”. Yambiel’s experience is similar, but in his school, they usually discuss what happened in the school the day before. As he explained: “If there was a fight in the school the day before. What could have been done to stop it?” Additionally, after the meeting, they make announcements reflecting on how the meeting went. If there is time, they add a section of *chismes* (gossip), where they talk about whatever they want. Jose Adrián explains the importance of these meetings in the following passage:

All this has a lot to do with trust. If I don’t have a connection with you, I won’t trust you. Do you understand me? And if I trust you, let’s say I have a lot of trust in you, like some

of my classmates with my teachers. They tell them about situations that have happened to them. And after that, they [the teachers] don't tell them what to do but guide them.

Additionally, he explains:

With the teacher I feel more comfortable is with the math teacher because he is my homeroom teacher, and I always do community meetings with him. We have 30 minutes to talk and get to know each other.

The experiences of Carlos, Yambiel, Engely and Jose Adrián reaffirmed the importance of having spaces that allowed the construction of connections. Additionally, community meetings can foster spaces that allow addressing social issues. As explained by Joglar:

If we are talking about educating for liberation, we have to understand that there is not just one path to liberation, nor is there only one liberation. It's not a singular thing, and it's not the same for everyone. And it seems to me that from these community meetings, thinking about how this could be a tool on this guide, these community meetings could identify different issues. And when I say that, for example, liberation is not a singular thing, well, maybe we can find aspects of our everyday life where we need to free ourselves in the social aspect of it. We can also talk about ecological problems that are a reality for us, and there we can, for example, include science and so on. Because if we want to liberate ourselves, we have to identify the oppressions that we suffer from and want to break free from, and in there [community meetings], we will find a little bit of everything.

Capacitation hours are used to build spaces of collaborative pedagogy and address social issues

Even when the institution (school) does not provide the space to foster these relations, teachers like Ramón use the resources (time) they have available and transform them into what they want. Ramón shared his testimonio of when he created the Peace Treaty. By that time (2010), he was working in a school in Loiza, a municipality in Puerto Rico. To contextualize, Loiza is a municipality with one of the most marginalized communities and most of its population is black (Nina, 2012). Between 2008 and 2010, Loíza remained among the country's top five municipalities with the highest crime rates. Furthermore, in 2011, one out of every three

murders in the Carolina policing region occurred in Loíza. Being Black, poor, and associated with criminality became the prevailing perspective through which this municipality and its people were viewed (Nina, 2012). This is a representation of the racism, criminalization and systemic violence in Puerto Rico. Ramón wanted to help reduce the severe number of deaths in the community. He created the following solution, narrated in his testimonio:

“I managed to make a peace treaty between the different gangs and the different students. In my capacitation hours, I would go and sit down with the different groups and negotiate what we were going to do so that there would be no type of aggression at the school, nor murder. We achieved that when the peace agreements were formed, in the first three months, there were no murders in all of Loiza. Furthermore, seven times they called me because they understood that they had to take a person’s life so that I could negotiate. The seven times they called me, we prevented that person from taking the other person’s life. And that through classes, through education.

In Puerto Rico public schools, besides some initiatives like the community meetings in Montessori, fostering spaces for connection that can engage in critical dialogues and that could address social issues have to do at the expense of teachers and students creating middle ground spaces by cutting classes, using their capacitation hours, and working many hours after the school period is over.

Brief discussion: Transforming classroom and school spaces

In this chapter I presented the mechanisms teachers and youth (that collaborated in this process) enact to transform their classrooms and schools. Examining the spatial dimension of education in Puerto Rico alongside the co-researcher's experiences and existing literature, my contention is that classrooms do not provide secure or supportive environments for nurturing relationships and tackling social problems. Nonetheless, teachers and students establish middle ground spaces and adapt them.

Reflecting on middle ground spaces in the school setting and our presence in the classroom helps us question our regulatory roles and how we want to interact with them. In the introduction of this dissertation, addressing the educational context of Puerto Rico, I quote the philosophical postulates of the PRDE presented in the current law. If our law is centred on the

idea of a liberatory education, why do we focus our education on following the traditional model imposed by the United States? Furthermore, if the Education Reform Act (2018) states that:

The Puerto Rican school must be an effective instrument for constructing a just and democratic society, cultivating ethics, solidarity and social awareness. [...]We recognise the importance of developing knowledge and academic skills in harmony with the emotional and social development of the student. (p.6)

In which ways is the PRDE working to foster spaces that cultivate social development, solidarity, social awareness and the construction of a just and democratic society? Liberation (in the words of Freire, 1970) has been established that is only possible in communion, questioning the oppressive system. The PRDE has not promoted this. If we expect schools to be an effective instrument of a democratic and just society. In that case, expecting students to follow teachers and teachers to follow curriculums mindlessly is counterproductive from a pedagogical point of view (García-Moya, 2019). To achieve epistemic justice, this shift in authority prompts us to reconsider the nature and origin of knowledge and how we share it.

Final Discussion: Transforming our educational spaces

By placing our vivencias and the mechanisms presented in conversation with critical pedagogy and existing literature on, PAR, the teacher-student relationship and spatial analysis of schooling, I delve into what can be learned from and about learning spaces. Furthermore, connecting our vivencias and aspirations to the literature and the laws of the PRDE reveals the “collisions between epistemologies and situated structural realities” (Ayala, 2009, p. 67) in schools. This discussion section presents an analysis of both chapter of the dissertation, understanding that the knowledges presented in both chapters are intrinsically related. Findings from this study demonstrate the need to transform the space and time structure of schooling in Puerto Rico to foster spaces that allow the construction of critical dialogue and collaborative pedagogy. I claim that Collaborative Pedagogy is necessary to address and transform broad social issues in the school and other learning spaces.

Democratizing knowledge and achieving epistemic justice requires a commitment to social change, and PAR and collaborative pedagogy offer this possibility to higher education (Armstrong et al., 2022) and secondary education. In conducting PAR and transforming our schools and classrooms, I reiterate three main statements about the process: (1) It is essential to build *confianza*, (2) it requires navigating middle grounds, and (3) it is a continuous collective praxis.

1. It is essential to build *confianza* (trust).

“*Confianza* is a way of being in a relationship with others rooted in the interconnectedness of our lives” (Perez-Da Silva, 2016, p.65). Even though there is an agreement in the literature that building trust is essential in participatory research (Armstrong et al., 2022; Jagosh et al., 2015; Plowfield et al., 2005), it is seen as variable and not as a process that is deeply embedded in social relations (Armstrong et al., 2022; Khodyakov, 2007). *Confianza* and willingness to build connections must be at the centre to produce PAR that engages in critical dialogues. As we can see, the *confianza* continually builds up through all the meetings. In the end, people knew and remembered each other’s names and felt comfortable talking with them directly and not through me.

Furthermore, we started to produce ideas for future projects and collaborations, confirming the importance of *confianza* and relationships for addressing social issues. The collaborative learning process was established through a *confianza* (trust) process, which offered the group a

sense of unity and solidarity (Ayers & Torrez, 2022). I agree with Ayers and Torrez (2022), who established that connecting the academia with the community is possible by sharing testimonios, transforming collective experiences and validating the students' and teachers' feelings and knowledge. PAR established an environment where the group engaged in discussions about their aspirations and perceived challenges, actively seeking solutions.

In the classroom setting and outside of it, building confianza and meaningful connections are essential to student-teacher relationships and the learning experience. These connections are what make collaborative pedagogy possible. The meaningfulness of these relationships was portrayed in the vivencias of Carlos, Engely, Yambiel and Jose Adrián and their analyses and proposed solutions to addressing problems through schooling. As established by hooks (1994), “students want us to see them as whole human beings with complex lives and experiences rather than simply as seekers after compartmentalized bits of knowledge” (p.15). Students with lower confidence in school report more significant problems with their teachers, have experienced and provoked more violence, feel less integrated, perceive greater injustice in conflict resolution, and believe they are not allowed to participate in solving school problems (Fundación SM, 2008). In the educational context, relationships based on trust enhance efficiency in the learning process, creating a conducive environment for discussion and respect for different points of view (Zapata et al., 2010). We must remember that spaces generated by confianza are safe spaces where feelings are explored in the community, making a vehicle for transformative dialogue and action (Perez-Da Silva, 2016).

2. It requires Navigating the middle grounds, which includes the virtual and physical spaces and our roles and identities.

In this work, the term middle ground is used on various occasions to document spaces and relationships that are often not considered in academia and schools. Middle ground spaces and their “anti-structure” are not addressed on most occasions “because of the political forces that make their ‘beastly’ structure so oppressive, and students’ experience so mind-numbing and spirit-killing (Seale Collazo, 2023, pp. 17-18)”.

The virtual and physical spaces

In this research process, the virtual space required navigating the middle ground created by our diverse spatial locations. This middle ground space includes the interruptions that one could engage (family members coming in and out of the rooms, the noises around us, the lack of

electricity, connection problems, and the on and off cameras). It is essential to note that the shift of classroom spaces into online spaces during the pandemic facilitated the conduction of this project. Due to the online pivot during the pandemic, online activities and meetings became more regular and diverse (Auerbach et al., 2020) and more familiar to many people. However, the opportunities for connecting brought by online spaces are also accompanied by the limits and exclusions of the digital world (Auerbach et al., 2022). The conversations before and after the meetings, the body language and being only in one physical space simultaneously (experiencing the same inputs from the space outside) were neglected in the virtual setting.

On the other hand, finding a balance within the research project involved both adhering to and deviating from established “rules”. As part of my CUREC, I established that I would use Microsoft Teams. However, Zoom proved to be a more accessible platform for all the co-researchers. Additionally, the use of communication through “informal technology” like WhatsApp facilitated a connection with the group on a daily basis and fostered more informal conversations (Auerbach et al., 2022). Conducting PAR remotely requires allowing for mistakes and trying new formats (Auerbach et al., 2022). As shown, this research process presents the challenges and the potential to foster educational and transformative spaces in the virtual setting.

Within the school and classroom context, successfully navigating middle grounds entails questioning the temporal and spatial dynamics that encompass our surroundings. Most schools and educational systems do not undergo a process of praxis that looks to change not only the lives of the students but also the structures around them, starting with the school itself. The hierarchical structure that dominates the educational system at higher levels also trickles down to the lower tiers. Several educators feel like they lack control over the school's management, while countless students experience disconnection from their peers and teachers (Williams, 2016). The spatial and temporal structure of our educational system demands additional exploration and more discussions that critically examine and question the existing norms.

Our “roles” and identities.

It is important to note that failing to address power dynamics ingrained in our roles and identities while navigating middle grounds leaves numerous aspects unexamined. Similar to student-teacher relations is the polarization of the researcher-researched relationship, and the

predominantly clear division between the two makes it hard to collaborate (Herr, 2017). Furthermore, the adult-youth (teacher-student) relationship creates a hierarchy and a power dynamic where youth voices are often undervalued. It is uncommon for the youth to participate and have input into the structures and rules in the school (Herr, 2017) and in research. These structures do not conceptualise students as collaborators in education development processes (Herr, 2017). In this sub-section I address our positions in two categories: Dismantling hierarchies in the Research process and dismantling hierarchies in our classrooms.

Dismantling hierarchies in the Research process

In this research process, I aimed to dismantle hierarchies. One manifestation of these hierarchies was the research-researched. Aware of this power dynamic, I aimed to transform this relationship into co-researchers during the meetings.

This dialectical tension in commitment and praxis leads to a rejection of the asymmetry implicit in the subject/object relationship that characterizes traditional academic research and most tasks of daily life. According to participatory theory, such a relationship must be transformed into subject/subject rather than subject/object. (Fals-Borda and Rahman, 1991, pp. 4- 5)

PAR commits to sharing and clarifying roles, responsibilities, and decision-making on an ongoing and reiterative basis during the entire research process (Manzo & Brightbill, 2007). In practice, I continuously reaffirmed that it was a collaborative process where all of us were co-researchers, that everyone could ask questions and that nothing had to stay like I was proposing. Doing this by valuing the interest and perspectives everyone brings to the research and their ability to represent themselves (Manzo & Brightbill, 2007). As shown in the third meeting, fostering spaces for disagreement represents how we dismantled these hierarchies. However, because of the nature of my degree (where I must present a dissertation of my authorship), the researcher and co-researcher dynamics still require more work, and it was not possible to completely dismantle them. While PAR seeks social transformation, nevertheless, it constitutes a form of power (Kindon et al., 2007). On the other hand, conducting PAR also requires questioning how much time the other researchers have to invest (considering they have full-time school jobs as teachers and students) and how much they are willing to invest.

One of the other manifestations of the power dynamics was the teacher-student hierarchies, the navigation of our roles, and how we want other people to perceive us. To be able to dismantle this hierarchy requires understanding that teachers, students, and researchers are “always implicated in the very structures they are trying to change” (Ellsworth, 1989, p.310). The middle ground is also hard to navigate because even though we are dismantling these hierarchies to have more horizontal dialogues, our experiences in our “roles” are part of what we want to learn from each other.

This research process and critical dialogues are fostered through a conscious effort to disrupt and call into question this paradigm of knowledge production (Freire, 1970). This process disrupts inequality by dismantling “critical epistemologies¹² hierarchies among cultural and experiential knowledge(s) and “official” or disciplinary knowledge(s)” (Caraballo et al., 2017, p. 327). While PAR is positioned as a newer hope for socially relevant, hierarchy-disrupting, counterhegemonic¹³ research, there are middle grounds that we all contend with in doing this work: middle grounds between its hope or promise and its potential for social reproduction (Ayala, 2009).

Dismantling hierarchies in our classrooms

Because of our schools’ temporal and spatial structure, middle ground (in between spaces fostered by students and teachers to create meaningful interaction and non-hierarchical spaces) proved essential for developing collaborative pedagogy. As García-Moya (2020) established, connectedness is not the norm in student-teacher relationships. However, adolescents embrace the teacher they feel connected to, and we should not disregard the impact of these relationships. Collaborative pedagogy has been built at the expense of the middle ground fostered by students, teachers (and other community members). We must advocate for compromises with the structural aspects of schooling, including levelling hierarchies as much as possible and questioning the curriculums (Seale-Collazo, 2023). As established, in a classroom setting, the typical notion is that the teacher holds the ultimate authority regarding knowledge. “The brief hiatus in the hierarchical chain of authority in the classroom is at the heart of collaborative learning” (Bruffee, 1987, p.47). Seale Collazo (2023) argues that good teachers

¹² Epistemology- the philosophical branch and study of what constitutes knowledge. Critical epistemologies understand that knowledge is subjective (different for everyone) and is grounded in their vivencias.

¹³ That challenge the power dynamics and systems of oppression in place.

have sought ways to foster these spaces, as presented in his work and this dissertation. When we highlight the significance of the middle ground, we support the influential work that teachers are doing, often at a personal cost (Frelin & Grannäs, 2014). I reiterate that classrooms are not encouraging spaces to nurture relationships and address social issues; however, teachers and students create middle ground spaces and transform them in their own ways.

3. Continuous collective praxis

Changes in academia and in our classrooms and schools must be accompanied by an ongoing praxis. It is crucial that this process does not remain in reflection without action, nor in action without reflection. This is what has led to the growing disconnect between theory and practice. Similarly, we must encourage this praxis to be collective and collaborative if we aim for an education system that addresses the needs of everyone. Additionally, our educational practices that challenge systems of oppression and create middle ground spaces are the manifestations of our praxis processes in the classrooms, schools, and our communities. As established by Garriga-López (2019):

Puerto Ricans are forging decolonial praxis as we continue to develop creative and substantive expressions, forms of resistance, survival, knowledge production, and solidarity that are capable of inspiring and resonating with people around the world.
(p.185)

Recommendations

By exploring the teacher-student collaboration, we present solutions and mechanisms that have emerged from classroom interactions and our research group with potential for social change. These mechanisms can serve as an inspiration/model for other teachers and students experiencing similar situations across the archipelago, in Latin America and abroad. This work is embedded in transformation and proposes multiple recommendations for our learning spaces. Regarding the change in research and academia, we must keep questioning our practices, our roles in the process and our aims with our work. PAR proposes new possibilities but presents many challenges that we navigate through middle grounds to dismantle and bypass the structures. For future research, I suggest looking at a collaborative pedagogy/learning with people outside of the student-teacher relationship, engaging with other members of our educational spaces (principals, psychologists, counsellors, non-teaching staff and parents, among others). In this sense, it is essential to conduct community-based research (Rubiano et al., 2020) for people to reflect on and transform their vivencias of schooling. I invite the readers to engage in a critical dialogue with this dissertation, the guide and, more than that, in their schools, to have a praxis and construct the school they want to achieve.

I invite the Puerto Rico Department of Education administration and school principals to start dialogues about the dimensions of time and space in schools and to allow school communities to nature spaces (free periods) beyond the imposed basic subjects, where the purpose is to build relationships, dialogue and transform. Philosophical theories should not serve to move political campaigns and to look good on paper, but we must implement them in our practices and actions.

Conclusion: Final Thoughts

This work proposes transforming learning spaces (research and schooling) through a collaborative pedagogy. Collaborative Pedagogy encompasses the various conversations outlined in this study. This research process allowed me to engage in many dialogues with the group, which allowed me to question and dismantle my practices as a student, teacher and researcher. We must aim to develop more spaces in research (as presented by PAR) and in schooling (as shown in the findings of the students' and teachers' *vivencias*) that foster spaces to build relationships and *confianza*. We must question (together, collaboratively) and transform schooling spatial and temporal structures. It has been said before that we have to implement collaborative learning/pedagogy and that we have to work in the community. In this regard, the findings may sound obvious. However, we often abstain from fostering these spaces and leave the educational structures unquestioned and unchallenged.

I finish this work in pursuit of hope. Although I insist on collaborations to transform our spaces, sometimes I do not see the end of *juvenicides* and the precariousness of life for many people. Having to write this while a group of five adolescents wake up lifeless (Figueroa, 2023) leads me to question my role over and over again, the value of my work in the academy and in which spaces I should navigate to contribute more.

Even if we cannot eradicate *juvenicides* only through schooling, understanding that it is a complex problem that embraces different systems of oppression and that schools can perpetuate inequality, addressing this topic is of paramount importance. A collaborative pedagogy has the potential to engage and foster better human relations and be closer to achieving the proposed philosophical goals of Puerto Rico's education system, that is, to build a liberatory education, construct a just and democratic society and promote the development of the people in the community. The relationships developed among teachers and students may be a drop in the ocean considering the scale of the problem of *juvenicides*. Still, it is a drop that has potential in the world. We must embark on a *praxis* together because if we stop questioning, challenging, and imagining utopias of our education, we allow the systems of oppression to determine our possibilities.

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Appendix A: Guide for a Collaborative Pedagogy (English and Spanish)
2023

GUIDE FOR A COLLABORATIVE PEDAGOGY:

TRANSFORMING OUR LEARNING SPACES



Introduction

This guide was born as a product of a Participatory Action Research project. It was born as a product of the critical and collaborative dialogue of a group of teachers and students about our vivencias and aspirations. This guide emerges from our attempt to address juvenicides and to provide new possibilities for life.

This guide is inspired by the work of Dr Jose Manuel Valenzuela on juvenicides in his book *Trazos de Sangre y Fuego*, the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire and the guide *Desde el Suelo: herramientas para radicalizar nuestros prácticas* created by the CARIBANA collective from which the idea of collecting our experiences and educational practices in a guide was born.

The mechanisms implemented by the members of this collective will not always be shown in a replicable way. However, we hope that our experiences will serve as inspiration for our readers. Above all, we invite them to see the guide as a praxis (reflection and action) that allows them to think about the educational spaces we want to build and how we make them possible.

To the extent that we can make our education more participatory, we can create a more participatory society. To the extent that we can have a fairer education, we can create a fairer society. Because at the end of the day, what is school if not the collection of all our social aspirations. Or at least, that's what school should be.

Who are we?

Nicole Ramirez

Black, teacher, trade unionist and daughter of Boriken. Beyond the title, I consider myself a facilitator in the teaching-learning process of my students and, as I have always said: first the social-emotional and then the grades.

Edward Clifford

Student with a bachelor's degree from the University of Puerto Rico. He serves as a teacher of the Department of Education in Secondary Education, specialising in History. He is recognised for his work in several institutions, such as the General Council of Students and as a coordinator assistant in private events.

Alex Rodríguez Joglar

Puerto Rican teacher with a degree in Secondary Education in History from the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus. He offers History courses under the CASA Project. His work as a teacher has focused on alternative education for students with low achievement and/or classified as having a high risk of dropping out.

Jose Adrián Betancourt Castro

I was born on February 19, 2008, and I have eight siblings: Gabriel, Francisco, Carlos, Clara, Daniel, Cristian and Isabel. I study at the Juana Sánchez de Juncos School and live in Las Piedras, Puerto Rico.

Engely De La Rosa Rodríguez

High school student, honest, fair, and reasonable, wanting to change the world and Puerto Rico in various ways, contributing my spiritual and scientific points of view, among others, for a prosperous future for us young people and the new generations.

Carlos Betancourt Castro

I am 17 years old, and I was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico. I come from a large family with nine children from a single marriage. I live in Las Piedras and am a high school senior, one year away from the university. I want to study accounting or aviation mechanics when I graduate. I love sports, specifically football, and having a good physique. Something curious about me is that I really like animals. In the future, I want to achieve a free life by being financially free. I want to help people achieve their goals and dreams.

Jose Ramón Cuadra

Fighter, educator and enemy of the system. He has been a teacher and youth mentor since 1998. He primarily works with students classified as "high-risk" and with youth deprived of liberty. He belongs to Sankofa collective ("go back and take it"). This organization works hand in hand with the communities and seeks empowerment at a collective level to develop the Country we dream of. His words and actions inspire the struggle for the collective revolution we aspire to.

Tayna Mía Rivera Rodríguez (Editor)

Puerto Rican student and educator. Her work examines social issues through a feminist, anti-colonial, and intersectional lens, with a specific interest in understanding and transforming the role of education. She believes in the power of collaboration and has no doubts that there are better ways to teach, to learn, and to build a society.

Camila Jesurún (Illustrator)

Artist and student, who is heading to pursue her first year of university at UPR-RP. Art has been a transformative entity for her, helping her overcome challenging moments in her life. She understands that art is a way to express what you feel and imagine new futures.

Defining Juvenicides

In this section, we will define juvenicides. We invite you to explore juvenicides and the other suggested terms to define and what they mean to you within your vivencias and educational spaces.

Juvenile

Juvenile is defined by Jose Manuel Valenzuela as the sum of a process that begins with the precariousness of the lives of young people, the expansion of their economic and social vulnerability, the increase of their citizen defenselessness, the criminalization of some youth identities and the decrease of options available for the development of viable life projects in the face of a reality defined by the early construction of a dangerous approach to death. In other words, the precariousness that brings young people closer to death. Valenzuela developed the concept of juvenile with four main objectives:

1. point out and make visible the enormous number of young people murdered in Latin America.
2. make visible ascriptions and identity repertoires that increase the chances of a young person being killed.
3. develop strategies and proposals of an academic and political nature aimed at preventing the continuation of murders and massacres of young people.
4. Identify causes and those responsible for the deaths.

As part of our collaborative work, we took on the task of thinking and discussing how we understood that juvenicide and its consequences could be seen. Given this, we developed the following graph with preliminary terms born from our dialogue and vivencias. We invite you to carry out this exercise in your learning spaces and consider how this experience of juvenicide is understood in different spaces.



OTHER IMPORTANT TERMS TO DEFINE COLLECTIVELY:

- EDUCATION
- COLLABORATIVE PEDAGOGY
- BANKING EDUCATION VS POPULAR EDUCATION
- INCLUSION VS INTEGRATION
- SCHOOL
- STRUCTURAL CAUSES

Questioning Our Roles: Dismantling Hierarchies

To develop collaborative educational spaces, we must start by eliminating hierarchies and questioning the power relations surrounding us.

“I don’t use the desk—I don’t use a briefcase”

Ramón’s testimony about his use of the desk led us to a process of reflection in our collaborative space:

I never use the escritorio (“teacher’s desk”). I also sit in a pupitre (“students’ desk”) with the students, and I turn the pupitre to the front, and we discuss among ourselves. And we construct and deconstruct this society. But I will never in my life sit in a seat and say I am the light, the life, the power and the knowledge because many of these things that I am telling here are thanks to the fact that my students have taught me.

When we enter the room, we show them that we are enemies of colonial education, from the moment we enter the room. From the way we dress. I do not use a briefcase. Never in my life am I going to use the briefcase. The briefcase completely divorces me from the students. I use a backpack. (Ramón)

Suggestions:

Have a dialogue with students about these hierarchies:

- Why do we use or not use the "escritorio"?
- Why do teachers and students dress differently?
- Why do we use uniforms? Do we understand that they are necessary?
- Do we think this has an effect on how we see and perceive each other?

Questioning time in schools

Why do we take classes regularly from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.? Why do we take 6-7 subjects a day in periods of 50 minutes? Why do young people only have 1 hour of free lunch and no more socialisation spaces? Why do we not have more spaces for collaboration and communication?

The young people narrated how the extracurricular spaces, the excursions, the free hours, the time spent in the playground and the moments of socialisation are the most meaningful and enjoyable times at school. What is the potential of these spaces? What needs does our school have, and how do we encourage young people to be motivated to enter class if we give them more spaces for dialogue?

Suggestions:

- Provide more free school hours, which can be directed to create clubs and cultivate spaces for young people and teachers to engage in dialogues.
- Leave a space in the classes for a free theme (For example, one Friday bi-weekly). This space can enhance liberating conversations, relationships, and reflection and help solve individual and collective problems. Invite social workers, counsellors and school psychologists to this space to break stigmas about mental health and engage in collaborative conversations about issues that press us.

The Curriculum Dilemma

Using the curriculum of the education department or not using it? What benefits does it have for our educational practices? What repercussions can it have for us?

Individual experiences:

I never use the curriculum from the Department of Education. During the first few weeks, I discuss with them what history is. I talk about my history, and they talk about their history. Democratically, we construct the curriculum based on these perspectives for the history class of Puerto Rico, the history of the United States, the history of the world, and sociology. That's what I do, and then we begin to deconstruct this world. (Ramón)

As a teacher, I tried to give freedom to the students without leaving the curriculum. How do you want to learn this? Do you agree that we should do this? But it is not like I can tell students to learn this and period. I have changed the course of my class to topics that interest them, and I think that is the way to start breaking with those schemes. Looking for a way to take it to what they like without letting me go, the system says that I have to teach them that it suits the system and does not suit them. I can give them [students] academic freedom as long as they don't abuse it and reach a middle ground, an agreement with a contract between them and me where I can teach the class while they feel comfortable with the approach. It is really challenging to reach that consensus. (Clifford)

Suggestions: Questions, questions and questions

- Why do I follow the curriculum, and whom do we benefit from doing it?
- Speaking to students, teachers and other school community members: what do we expect to learn and achieve? What do we want? What are our needs?
- Dismantle curricula and curricular standards require not taking what is presented in them for granted.

"La cooperativa"

The co-op

Community: Santurce (Proyecto CASA)

Problem identified: Substance abuse

Anecdote: Ramón

I told one of the students, let's put here mathematically when you smoke daily. He smoked about \$20 a day. I put on the board $20 \times 365 = \$7,300$ per year. I said, "What would you do with \$7300 a year?" He explained to me what he could do with that amount of money. I said, let's do a "bank" process. I told him, "I'm not going to ask everyone who smokes and everyone who gets drugs", which was the majority, "to give me all the money. But of those 20 dollars that I'm going to put in the Bank, I'm going to put the list of how much they are generating. For every 100 dollars I'm going to get a person who brings more money and then apart from graduating when you graduate we give you a check with everything you saved".

I took advantage of the moment to talk about the negative savings, the level of problems that there were in the Puerto Rican, who, for every dollar he earns, spends 1.7 (That was the average of Puerto Ricans at that time in 2010)

One of the boys in his house had no tiles, and we put the house tiles with that money. That way, they saved from their own money, and we began to combat negative savings. All this was achieved in direct communion with the students.

The CASA Project, when they saw all those students receiving a diploma and a check, they asked, "what is that?" Then, the same department wanted to reward me, and I didn't even go to their awards; I don't play their game. Because besides the fact I go against the slopes and all the pressures they put, then they want to reward you for what you did. Look, I did it without your resources. I did it without following your parameters. I did it in communion with a population, and they helped me understand their reality so that we can look for an answer through education. We serve as tools to transform the situation they understand must be resolved.

Community meetings (Montessori)

Inspiration: This tool was created with the ideas and experiences of Jose Adrián and Yambiel (who preferred to participate anonymously). Both are part of the Montessori Public Schools project, and community meetings are implemented in their schools.

Community Meetings:

Every morning from 8:00 am-8:30 am

Everyone must be able to see and hear everyone else in the community (classroom).

In the centre of the room is a little table; everyone would sit around and light a candle.

1. The candle is passed, and everyone says an intention.
What is your intention today?
2. Someone had to bring a reflection, and when they say the reflection, a space is opened for people to talk about it.
3. They introduce the agenda for the day
4. News from outside the school are presented and discussed.

Lastly, thanks are given. Everyone has to say: What are they grateful for?



(Escuela Intermedia Montessori Luis Muñoz Marín Comerío - La Mora, 2022)

Adaptations:

- If space is left over, you can open a gossip session, which is a space to talk about free topics with young people but always with respect.
- If it is not possible to have the space every morning, look for a time a week when these group meetings can take place.

Reflection and Value of the community meetings

All this has a lot to do with trust. If I don't have a connection with you, I won't trust you. Do you understand me? And if I trust you, let's say I have a lot of trust in you, like some of my classmates with my teachers. They tell them about situations that have happened to them. And after that, they [the teachers] don't tell them what to do but guide them. (Jose Adrián)

If we are talking about educating for liberation, we have to understand that there is not just one path to liberation, nor is there only one liberation. It's not a singular thing, and it's not the same for everyone. And it seems to me that from these community meetings, thinking about how this could be a tool on this guide, these community meetings could identify different issues. And when I say that, for example, liberation is not a singular thing, well, maybe we can find aspects of our everyday life where we need to free ourselves in the social aspect of it. We can also talk about ecological problems that are a reality for us, and there we can, for example, include science and so on. Because if we want to liberate ourselves, we have to identify the oppressions that we suffer from and want to break free from, and in there [community meetings], we will find a little bit of everything. (Joglar)

Legacy projects

Project-Based Learning

Goal: The Legacy Project is intended for young people and teachers to work offering services to the community. In the community schools, these projects seek to work by and for the community. In this process, you not only feel involved, but at the same time, you are impacting yourself.

Plan of action:

- Identify (preferably together with students) which areas in the community need some help.
- Initiate communication with other community members or the organization in charge.
- Start the project.

Example:

We are in Río Piedras, behind the market square, and we have a whole community that has been in detriment for the last 20 years and can benefit from a legacy project oriented towards working on some aspect that needs the community. This semester, I met with the Puerto Rico Historical Building, a group of people who seek to educate and preserve the built heritage of Río Piedras. I wanted them to understand Río Piedras as a historical place and that those buildings that are detrimental today have a historical significance or value. I ensured that they were getting to know their community beyond the buildings that today are hospitalillos, where they know that drugs are sold, but they will appreciate it a little further. Although I only had eight weeks to work on that project, the same working materials were there across the street, which made it easier for me. (Joglar)

Suggestions:

- Select places adjacent to the school to facilitate the mobilization of teachers and young people to space

Peace Treaty

Community: Loiza

Context:

By that time (2010), Ramón was working in a school in Loiza, Loiza is a municipality with one of the most marginalized communities and most of its population is black (Nina, 2012). Between 2008 and 2010, Loiza remained among the country's top five municipalities with the highest crime rates. Furthermore, in 2011, one out of every three murders in the Carolina policing region occurred in Loiza. Being Black, poor, and associated with criminality became the prevailing perspective through which this municipality and its people were viewed (Nina, 2012).

Anecdote: Ramón

I managed to make a peace treaty between the different gangs and the different students. In my capacitation hours, I would go and sit down with the different groups and negotiate what we were going to do so that there would be no type of aggression at the school, nor murder. We achieved that when the peace agreements were formed, in the first three months, there were no murders in all of Loiza. Furthermore, seven times they called me because they understood that they had to take a person's life so that I could negotiate. The seven times they called me, we prevented that person from taking the other person's life. And that through classes, through education.

Reference: Nina, D. (2012). LOIZA SABE A NO VIOLENCIA. El Post Antillano.
https://elpostantillano.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2277:daniel-nina-sp-2109180062&catid=295&Itemid=1004

Mini-Course: Juvenicides and Reggaetón: A look at narcoculture in Latin America

BY TAYNA RIVERA RODRÍGUEZ

Puerto Rico is recognized worldwide for the successful production of reggaeton artists and for having the most listened-to exponents of trap in recent years. Both musical genres are characterized by landing in the reality of many young Puerto Ricans and Latin Americans. Their lyrics capture subversive narratives that are not told or recognized in hegemonic history. Since the beginning of reggaeton in the 90s, along with the growing economic crisis and settlement of neoliberal policies, reggaeton proposed a marginal space of expression for the most disadvantaged youth. The criminalization of impoverished populations is one-way structural violence manifests itself. In Puerto Rico, legislation and public policy to "stop" juvenile crime were influenced by high homicide rates, which became the centre of political discourse in the 1990s.

In this mini-course, we will discuss the structural and systematic violence in Puerto Rico and Latin America. We will begin with a look at juvenicide to make visible the early death of young people in Mexico and Latin America.

Juvenicide comprises the process of the precariousness of life and the reduction of options that bring young people closer to death. Which young people are most affected by young people? Who is closest to death? Reggaeton has spent decades narrating and denouncing precisely those who are abandoned by the State and sentenced to early death. Using reggaeton as the central axis, we will guide this course.

In this way, the readings suggested delve into a historical account of the criminalization of impoverished communities and the "Mano dura Contra el Crimen". Then, we will analyze narcoculture and its influence in Latin America and globally. Finally, the attachments present some solutions and collective resistances that have been and continue to be formulated by young people.

Every verse presented in this course is a picture of our impoverished communities; It is the experience of some young person. Our artists of the urban genre narrate the early death and show us the necropolitics. Their stories bring us closer to a glimpse of juvenicide.

Syllabus

Theme 1: Introduction to Juvenicide

- What is juvenicide?
 - Background and context of the term
 - How do we conceptualize it in our experiences and our contexts?

Theme 2: The Rise of Reggaeton - "Mando dura contra el crimen"

- The War on Drugs

Theme 3: Narcoculture and Reggaeton

- Does music build realities, or does reality build music?

Theme 4: We resist-"Somos raperos pero no delincuentes"

- Another look at our youth

List of resources and course readings:

Playlist for the course on Spotify:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/4Sl4K4ebnU6V7VdnJD5Mi0?si=81dc2f1d53c84a2c&nd=1>

(Some of the songs mentioned in the outline are not on Spotify but can be found on YouTube. However, this is open to constant evolution)

For additional resources access:

<https://www.hastabajoproject.com/>

Theme 1: Introduction to Juvenicides

Readings for this theme:

- Valenzuela, J. (2019) . Trazos de Sangre y Fuego: Bionecropolítica y juvenicidio en América Latina. CALAS. <http://www.calas.lat/en/publicaciones/afrontar-las-crisis/jos%C3%A9-manuel-valenzuela-trazos-de-sangre-y-fuego>

Audiovisuals:

- Canserbero, Mundo de Piedra
- Cidade de Deus (Ciudad de Dios) (2002) [movie]

Songs/lyrics:

- Mr. Cavalucci, Qué será de nuestro destino
- Gallego, Chamaco's Corner

Additional readings:

- Fanon, F. (1965). Los Condenados de la tierra (2nd ed). Fondo de cultura económica México.
- Valenzuela, J. (2012) . Sed de Mal: feminicidios, jóvenes y exclusión social. El Colegio de la Frontera Norte. <https://colef.repositorioinstitucional.mx/jspui/bitstream/1014/533/1/Sed%20de%20mal%201%20%28para%20Lectura%209.pdf>

Theme 2: The Rise of Reggaeton - "Mano dura contra el crimen"

Readings for this theme:

- Negrón Torres, B. (2018). ¿De dónde y cuándo aparece el reggaetón?: Un análisis al surgimiento del reggaetón en Puerto Rico a través del concepto de relación espacio – temporal de Mikhail Bakhtin [Blog Post]. Puesto Pal Perreo. <https://puestopalperreo.weebly.com/reggaetoacuten-blog/de-donde-y-cuando-aparece-el-reggaeton-un-analisis-al-surgimiento-del-reggaeton-en-puerto-rico-a-traves-del-concepto-de-relacion-espacio-temporal-de-mikhail-bakhtin>
- LeBrón, M. (2020). They Don't Care if We Die: The Violence of Urban Policing in Puerto Rico. *Journal of Urban History*, 46(5), 1066–1084. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144217705485>

Podcast:

- Ivy Queen [Host] (2021). Loud: The History of Reggaeton. Futuros Studio. [podcast]

Songs/lyrics:

- Tego Calderón, Loiza
- Vico C, La Recta Final
- Baby Rasta y Gringo, Presidente de la música
- Arcángel y De la Ghetto, Policías envidiosos
- Tego Calderón, Por burro
- Don Omar, Fly away

Additional readings:

- LeBrón, M. (2016). Mano Dura Contra El Crimen and Premature Death in Puerto Rico. En J, Camp (Ed) & C, Heatherton (Ed.), *Policing the Planet: Why the policing crisis led to Black Lives Matter* (1st ed., pp. 95-107). Verso.
- Dinzey-Flores, Z. Z. (2008). De la Disco Al Caserío: Urban Spatial Aesthetics And Policy to the Beat of Reggaetón. *Centro Journal*, XX(2), 35-69. ISSN: 1538-6279. <https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/377/37712148002.pdf>
- Wyrwisz, A. (2015). *Americas's Longest War – The War on Drugs*. Jagiellonian University. <https://depot.ceon.pl/handle/123456789/8081>
- Barret, D. (N/D) The impacts of drug policies on children and young people. Open Society Foundation.

Theme 3: Narcoculture and Reggaeton

Readings for this theme:

- Valencia, S. (2014) Capitalismo Gore. *Debate Feminista*, 50, 51-76. [https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0188-9478\(16\)30129-3](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0188-9478(16)30129-3)
- VEGA, O. (2022). The Influence of Narcoculture on Popular Music: A Critical Look at Reggaeton's Narco-Messages and Narco-Representations. *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 147(1), 77-104. doi:10.1017/rma.2022.13

Audiovisuals:

- Talento de Barrio (2008) [movie]

Songs/lyrics:

- Tu No Metes Cabra Remix
- Peso Pluma, Natanael Cano, PRC
- Cosculluela Ft. Kendo Kaponi, Matalos (Capitulo 3)
- Cosculluela Ft. Kendo Kaponi, Peligro (Capitulo 4)
- Nesi y Josephlee, Pretty Mafia
- Alemán, Rucón
- Anuel, Soldado y Profeta
- Anuel AA y YOYUNGCHIMI, Diamantes en Mis Dientes
- Bad Bunny, Ser Bichote

Additional readings:

- Mbembé, J., & Meintjes, L. (2003). Necropolitics. *Public Culture* 15(1), 11-40. <https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/39984>.
- Luis Javier Cintrón-Gutiérrez, 'Aspectos sociológicos sobre la narco-cultura y los ritos funerarios en Puerto Rico: El caso de la muerte del "Chacal de Llorens Torres"', *Caribbean without Borders: Beyond the Can(n)ons Range*, ed. María del Carmen Quintero Aguiló, Gabriel J. Jiménez Fuentes, Marisol Joseph Haynes, Gabriel Mejía González and Diana Ursulin Mopsus (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 112-23 (pp. 112-13).

Theme 4: We resist–“Somos raperos pero no delincuentes”

Readings for this theme:

- Reguillo, R. (2000). Pensar los jóvenes. Emergencia de culturas juveniles: estrategias del desencanto. Grupo Editorial Norma.
- Restrepo, A. (2010). Los jóvenes y sus luchas por el reconocimiento. *Nomadas (Colombia)*, (32), 179-193. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/los-jóvenes-y-sus-luchas-por-el-reconocimiento/docview/2046661478/se-2>
- Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8(1), 69-91. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1361332052000341006>

Audiovisuals:

- Residente, This is not America
- Chocolate Remix, Ni una menos

Songs/lyrics:

- Ivy queen, Reggae Respect
- Bad Bunny, El Apagón
- iLe, Residente y Bad Bunny, Afilando los Cuchillos
- Apache y Canserbero, Ready

Additional readings:

- Warren, Mark R. (2021). *Willful Defiance: The Movement to Dismantle the School-to-Prison Pipeline*. New York, Oxford Academic. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197611500.001.0001>,
- Rivera-Rodríguez, T. (2021) Las voces de los jóvenes viequenses y su percepción ante la exclusión, los juvenicidios y la educación. *Revista [IN]Genios*, 8 (1), 1-16. <https://www.ingeniosupr.com/vol8-1/2021/12/7/las-vozes-de-los-jvenes-viequenses-y-su-percepcin-ante-la-exclusin-los-juvenicidios-y-la-educacin>
- Freire, P. (1974). *La Pedagogía del Oprimido*.

Additional Suggestions



Names

Learn the names (the names that people understand to identify them, not the names that may have been given to them at birth and they reject. Learn their names, the ones that give them their identity). Learning and using these preferred names humanizes the learning process and contributes to a more comfortable and inclusive environment for students, teachers, and those around us.



Letters (Words of affirmation)

Letters/Writings: Write to each other! Constantly remind each other what you value about them, both teachers to students and students to teachers. Beyond what we are in our academic roles, let's remember the humanity we love in each other.



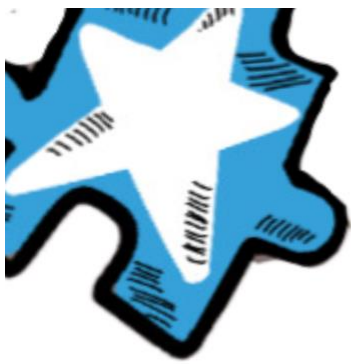
Work collaboratively

.The educational process should be a collaborative endeavor where we recognize that all of us bring valuable ideas and a wealth of knowledge to contribute.



Know your rights

Knowing our rights is an essential part of how we navigate the spaces around us and learn what powers we have to combat what seems unjust. Although the law can be extremely unjust, knowing it is what gives us the tools to transform it.



Final Thoughts

Faced with the systems of oppression that saturate our daily existence, we understand the necessity of coming together to create new ways of living, new forms of the future. Daring to envision utopia in order to guide ourselves towards it.

The structural causes of Juvenicides and our social problems could change or remain the same, but the manifestations of this violence that our young people face may have a different nuance. Given this, we understand that this guide and the questions presented here must be a praxis (reflection and action) and needs to be in constant review. We hope this guide will serve as a frame of reference, always subject to transformation and evolution. If we understand that our theory needs street, we must put it into practice constantly and we should not allow our education to move away from what we are and what we want to build.

The initial purpose of this guide is to initiate conversations, spark questioning, and promote critical dialogues. We invite you to continue reflecting, taking action, and building new lives, always as a collective.





We do not want these
pieces...



2023

GUÍA PARA UNA PEDAGOGÍA COLABORATIVA

TRANSFORMANDO NUESTROS ESPACIOS DE APRENDIZAJE



Introducción

Esta guía nace como producto de una investigación participación acción. Nace como producto del dialogo crítico y colaborativo de un grupo de maestros y estudiantes sobre nuestras vivencias y aspiraciones. Esta guía surge de nuestro intento por abordar los juvenicidios y brindar nuevas posibilidades para la vida.

La misma está inspirada en el trabajo del Dr. Jose Manuel Valenzuela sobre los juvenicidios en su libro Trazos de Sangre y Fuego, la Pedagogía del Oprimido de Paulo Freire y la guía Desde el Suelo: herramientas para radicalizar nuestras prácticas creada por el colectivo Caribana de donde nace la idea de recoger nuestras vivencias y prácticas educativas en una guía.

Los mecanismos implementados por lxs miembros de este colectivo no siempre se mostraran de una manera replicable. Sin embargo, esperamos que nuestras vivencias sirvan de inspiración para nuestrxs lectores. Sobre todo, lxs invitamos a que vean la guía como una praxis (reflexión y acción) que les permitan pensar en los espacios educativos que queremos construir y como hacemos que sean posibles.

En la medida que podemos hacer nuestra educación más participativa, podemos crear una sociedad más participativa. En la medida que podamos tener una educación más justa, podemos crear una sociedad más justa. Porque al final del día, qué es la escuela, sino la colección de todas nuestras aspiraciones sociales o al menos eso es lo que debería ser.

¿Quiénes somos?

Nicole Ramirez

Negra, maestra, sindicalista e hija de Boriken. Más allá del título me considero una facilitadora en el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje de mis estudiantes y como siempre he dicho: primero lo social-emocional y después las notas.

Edward Clifford

Estudiante con bachillerato de la Universidad de Puerto Rico. Funge su posición como docente del Departamento de Educación en el área de Historia Secundaria. Reconocido por su labor en varias instituciones como el Consejo General de Estudiantes y asistente de coordinación en eventos privados.

Alex Rodríguez Joglar

Maestro puertorriqueño con un grado en Educación en Historia Secundaria de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras. Ofrece cursos de Historia bajo el Proyecto de Centros de Apoyo Sustentable al Alumno (CASA). Su trabajo como docente se ha centrado en la educación alternativa para estudiantes con bajo aprovechamiento y/o alto riesgo de deserción escolar.

Jose Adrián Betancourt Castro

INací en febrero 19 del 2008 y tengo 8 hermanos: Gabriel, Francisco, Carlos, Clara, Daniel, Cristian e Isabel. Estudio en la Escuela Juana Sánchez de Juncos y vivo en Las Piedras, Puerto Rico.

Engely De La Rosa Rodríguez

Estudiante de high school, honesta, justa y razonable con ganas de cambiar el mundo y Puerto Rico de diversas maneras, aportando mis puntos de vista espirituales, científicos, entre otros, para un futuro próspero para nosotros los jóvenes y las nuevas generaciones.

Carlos Betancourt Castro

Tengo 17 años y nací en abril 18 de 2006 en San Juan, Puerto Rico. Vengo de una familia numerosa; somos 9 hijos de un solo matrimonio. Actualmente vivo en Las Piedras y soy senior, a falta de un año para entrar a la universidad. Quiero estudiar contabilidad o mecánica de aviación cuando me gradue. Soy un chico que le encanta el deporte específicamente el fútbol y también me encanta tener un buen físico. Algo curioso de mi es que me gustan mucho los animales. En el futuro quiero lograr tener una vida libre, siendo libre financieramente me gustaría ayudar a la gente para lograr sus metas y sueños.

Jose Ramón Cuadra

Luchador, educador y enemigo del sistema. Ha ejercido como maestro y guía de jóvenes desde 1998. Principalmente trabaja con estudiantes clasificados como de alto riesgo y jóvenes que han estado en las cárceles. Pertenece al colectivo Sankofa (regresa y tómallo) “organización que trabaja mano a mano con las comunidades y que busca el empoderamiento a nivel colectivo para comenzar a desarrollar el País que soñamos”. Su palabra y acción inspiran la lucha para la revolución colectiva a la que aspiramos.

Tayna Mía Rivera Rodríguez (Editora)

Estudiante puertorriqueña y educadora. Su trabajo busca mirar los problemas sociales desde una óptica feminista, anticolonial e interseccional; con en el interés particular de entender y transformar el papel de la educación. Ella cree en el poder del trabajo colectivo y colaborativo y no tiene dudas de que hay mejores maneras de enseñar, aprender y construir una sociedad.

Camila Jesurún (Ilustradora)

Artista y estudiante, que se encamina a cursar su primer año de universidad en UPR-RP. El arte ha sido una entidad transformadora para ella, ayudándole a superar momentos difíciles en su vida. Comprende que el arte es una forma de expresar lo que sientes e imaginar nuevos futuros.

Definiendo Juvenicidios

En esta sección, definiremos los juvenicidios. Te invitamos a explorar los juvenicidios y los otros términos sugeridos para definir y lo que significan para ti (y para tu colectivo) dentro de tus vivencias y espacios educativos.

Juvenicidio

El juvenicidio es definido por Jose Manuel Valenzuela como la suma de un proceso que inicia con la precarización de la vida de los jóvenes, la ampliación de su vulnerabilidad económica y social, el aumento de su indefensión ciudadana, la criminalización clasista de algunas identidades juveniles y la disminución de opciones disponibles para el desarrollo de proyectos viables de vida frente a una realidad definida por la construcción temprana de un peligroso acercamiento a la muerte.

Valenzuela desarrolló el concepto de juvenicidio con cuatro objetivos inaplazables:

(1) señalar y visibilizar la enorme cantidad de jóvenes asesinados en América Latina.

(2) hacer visibles pertenencias, adscripciones y repertorios identitarios que incrementan las posibilidades de que un joven sea asesinado.

(3) desarrollar estrategias y propuestas de orden académico y político orientadas a impedir la continuación de asesinatos y masacres de jóvenes.

(4) identificar causas y responsables de tanta muerte innecesaria.

Como parte de nuestro trabajo colaborativo nos tomamos la tarea de pensar y discutir cómo nosotrxs entendíamos que se podía ver ese juvenicidio y sus consecuencias. Ante esto, desarrollamos la gráfica que aquí presentamos con términos preliminares que nacieron de nuestro dialogo y vivencias. Les invitamos a realizar este ejercicio en sus espacios de aprendizaje y pensar en cómo se entiende ese vivencia del juvenicidio en diferentes espacios.



OTROS TERMINOS QUE LES INVITAMOS A DIALOGAR Y DEFINIR COLECTIVAMENTE:

- EDUCACIÓN
- PEDAGOGÍA COLABORATIVA
- EDUCACIÓN BANCARIA VS EDUCACIÓN POPULAR
- INCLUSIÓN VS INTEGRACIÓN
- ESCUELA
- CAUSAS ESTRUCTURALES

Cuestionando nuestros roles: Eliminando jerarquías

Si queremos desarrollar espacios educativos de colaboración tenemos que comenzar eliminando jeraquías y cuestionando las relaciones de poder (maestro-estudiante) que nos rodean.

“Yo no uso el escritorio-Yo no uso maletín”

El testimonio de Ramón sobre su uso del escritorio nos llevo a un proceso de reflexión en nuestro espacio colaborativo:

Esta gente nos da esta silla y nos dice que nosotros somos el maestro y te dan una mesa más grande que los estudiantes. Yo no, yo lo que necesito es un pupitre. Y ahí yo cojo todas las notas.

Nosotros cuando entramos al salón, nosotros demostrarle a ellos que nosotros somos enemigos de la educación colonial, desde que entramos al salón. Desde la forma que nos vestimos. Yo no uso maletín, en mi vida voy a usar el maletín. El maletín, me divorcia completamente de los estudiantes. Yo uso una mochila igual que ellos. Como le dije, no uso el escritorio, o sea yo no, yo soy parte, porque todavía estoy aprendiendo, todos los días estoy aprendiendo. Pero yo jamás en mi vida voy a sentarme en un asiento a decir yo soy la luz, la vida, el poder y el conocimiento, porque muchas de estas cosas que estoy contando es gracias a que mis estudiantes me han enseñado a mí.

Sugerencias:

Tener un diálogo entre estudiantes, maestros y otros miembros de la comunidad sobre estas jeraquías.

- ¿Por qué usamos o no usamos el escritorio?
- ¿Por qué lxs maestrxs y los estudiantes visten diferente?
- ¿Por qué utilizamos uniformes? ¿Entendemos que son necesarios?
- ¿Creemos que esto tiene un efecto en cómo vemos y percibimos a los demás?

Cuestionando el tiempo en las escuelas

¿Por qué tomamos clases regularmente de 7:30am-4:00pm? ¿Por qué tomamos 6-7 clases al día en periodos de 50 minutos? ¿Por qué lxs jóvenes solo cuentan con 1 hora de almuerzo libre y no tienen mas espacios de socialización? ¿Por qué no gestionamos más espacios de colaboración y comunicación?

Lxs jóvenes narran como los espacios extracurriculares, las excursiones las horas libres, el tiempo que pasan en el patio/cancha y los momentos de socialización son los más que disfrutan del tiempo escolar. ¿Por qué no gestionamos más de estos espacios? ¿Por qué no vemos el potencial que tienen para desarrollar proyectos educativos? ¿Qué necesidades tiene nuestra escuela y cómo potenciamos que lxs jóvenes estén motivados para entrar a clase si les damos más espacios de conversación?

Sugrencias:

- Proveer más horas libres en las escuelas, que pueden ir dirigidas a crear clubes, a gestionar espacios de dialogo, a que lxs jóvenes y maestros disfruten de conversar.
- Cada dos viernes dejar un espacio para tema libre. Este espacio puede potenciar conversaciones liberadoras, espacios de conexión, reflexión y ayudar a solucionar problemas que tengan quienes participan de este espacio. Invitar a lxs trabajadores sociales, consejerxs y psicólogxs escolares a este espacio para ir rompiendo estigmas sobre la salud mental y entablando conversaciones colectivas sobre temas que nos apremian.

El dilema del currículo

¿Utilizar el currículo del departamento de educación o no utilizarlo? ¿Qué beneficios tiene para nuestras prácticas educativas? ¿Qué repercusiones puede tener para nosotrxs?

Vivencias individuales:

Yo nunca uso el currículo del departamento de educación. Los primeras semanas yo discuto con lxs estudiantes qué es historia. Yo hablo de mi historia, ellos hablan de su historia y ahí nosotros de manera democrática construimos cuál es el currículo dentro de estas perspectivas. Eso es lo que yo hago y entonces empezamos a desconstruir este mundo. Pero además de eso, nosotros tenemos que después ser partícipes directo. La clase de historia tiene que ser nuestra historia, no la historia de ellos. (Ramón)

Yo como maestro, trató de darle libertad a lxs estudiantes, sin salirme del currículo. ¿De qué forma ustedes quieren aprender esto? ¿Están de acuerdo con que hagamos esto? Pero no es como que yo le puedo decir a lxs estudiantes a aprendente esto y punto. He cambiado el rumbo de mi clase a temas que ellos le interesan y yo creo que así es la forma de empezar a romper con esos esquemas. Buscando la forma de llevarlo a lo que les gusta sin tener que dejarme llevar, por lo que el sistema dice que les tengo que enseñar, que en realidad le conviene al sistema y no les conviene a ellos. (Clifford)

Sugerencias: Cuestionar, cuestionar y cuestionar

- ¿Por qué sigo el currículo y a quién beneficio mientras lo hago?
- Hablar estudiantes, maestros y otros miembros de la comunidad escolar ¿Qué esperamos? ¿Qué queremos? ¿Cuáles son nuestras necesidades?
- Desmantelar los currículos y estándares curriculares. No dar por sentado lo que en ellos se presenta.

La cooperativa

Comunidad: Santurce (Proyecto CASA)

Problema identificado: Alto consumo de drogas

Anécdota (Ramón Cuadra):

Le dije a uno de los estudiantes, vamos a poner aquí matemáticamente cuando tú fumas diariamente. Él fumaba alrededor de 20 dólares diarios. Yo puse en la pizarra $20 \times 365 = 7,300$ dólares anuales. Yo le dije: ¿Qué tú harías con 7,300 dólares anuales? El me explicó lo que él pudiera hacer con esa cantidad de dinero. Le dije, vamos a hacer un proceso de Banco. Le dije, yo no le voy pedir ahora a todos los que fuman y todos los que se meten droga, que era la mayoría, que me entreguen todo el dinero. Pero de esos 20 dólares que le voy a poner en el Banco, les voy a poner la lista de cuanto están generando y por cada 100 dólares yo le voy a conseguir una persona que le aporte un dinero adicional. Entonces aparte de graduarte, cuando te gradúas te entregamos un cheque con todo lo que tu ahorraste.

Aproveché el momento para hablar del ahorro negativo, del nivel de problemas que había en el puertorriqueño, que por cada dólar que gana, gasta 1.7 (Ese es el promedio de los puertorriqueños en ese momento, en el 2010 que le dí clases a ellos).

Uno de los muchachos en su casa no tenía losetas y con ese dinero y entre todos le pusimos las losetas de la casa. De esa manera, ellos ahorraron de su propio dinero y comenzamos a combatir el ahorro negativo. Todo esto se logró en comunión directa con los estudiantes.

El Proyecto CASA cuando vió todos esos estudiantes recibiendo un diploma y aparte un cheque, preguntaban “¿Qué es eso?”. Después el mismo departamento me quiso premiar y yo no voy a las premiaciones de ellos, yo no les juego el chiste a ellos. Porque detrás de que yo me voy en contra de las vertientes y de todas las presiones que ellos ponen, después te quieren premiar con con lo que hiciste. Mira, yo lo hice sin tus recursos. Yo lo hice sin seguir tu parámetro. Yo lo hice en comunión con una población y ellos me ayudaron a mí a entender su realidad para que de esa manera buscar que en la educación, podamos ser respuesta. Que sirvamos de herramientas para transformar esa situación que ellos entienden que se debe resolver.

Reuniones de comunidad (Montessori)

Inspiración: Esta herramienta fue creada con las ideas y experiencias de Jose Adrián y Yambiel, quien prefirió que sus participaciones fueran anónimas. Ambos son parte del proyecto de Escuelas Públicas Montessori y en sus escuelas se implementan las reuniones de comunidad.

Reunión de Comunidad (Procedimiento):

- Cada mañana de 8:00 am a 8:30 am,
- Todos deben poder ver y escuchar a los demás en la comunidad (salón de clases).
- En el centro del salón hay una pequeña mesa; todos se sientan alrededor y se enciende una vela.
- Se selecciona quien será el facilitador de la reunión
- La vela se comienza a pasar entre lxs estudiantes y todos dicen una intención. ¿Cuál es tu intención hoy?
- Luego, alguien tiene que traer una reflexión y cuando la dicen, se abre un espacio para que las personas hablen al respecto.
- Se presentan la agenda del día y/o los anuncios.
- Se presentan y discuten noticias externas a la escuela.
- En el ámbito mundial o local de Puerto Rico
- Por último, se dan las gracias. Todos tienen que decir: ¿Por qué están agradecidos?



Adaptaciones:

- Si sobra espacio se puede abrir una sesión de chismes, que es en realidad un espacio para hablar de temas libres con lxs jóvenes pero siempre con respeto.
- De no ser posible tener el espacio todas las mañanas, buscar una hora a la semana donde se puedan dar esas reuniones de grupo.

Reflexión e importancia de las reuniones de comunidad:

Las reuniones de comunidad te proveen un espacio de 30 minutos para poder conocer bien a tu maestro, a tus maestros (no siempre te toca con la reunión de comunidad con tu maestro de salón hogar) y tienes esos 30 minutos para conocerlos y para crear una conexión. Esa conexión es importante porque sí, yo no tengo una conexión contigo, no, no voy a tener confianza contigo. Si tengo confianza contigo, como algunos de mis compañeros con mis maestros, les cuentan situaciones que las han pasado. Los maestros no les dicen qué tienen que hacer, sino los guían para construir una solución. (Jose Adrián)

Si estamos hablando de educar para liberar, pues hay que entender que no hay un solo camino hacia la liberación, ni tampoco una sola liberación, no es una sola cosa, ni es lo mismo para para todo el mundo. En el espacio de las reuniones de se pueden identificar distintas problemáticas este. Y cuando digo que la liberación no es una sola cosa, pues a lo mejor podemos encontrar aspectos de nuestra cotidianidad en la que necesitamos liberarnos en el aspecto social. También podemos hablar de problemas ecológicos que son una realidad para nosotros y ahí podemos, por ejemplo, incluir a la ciencia y otras materias. Si nos queremos liberar, tenemos que identificar cuáles son esas opresiones que sufrimos de las que queremos salir y creo que ahí pues vamos a encontrar un poco de todo... (Joglar)

Tratado de Paz

Comunidad: Loiza

Contexto:

Para ese entonces (2010), Ramón estaba trabajando en una escuela en Loíza. Loíza es un municipio con una de las comunidades más marginadas y la mayoría de su población es de origen afrodescendiente-comunidad negra (Nina, 2012). Entre 2008 y 2010, Loíza se mantuvo entre los cinco municipios del país con las tasas de criminalidad más altas. Además, en 2011, una de cada tres muertes en la región policial de Carolina ocurrió en Loíza. Ser negro, pobre y asociado con la criminalidad se convirtió en la perspectiva predominante a través de la cual se percibía a este municipio y su población (Nina, 2012).

Anecdote: Ramón

Cuando estuve en loíza mis estudiantes tenían un problema bien grave de asesinatos, entre todos ellos. Yo, en comunión con lxs estudiantes, logré hacer un tratado de paz entre las distintas gangas. Yo les explicaba como eso era posible. En mis horas en vez de estar corrigiendo yo iba y me sentaba con los diferentes grupos y negociaba lo que íbamos a hacer para que en la escuela no hubiera ningún tipo de agresiones, ni tampoco asesinatos. En este proceso, logramos que cuando se formaron los acuerdos de paz en los primeros 3 meses no hubieran asesinatos en todo Loiza. En 7 ocasiones me llamaron, porque entendían ellos que tenían que quitarle la vida a una persona. Me llamaban para el bando contrario, para yo negociar y ver si era posible. Las 7 veces que me llamaron logramos que a la persona no se le quitara la vida y eso a través de las clases, a través de la educación.

Reference: Nina, D. (2012). LOIZA SABE A NO VIOLENCIA. El Post Antillano.
https://elpostantillano.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2277:daniel-nina-sp-2109180062&catid=295&Itemid=1004

Mini Curso: Juvenicidios y Reggaetón: Una mirada a la narcocultura en latinoamérica

POR TAYNA RIVERA RODRÍGUEZ

Puerto Rico es reconocido mundialmente por la producción exitosa de artistas de reggaetón, y en años recientes por tener los exponentes más escuchados del trap. Ambos géneros musicales se caracterizan por aterrizar en la realidad de muchxs jóvenes puertorriqueñxs y latinoamericanos. Mediante sus líricas plasman las narrativas subversivas que no se cuentan ni reconocen en la historia hegemónica. Desde los comienzos del reggaetón en los años 90, a la par con la creciente crisis económica y asentamiento de las políticas neoliberales, el reggaetón propuso un espacio marginal de expresión para lxs jóvenes más desventajadxs. La criminalización de las poblaciones empobrecidas es una manera en la que se manifiesta la violencia estructural. En Puerto Rico, la legislación y política pública para “detener” el crimen juvenil estuvo influenciada por las altas tasas de homicidios, lo que se convirtió en el centro del discurso político en la década del 1990.

En este curso expondremos la violencia estructural y sistemática que se vive en Puerto Rico y Latinoamérica. Comenzaremos con una mirada al juvenicidio, término creado por el Dr. Jose Manuel Valenzuela para visibilizar la muerte temprana de jóvenes en México y Latinoamérica. El juvenicidio comprende el proceso de la precarización de la vida y la dismunición de opciones que acerca a lxs jóvenes a la muerte. ¿Qué jóvenes son lxs más afectadxs por los juvenicidixs? ¿Quiénes están más cercanxs a la muerte? El reggaetón lleva décadas narrando y denunciando precisamente quiénes son abandonadxs por el Estado y sentenciadxs a la muerte temprana. Utilizando el reggaetón como eje central guiaremos este curso.

De esta manera, nos adentraremos en un recuento histórico de la criminalización de las comunidades empobrecidas y la Mano dura contra el crimen. Luego analizaremos la narcocultura y su influencia en Latinoamérica y la escala global. Finalmente, presentaremos algunas soluciones y resistencias colectivas que han ido y que continúan formulando lxs jóvenes.

Cada verso presentado en este curso es una imagen de nuestras comunidades empobrecidas; es la experiencia de algún joven. Nuestrxs artistas del género urbano nos narran la muerte temprana, y nos muestran las necropolíticas. Sus historias nos acercan a una mirada del juvenicidio.

Temario

Tema 1: Introducción al Juvenicidio

- ¿Qué es el juvenicidio?
- Trasfondo y contexto del término
- ¿Cómo lo conceptualizamos en nuestras experiencias y nuestros contextos?

Tema 2: El surgimiento del Reggaetón- Mano dura contra el crimen

- La guerra contra las drogas

Tema 3: Narcocultura y Reggaetón

- ¿La música construye realidades o la realidad construye música?

Tema 4: Resistimos-“Somos raperos pero no delincuentes”

- Otra mirada de nuestra juventud

Lista de recursos y lecturas del curso:

Playlist para el curso en Spotify:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/4SI4K4ebnU6V7VdnJD5Mi0?si=81dc2f1d53c84a2c&nd=1>

(Algunas de las canciones mencionadas en el bosquejo no se encuentran en Spotify pero pueden encontrarse en Youtube. Sin embargo es importante destacar que todo lo expuesto aquí son sugerencias y debe estar abierto para una evolución constante)

Para recursos adicionales recomendamos acceder a:

<https://www.hastabajoproject.com/>

Tema: Introducción al juvenicidio

Lecturas para este tema:

- Valenzuela, J. (2019) . Trazos de Sangre y Fuego: Bionecropolítica y juvenicidio en América Latina. CALAS. <http://www.calas.lat/en/publicaciones/afrontar-las-crisis/jos%C3%A9-manuel-valenzuela-trazos-de-sangre-y-fuego>

Audiovisuales:

- Canserbero, Mundo de Piedra
- Cidade de Deus (Ciudad de Dios) (2002) [movie]

Canciones:

- Mr. Cavalucci, Qué será de nuestro destino
- Gallego, Chamaco's Corner

Lecturas adicionales:

- Fanon, F. (1965). Los Condenados de la tierra (2nd ed). Fondo de cultura económica México.
- Valenzuela, J. (2012) . Sed de Mal: feminicidios, jóvenes y exclusión social. El Colegio de la Frontera Norte. <https://colef.repositorioinstitucional.mx/jspui/bitstream/1014/533/1/Sed%20de%20mal%201%20%28para%20Lectura%209.pdf>

Tema 2: El surgimiento del Reggaetón- Mano dura contra el crimen

Lecturas para este tema:

- Negrón Torres, B. (2018). ¿De dónde y cuándo aparece el reggaetón?: Un análisis al surgimiento del reggaetón en Puerto Rico a través del concepto de relación espacio – temporal de Mikhail Bakhtin [Blog Post]. Puesto Pal Perreo. <https://puestopalperreo.weebly.com/reggaetoacuten-blog/de-donde-y-cuando-aparece-el-reggaeton-un-analisis-al-surgimiento-del-reggaeton-en-puerto-rico-a-traves-del-concepto-de-relacion-espacio-temporal-de-mikhail-bakhtin>
- LeBrón, M. (2020). They Don't Care if We Die: The Violence of Urban Policing in Puerto Rico. *Journal of Urban History*, 46(5), 1066–1084. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144217705485>

Podcast:

- Ivy Queen [Host] (2021). Loud: The History of Reggaeton. Futuros Studio. [podcast]

Canciones:

- Tego Calderón, Loiza
- Vico C, La Recta Final
- Baby Rasta y Gringo, Presidente de la música
- Arcángel y De la Ghetto, Policias envidiosos
- Tego Calderón, Por burro
- Don Omar, Fly away

Lecturas adicionales:

- LeBrón, M. (2016). Mano Dura Contra El Crimen and Premature Death in Puerto Rico. En J, Camp (Ed) & C, Heatherton (Ed.), *Policing the Planet: Why the policing crisis led to Black Lives Matter* (1st ed., pp. 95-107). Verso.
- Dinzey-Flores, Z. Z. (2008). De la Disco Al Caserío: Urban Spatial Aesthetics And Policy to the Beat of Reggaetón. *Centro Journal*, XX(2), 35-69. ISSN: 1538-6279. <https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/377/37712148002.pdf>
- Wyrwysz, A. (2015). Americas's Longest War – The War on Drugs. Jagiellonian University. <https://depot.ceon.pl/handle/123456789/8081>
- Barret, D. (N/D) The impacts of drug policies on children and young people. Open Society Foundation.

Tema 3: Narcocultura y Reggaetón

Lecturas para este tema:

- Valencia, S. (2014) Capitalismo Gore. Debate Feminista, 50, 51-76. [https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0188-9478\(16\)30129-3](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0188-9478(16)30129-3)
- VEGA, O. (2022). The Influence of Narcoculture on Popular Music: A Critical Look at Reggaeton's Narco-Messages and Narco-Representations. Journal of the Royal Musical Association, 147(1), 77-104. doi:10.1017/rma.2022.13

Audiovisuales:

- Talento de Barrio (2008) [movie]

Canciones:

- Tu No Metes Cabra Remix
- Peso Pluma, Natanael Cano, PRC
- Cosculluela Ft. Kendo Kaponi, Matalos (Capítulo 3)
- Cosculluela Ft. Kendo Kaponi, Peligro (Capítulo 4)
- Nesi y Josephlee, Pretty Mafia
- Alemán, Rucón
- Anuel, Soldado y Profeta
- Anuel AA y YOYNGCHIMI, Diamantes en Mis Dientes
- Bad Bunny, Ser Bichote

Lecturas adicionales:

- Mbembé, J., & Meintjes, L. (2003). Necropolitics. Public Culture 15(1), 11-40. <https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/39984>.
- Luis Javier Cintrón-Gutiérrez, 'Aspectos sociológicos sobre la narco-cultura y los ritos funerarios en Puerto Rico: El caso de la muerte del "Chacal de Llorens Torres"', Caribbean without Borders: Beyond the Can(n)ons Range, ed. María del Carmen Quintero Aguiló, Gabriel J. Jiménez Fuentes, Marisol Joseph Haynes, Gabriel Mejía González and Diana Ursulin Mopsus (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 112-23 (pp. 112-13).

Tema 4: Resistimos-“Somos raperos pero no delincuentes”

Lecturas para este tema:

- Reguillo, R. (2000). Pensar los jóvenes. Emergencia de culturas juveniles: estrategias del desencanto. Grupo Editorial Norma.
- Restrepo, A. (2010). Los jóvenes y sus luchas por el reconocimiento. Nomadas (Colombia), (32), 179-193. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/los-jóvenes-y-sus-luchas-por-el-reconocimiento/docview/2046661478/se-2>
- Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. Race Ethnicity and Education, 8(1), 69-91. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1361332052000341006>

Audiovisuales:

- Residente, This is not America
- Chocolate Remix, Ni una menos

Canciones:

- Ivy queen, Reggae Respect
- Bad Bunny, El Apagón
- iLe, Residente y Bad Bunny, Afilando los Cuchillos
- Apache y Canserbero, Ready

Lecturas adicionales:

- Warren, Mark R. (2021). Willful Defiance: The Movement to Dismantle the School-to-Prison Pipeline. New York, Oxford Academic. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197611500.001.0001>,
- Rivera-Rodríguez, T. (2021) Las voces de los jóvenes viequenses y su percepción ante la exclusión, los juvenicidios y la educación. Revista [IN]Genios, 8 (1), 1-16. <https://www.ingeniosupr.com/vol8-1/2021/12/7/las-vozes-de-los-jvenes-viequenses-y-su-percepcin-ante-la-exclusin-los-juvenicidios-y-la-educacin>
- Freire, P. (1970). La Pedagogía del Oprimido.

Sugerencias adicionales



Nombres

Aprendete los nombres (los nombres que las personas utilizan, no los nombres que les hayan sido asignados al nacer y rechazan. Aprendete sus nombres, aquellos que les otorgan su identidad). Aprendernos los nombres de los estudiantes y profesores (y de las personas a nuestro alrededor) humaniza el proceso de aprendizaje, influye en cuán cómodos nos sentimos en el ambiente y establece un sentido de respeto y conexión.



Cartas (palabras de afirmación)

Cartas/Escritos: ¡Escríbanse mutuamente! Recuérdense constantemente lo que valoran el uno del otro, tanto profesores a estudiantes como estudiantes a profesores. Más allá de lo que somos en nuestros roles académicos, recordemos la humanidad que amamos en cada uno.



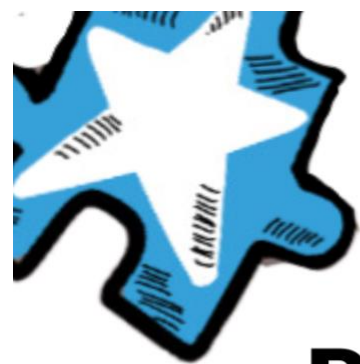
Trabajemos colaborativamente

El proceso educativo debe ser un esfuerzo colaborativo, en el que reconozcamos que todos aportamos ideas valiosas y que tenemos mucho para contribuir.



Conoce tus derechos

Conocer nuestros derechos es una parte esencial de cómo navegamos por los espacios que nos rodean y aprender qué poderes tenemos para combatir lo que no es injusto. Aunque la ley puede ser extremadamente injusta, conocerla es lo que nos proporciona la herramienta para transformarla.



Reflexiones finales

Ante los sistemas de opresión que saturan nuestro diario vivir, entendemos la necesidad de unirnos para crear nuevas formas de vivir, nuevas maneras de concebir el futuro. Atreviéndonos a imaginar la utopía para guiarnos hacia ella.

Las causas estructurales de los juvenicidios y nuestros problemas sociales podrían cambiar o mantenerse igual, pero las manifestaciones de esta violencia que enfrentan nuestros jóvenes podrían tener matices diferentes. Ante esto, entendemos que esta guía y las preguntas que aquí se presentan deben ser una praxis (reflexión y acción) y deben estar en constante revisión. Esperamos que esta guía sirva como marco de referencia, siempre sujeto a transformación y evolución. Si comprendemos que nuestra teoría necesita la calle, debemos ponerla en práctica constantemente y no permitir que nuestra educación se aleje de lo que somos y de lo que deseamos construir.

El propósito inicial de esta guía es iniciar conversaciones, suscitar cuestionamientos y promover diálogos críticos. Te invitamos a seguir reflexionando, tomando acción y construyendo nuevas vidas, siempre en colectivo.



Agradecimientos

Agradecemos inmensamente a todas las personas en Puerto Rico y alrededor del mundo que cada día se llenan de coraje, luchan y se levantan para construir un futuro colectivo, libre, justo y equitativo.

Para obtener más información o realizar sugerencias, contactar a:
taynamiarivera@gmail.com



Estas piezas no las
queremos...



Appendix B: Ethical Approval

CUREC (Central University Research Ethics Committee) Approval from the University of

Oxford

Research ethics approval

Research title:

Conceptualising classrooms as ‘spaces’ of co-reflection:

The role of teachers and youth fighting against systemic violence to eradicate juvenicides in Puerto Rico

Rico

Research ethics reference:

EDUC_C1A_23_025

The above application has been considered on behalf of the Education Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) in accordance with the University’s procedures for ethical approval of all research involving human participants.

I am pleased to confirm that, on the basis of the information provided to the DREC, ethics approval has now been granted for this study.

Please note the following:

Personal data: It is the responsibility of the PI to ensure that all personal data collected during the project is managed in accordance with the University’s [guidance and legal requirements](#).

In-person activities: Any data collection involving in-person interactions with participants must have an up-to-date fieldwork risk assessment in place; further guidance is available from the Safety Office’s [website](#).

Amendments: Please notify the committee if you intend to make any amendments to the information in your ethics application as submitted at date of this approval, as all changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. The amendment form is available on the [SSH IDREC webpage](#).

We welcome feedback on your experience of the ethical review process and suggestions for improvement. Please email any comments to staff.curec@education.ox.ac.uk / student.curec@education.ox.ac.uk or ethics@socsci.ox.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely

Liam Francis Gearon

DREC Chair

Liam Francis Gearon, PhD, FHEA, FRSA, Docent

Senior Research Fellow, Harris Manchester College, University of Oxford

Associate Professor, Department of Education, University of Oxford

Conjoint Full Professor, Newcastle University, Australia

Docent, University of Helsinki, Finland

Extraordinary Professor, North-West University, South Africa

Visiting Professor, Irish Institute for Catholic Studies, MIC, Limerick, Ireland

Honorary Senior Research Fellow, School of Education, University of Birmingham

Appendix C: Teacher- participant information sheet and consent

Dr. Aliya Khalid

aliya.khalid@education.ox.ac.uk

Tayna Mía Rivera Rodríguez, MSc student

Oxford University telephone number: 01865 xxxxxx

tayna.riverarodriguez@sant.ox.ac.uk

The role of teachers and youth fighting against systemic violence to eradicate juvenicides in Puerto Rico

TEACHER- PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Central University Research Ethics Committee Approval Reference: EDUC_C1A_23_025

Thank you so much for agreeing to consider participating in this participatory action research entitled: The role of teachers and youth fighting against systemic violence to eradicate juvenicides in Puerto Rico.

In the following sections we will give you further answers to some questions you may have about the project and your involvement in the study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

1. Why is this research being conducted?

This study aims to examine the relationship of teachers and youth and the impact it has on protecting the youth. It also aims to describe the mechanisms that teachers implement inside and outside the classroom and how this can be improved.

2. Why have I been invited to take part?

You were selected and invited to participate in this research because you are a high school teacher who has worked in the public education system of Puerto Rico. The selection was given by availability and seeking representation from different communities. Approximately 5 high school teachers and 10 young people are expected to participate in this study as volunteers.

3. Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide whether to take part. You can withdraw yourself from the research, without giving a reason, by advising us of this decision. In that case all data related to you will be removed from record. The deadline by which you can withdraw any information you have contributed to the research is May 31, 2023.

4. What will happen to me if I take part in the research?

A group/collective will be formed that will meet 3-5 times during the months of May and June

- We will agree upon a schedule that is convenient for you.
- In the group, it is expected that individuals share their experiences and their relationship with school and teachers/students.
- You can withdraw from participating in this part of the research.
- With your consent, we would like to audio and video record you so we can have an accurate conversation record.

5. What are the possible disadvantages and risks in taking part?

There are no anticipated physical risks involved in this study. You may feel overwhelmed when sharing personal information. However, all your information will stay safe and shared with a few selected research associates. The data will be anonymized considering the preferences of the participants, after a dialogue of the risks and benefits.

6. Are there any benefits in taking part?

By taking part in this study you may become aware of ways in which you may better navigate the student-teacher relationship. Findings from this study may be used for further policy and publications and thus your involvement in the study has the potential to benefit others.

7. Information collected

Data that will be collected

- Consent records (e.g., written consent forms, audio-recorded consent, assent forms)
- Contact details for the purpose of this research only
- Audio and Video Recordings
- Transcripts
- Letters and pictures of items/gifts
- I will retain a list of participant names linking to the numbers until the completion of my dissertation in order to approach people if clarity is needed.

Data Protection

- The raw data will be encrypted and stored safely in my personal computing device.
- The raw data collected from you will only be available to me and my research associates for analysis purposes.
- Some of your quotes from the interview may be used in the final report
- The reports and academic articles produced as a result of this study may be published publicly.
- I am happy to share a preliminary report of the project and your conversation if you wish to review it.
- It can be difficult/ impossible to fully anonymise data. Because of this we will discuss the different options (e.g pseudonymous, anonymising with numbers, revealing the identity) and you will decide which process you prefer.
- This identification evidence will be contained in the university OneDrive folder and will be destroyed as soon as the research has been published.

8. Will the research be published? Could I be identified from any publications or other research outputs?

The findings from the research will be written up into a dissertation. It is possible that the findings are also present in academic publications or conference presentations.

- I would like your permission to use direct quotations in any research outputs.
- A copy of my dissertation will be deposited both in print and online in the [Oxford University Research Archive](#) where it will be publicly available to facilitate its use in future research/ its access will be restricted.

9. Data Protection

The University of Oxford is the data controller with respect to your personal data, and as such will determine how your personal data is used in the research. The University will process

your personal data for the purpose of the research outlined above. Research is a task that is performed in the public interest. Further information about your rights with respect to your personal data is available from the University's Information Compliance web site at <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/individual-rights>.

10. Who has reviewed this research?

This research has received ethics approval from a subcommittee of the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee. (Ethics reference: **xxxxxx**).

11. Who do I contact if I have a concern about the research or I wish to complain?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this research, please contact Dr. Aliya Khalid-aliya.khalid@education.ox.ac.uk or Tayna Mía Rivera Rodríguez-tayna.riverarodriguez@sant.ox.ac.uk, and we will do our best to answer your query. We will acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how it will be dealt with.

If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford who will seek to resolve the matter as soon as possible:

The Chair, Dr Liam Gearon, Department of Education

Email: student.curec@education.ox.ac.uk

12. Further Information and Contact Details

If you would like to discuss the research with someone beforehand (or if you have questions afterwards), please contact:

Tayna Mía Rivera Rodríguez

Department of Education

tayna.riverarodriguez@sant.ox.ac.uk

Consent to take part in the study: The role of teachers and youth fighting against systemic violence to eradicate juvenicides in Puerto Rico
TEACHER

Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) approval reference: **xxxxx**
Purpose of Study: This study aims to examine the relationship of teachers and youth and the impact it has on protecting the youth.

Please initial each box if you agree with the statement

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above research. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any point [until 31/May/2023], without giving any reason.

I understand who will have access to personal data provided, how the data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the project.

I understand the extent to which I could be identifiable from any publications or presentations.

[Optional:] I consent to participate in the focus group.

[Optional:] I consent to the use of my letters and any others items/gifts I display

I consent to the following agreements regarding data anonymisation:

Use of quotations: Please indicate your preference (select *one* option):
a. I do not wish to be quoted. **or**
b. I agree to the use of quotations in research outputs if I am not identifiable. **or**

c. I agree to the use of direct quotations, attributed to my name, in research outputs.

I give permission for you to contact me again to clarify information.

I understand how to raise a concern or make a complaint.

I agree to take part in the study.

Name of participant

dd / mm / yyyy

Signature

Name of person taking consent

dd / mm / yyyy

Signature

Appendix D: Youth-participant information sheet and assent

Dr. Aliya Khalid

aliya.khalid@education.ox.ac.uk

Tayna Mía Rivera Rodríguez, MSc student

Oxford University telephone number: 01865 xxxxxx

tayna.riverarodriguez@sant.ox.ac.uk

The role of teachers and youth fighting against systemic violence to eradicate juvenicides in
Puerto Rico

YOUTH-PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Central University Research Ethics Committee Approval Reference: EDUC_C1A_23_025

Thank you so much for agreeing to consider participating in this participatory action research entitled: The role of teachers and youth fighting against systemic violence to eradicate juvenicides in Puerto Rico.

In the following sections we will give you further answers to some questions you may have about the project and your involvement in the study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

1. Why is this research being conducted?

This study aims to examine the relationship of teachers and youth and the impact it has on protecting the youth. It also aims to describe the mechanisms that teachers implement inside and outside the classroom and how this can be improved.

2. Why have I been invited to take part?

You were selected and invited to participate in this research because you are 13-18 years old. The selection was given by availability and seeking representation from different communities. Approximately 5 teachers and 10 young people are expected to participate in this study as volunteers.

3. Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide whether to take part. You can withdraw yourself from the research, without giving a reason, by advising us of this decision. In that case all data related to you will be removed from record. The deadline by which you can withdraw any information you have contributed to the research is May 31, 2023.

4. What will happen to me if I take part in the research?

A group/collective will be formed that will meet 3-5 times during the months of May and June

- We will agree upon a schedule that is convenient for you.
- In the group, it is expected that individuals share their experiences and their relationship with school and teachers/students.
- You can withdraw from participating in this part of the research.
- With your consent, we would like to audio and video record you so we can have an accurate conversation record.

5. What are the possible disadvantages and risks in taking part?

There are no anticipated physical risks involved in this study. You may feel overwhelmed when sharing personal information. However, all your information will stay safe and shared with a few selected research associates. The data will be anonymized considering the preferences of the participants, after a dialogue of the risks and benefits.

6. Are there any benefits in taking part?

By taking part in this study, you may become aware of ways in which you may better navigate the student-teacher relationship. Findings from this study may be used for further policy and publications and thus your involvement in the study has the potential to benefit others.

7. Information collected

Data that will be collected

- Consent records (e.g., written consent forms, audio-recorded consent, assent forms)
- Contact details for the purpose of this research only
- Audio and Video Recordings
- Transcripts
- Letters and pictures of items/gifts
- I will retain a list of participant names linking to the numbers until the completion of my dissertation in order to approach people if clarity is needed.

Data Protection

- The raw data will be encrypted and stored safely in my personal computing device.
- The raw data collected from you will only be available to me and my research associates for analysis purposes.
- Some of your quotes from the interview may be used in the final report
- The reports and academic articles produced as a result of this study may be published publicly.
- I am happy to share a preliminary report of the project and your conversation if you wish to review it.
- It can be difficult/ impossible to fully anonymise data. Because of this we will discuss the different options (e.g. pseudonymous, anonymising with numbers, revealing the identity) and you will decide which process you prefer.
- This identification evidence will be contained in the university OneDrive folder and will be destroyed as soon as the research has been published.

8. Will the research be published? Could I be identified from any publications or other research outputs?

The findings from the research will be written up into a dissertation. It is possible that the findings are also present in academic publications or conference presentations.

- I would like your permission to use direct quotations in any research outputs.
- A copy of my dissertation will be deposited both in print and online in the [Oxford University Research Archive](#) where it will be publicly available to facilitate its use in future research/ its access will be restricted.

9. Data Protection

The University of Oxford is the data controller with respect to your personal data, and as such will determine how your personal data is used in the research. The University will process

your personal data for the purpose of the research outlined above. Research is a task that is performed in the public interest. Further information about your rights with respect to your personal data is available from the University's Information Compliance web site at <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/individual-rights>.

10. Who has reviewed this research?

This research has received ethics approval from a subcommittee of the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee. (Ethics reference: **xxxxxx**).

11. Who do I contact if I have a concern about the research or I wish to complain?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this research, please contact Dr. Aliya Khalid-aliya.khalid@education.ox.ac.uk or Tayna Mía Rivera Rodríguez-tayna.riverarodriguez@sant.ox.ac.uk, and we will do our best to answer your query. We will acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how it will be dealt with.

If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford who will seek to resolve the matter as soon as possible:

The Chair, Dr Liam Gearon, Department of Education

Email: student.curec@education.ox.ac.uk

12. Further Information and Contact Details

If you would like to discuss the research with someone beforehand (or if you have questions afterwards), please contact:

Tayna Mía Rivera Rodríguez

Department of Education

tayna.riverarodriguez@sant.ox.ac.uk

Assent to take part in the study: The role of teachers and youth fighting against systemic violence to eradicate juvenicides in Puerto Rico

YOUTH

Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) approval reference: EDUC_C1A_23_025

Purpose of Study: This study aims to examine the relationship of teachers and youth and the impact it has on protecting the youth.

Please initial each box if you agree with the statement

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above research. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any point [until 31/May/2023], without giving any reason.

I understand who will have access to personal data provided, how the data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the project.

I understand the extent to which I could be identifiable from any publications or presentations.

[Optional:] I assent to participate in the focus group.

[Optional:] I assent to the use of my letters and any others items/gifts I display

I assent to the following agreements regarding data anonymisation:

Use of quotations: Please indicate your preference (select *one* option):

a. I do not wish to be quoted. **or**

b. I agree to the use of quotations in research outputs if I am not identifiable. **or**

c. I agree to the use of direct quotations, attributed to my name, in research outputs.

I give permission for you to contact me again to clarify information.

I understand how to raise a concern or make a complaint.

I agree to take part in the study.

Name of participant dd / mm / yyyy

Signature

Appendix E: Legal Guardian- participant information sheet and consent

Dr. Aliya Khalid

aliya.khalid@education.ox.ac.uk

Tayna Mía Rivera Rodríguez, MSc student

Oxford University telephone number: 01865 xxxxxx

tayna.riverarodriguez@sant.ox.ac.uk

LEGAL GUARDIAN-PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Central University Research Ethics Committee Approval Reference: EDUC_C1A_23_025

Thank you so much for agreeing to consider participating in this participatory action research entitled: The role of teachers and youth fighting against systemic violence to eradicate juvenicides in Puerto Rico.

In the following sections we will give you further answers to some questions you may have about the project and your involvement in the study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

1. Why is this research being conducted?

This study aims to examine the relationship of teachers and youth and the impact it has on protecting the youth. It also aims to describe the mechanisms that teachers implement inside and outside the classroom and how this can be improved.

2. Participation

The adolescent you are the legal guardian of was selected and invited to participate in this research because she/he/they is 13-18 years old. The selection was given by availability and seeking representation from different communities. Approximately 5 teachers and 10 young people are expected to participate in this study as volunteers.

3. Does she, him, they have to take part?

No. It is up to the adolescent to decide whether to take part. They can withdraw themselves from the research, without giving a reason, by advising us of this decision. In that case all data related to them will be removed from record. The deadline by which they can withdraw any information contributed to the research is May 31, 2023.

4. What will happen if the adolescent takes participates in this research?

A group/collective will be formed that will meet 3-5 times during the months of May and June

- We will agree upon a schedule that is convenient for you.
- In the group, it is expected that individuals share their experiences and their relationship with school and teachers/students.
- You can withdraw from participating in this part of the research.
- With your consent, we would like to audio and video record you so we can have an accurate conversation record.

5. What are the possible disadvantages and risks in taking part?

There are no anticipated physical risks involved in this study. You may feel overwhelmed when sharing personal information. However, all your information will stay safe and shared with a few selected research associates. The data will be anonymized considering the preferences of the participants, after a dialogue of the risks and benefits.

6. Are there any benefits in taking part?

By taking part in this study you may become aware of ways in which you may better navigate the student-teacher relationship. Findings from this study may be used for further policy and publications and thus your involvement in the study has the potential to benefit others.

7. Information collected

Data that will be collected

- Consent records (e.g., written consent forms, audio-recorded consent, assent forms)
- Contact details for the purpose of this research only
- Audio and Video Recordings
- Transcripts
- Letters and pictures of items/gifts
- I will retain a list of participant names linking to the numbers until the completion of my dissertation in order to approach people if clarity is needed.

Data Protection

- The raw data will be encrypted and stored safely in my personal computing device.
- The raw data collected from you will only be available to me and my research associates for analysis purposes.
- Some of your quotes from the interview may be used in the final report
- The reports and academic articles produced as a result of this study may be published publicly.
- I am happy to share a preliminary report of the project and your conversation if you wish to review it.
- It can be difficult/ impossible to fully anonymise data. Because of this we will discuss the different options (e.g. pseudonymous, anonymising with numbers, revealing the identity) and you will decide which process you prefer.
- This identification evidence will be contained in the university OneDrive folder and will be destroyed as soon as the research has been published.

8. Will the research be published? Could I be identified from any publications or other research outputs?

The findings from the research will be written up into a dissertation. It is possible that the findings are also present in academic publications or conference presentations.

- I would like your permission to use direct quotations in any research outputs.
- A copy of my dissertation will be deposited both in print and online in the [Oxford University Research Archive](#) where it will be publicly available to facilitate its use in future research/ its access will be restricted.

9. Data Protection

The University of Oxford is the data controller with respect to your personal data, and as such will determine how your personal data is used in the research. The University will process

your personal data for the purpose of the research outlined above. Research is a task that is performed in the public interest. Further information about your rights with respect to your personal data is available from the University's Information Compliance web site at <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/individual-rights>.

10. Who has reviewed this research?

This research has received ethics approval from a subcommittee of the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee. (Ethics reference: **xxxxxx**).

11. Who do I contact if I have a concern about the research or I wish to complain?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this research, please contact Dr. Aliya Khalid-aliya.khalid@education.ox.ac.uk or Tayna Mía Rivera Rodríguez-tayna.riverarodriguez@sant.ox.ac.uk, and we will do our best to answer your query. We will acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how it will be dealt with.

If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford who will seek to resolve the matter as soon as possible:

The Chair, Dr Liam Gearon, Department of Education

Email: student.curec@education.ox.ac.uk

12. Further Information and Contact Details

If you would like to discuss the research with someone beforehand (or if you have questions afterwards), please contact:

Tayna Mía Rivera Rodríguez

Department of Education

tayna.riverarodriguez@sant.ox.ac.uk

Consent to take part in the study: The role of teachers and youth fighting against systemic violence to eradicate juvenicides in Puerto Rico
Legal Guardian

Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) approval reference: EDUC_C1A_23_025

Purpose of Study: This study aims to examine the relationship of teachers and youth and the impact it has on protecting the youth.

Please initial each box if you agree with the statement

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above research. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

I understand that the participation of the adolescent in my custody is voluntary and that she/he/they is free to withdraw at any point [until 31/May/2023], without giving any reason.

I understand who will have access to personal data provided, how the data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the project.

I understand the extent to which she/he/they could be identifiable from any publications or presentations.

I understand how to raise a concern or make a complaint.

By signing, you authorise the minor to participate in this research project.

Name of Participant

Name of legal guardian

Name of person taking consent

Signature

Signature

Appendix F: Flyer (in Spanish)

Ethics Approval Reference:
EDUC_CIA_23_025]



Investigación participación- acción

Saludos jóvenes y educadorxs,

Les invito a participar de esta investigación que busca documentar el papel de los maestrxs y jóvenes que luchan contra la violencia sistémica para erradicar los juvenicidios en Puerto Rico. La misma consiste de crear un colectivo de jóvenes y maestrxs interesados en dialogar, compartir y formular estrategias que utilizan o pueden utilizar las escuelas y comunidades para proteger a la juventud. Como parte de la investigación nos reuniríamos de manera virtual (3-5 veces en grupo). Quedo a su disposición.

Muchas gracias,

Tayna Mía Rivera Rodríguez

Si está interesado y desea más información,
puede comunicarse a
tayna.riverarodriguez@sant.ox.ac.uk
o completar el formulario adjunto:
https://forms.gle/NKdr2385JB9TYhPW9_

Appendix G: Google Form- To request further information about the research (in Spanish)

Investigación participación-acción: El papel de los maestrxs y jóvenes que luchan contra la violencia sistémica para erradicar los juvenicidios en Puerto Rico

¿Está interesado en participar en este proyecto de investigación? Por favor conteste las siguientes preguntas para que podamos contactarlo.

* Indicates required question

1. ¿Eres maestro/estudiante en el sistema de educación pública de Puerto Rico? *

Mark only one oval.

- Si, Maestro
- Si, Estudiante
- Other: _____

2. Si respondiste maestro en la pregunta anterior: ¿Eres un maestro de escuela secundaria?

Mark only one oval.

- Si
- No
- No aplica

3. ¿Qué nombre debo usar cuando nos comuniquemos con usted?

4. ¿Cuáles son tus pronombres?

5. ¿Qué edad tienes actualmente?

6. Correo electrónico

7. ¿Cuál es su número de teléfono (si le resulta cómodo compartirlo)?

8. ¿Le gustaría saber más sobre nuestra investigación y ser voluntario para participar? *

Mark only one oval.

Si

No

Tal vez

Other: _____

9. ¿Cómo prefiere que nos comuniquemos con usted? *

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Appendix H: Google Form-Final meeting (in Spanish)

8/3/23, 8:20 PM

Reflexión reunión final- Investigación Participación-acción

Reflexión reunión final- Investigación Participación-acción

¡Agradecida eternamente por haber contado con su apoyo y colaboración en este pasado mes!

1. Nombre completo (preferido)

2. Pronombres

3. ¿Qué mejorarías?

4. ¿Qué te gustó o qué te llevas del espacio?

8/3/23, 8:20 PM

Reflexión reunión final- Investigación Participación-acción

5. ¿Quieres que tu información sea anónima?

Mark only one oval.

- Si, anónimo
- Si, seudónimo (nombre falso)
- No, prefiero que esté mi nombre

6. Comentarios Adicionales

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms