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2S1. Re-Framing Master Narratives of Dis/ability Through an Emotion Lens: Sophia Cruz's LD Story at her Intersections

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Re-Framing Master Narratives of Dis/ability through an Affective Lens:
Sophia Cruz's LD Story at her Intersections

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Education Summit
Inclusive Praxis for 21st Century Education:
Advocacy, Challenges, and the Public Good
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Problem Space

- Social and emotional dimensions of Learning Disabilities (LD) knowledge base
  - privileges a deficit perspective
    - *Depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, and difficulty making friends leading to loneliness, deficits in social and cognitive perception and social competence, hyperactivity, aggression, teasing and bullying.*
  - pays little attention to cultural influences and equity *(Arzubiaga, Artiles, King, & Harris-Murri, 2008; Hernández-Saca & Cannon, 2016).*

Research Questions

1. What are Latina/o students with LD's lived-experiences about being labeled with LD?

2. What are Latina/o students with LD's understandings of the idea of LD?

Socio-Cultural Historical Perspectives
(Cole, 1996; Hedegaard, 2008; Rogoff, 2003)

1. **Cultural mediation and social origin** of development
   - The distinctive characteristics of people with LD are emotionally, socially, culturally, and historically bound and mediated.
   - Affective dimension: Voice, lived experiences.

2. **Discourses and narratives** of
   - Institutions (schooling), disciplinary fields/practices, policies.
   - LDs, minorities, able/disabled.

3. **Multiple levels**
   - Institutional, interpersonal, individual.

4. **Multiple time scales**
   - Histories of groups/institutions, biographies, events/moments.

Methods

- Interdisciplinary methods

- Positionality

- School Site

Data Collection

- Critical Ethnographic Methods
  - Field observations (2 and a half years (6 months of data collection and participant observations).
  - Fieldnotes
  - In-Depth Interviews
    - Students (~23 hours), Teachers (~26 hours), Parents (~10 hours)

- Information & Materials
  - District and School Performance Statistics
  - Background and Sociocultural Contexts

Data Analysis

1. Descriptive Coding

2. Coding of emotion discourse through identification of emotion-laden talk
   a. Emotion implicatives WHATS (Prior, 2016)
   b. Intensifiers (Labov, 1972)

3. Thematic analysis

4. Memoing

Focal Participants

	Disability	Sex	Grade	Age	Ethnicity	Language	SES
Sophia Cruz (Student)	LD and SLI	Female	7th	13	Mexican-American	Spanish and English	Working-Class
Luciana Cruz (Mother)	None	Female	N/A	40	Mexican	Spanish and English	Working class

Findings

Being LD: Sophia's Emotional Sense-Making

- **The hegemony of smartness (Leonardo & Broderick, 2011)** (See Example 1)

- **Disability micro-aggressions (Dávila, 2011)** (See Example 2)

What is LD? A unitary and fragmented notion for Sophia

- **LD as double-edged sword** (See Example 3)

- **The polysemic nature of LD** (See Example 4)

Participant Structure #1

Individually:

1. **Critically read and review** Sophia's voice

2. **Write** down any **thoughts, feelings and/or ideas** as they relate to your professional role in your communities of practice

Participant Structure #2

As a pair-share or group:
1. **Share your written thoughts, feelings, and/or ideas**
2. **Note and reflect together on any questions or tensions that came up for you**
3. **What connections to praxis (i.e., critical reflection and action) do you see from Sophia's story?**

Participant Structure #3

- Large Open Group Discussion

Key Terms

- Ableism (at its Intersections):
  - Medical-Psychological Model of Disability vs. Social Relational Model of Disability
  - The Hegemony of Smartness
  - Disability Micro-aggressions

The Hegemony of Smartness

- Sophia Cruz was aware of the ablest hierarch that the false and oppressive ideology of smartness created institutionally, interpersonally and individually that affected her. Both internally and externally, Sophia needed to navigate smartness, and I argue smartness is a species of hegemony since the ideological state apparatus within U.S. school culture creates and sustains the larger individualistic and meritocratic distinction between those "***not so smart***" and those "***who are smarter***" within the context of American schooling.

The Hegemony of Smartness

- These ideologies are hegemonic given that they do not necessarily originate within the neurology and biology of students such as Sophia, but are emotionally, historically, culturally and socially constructed within socioemotional contexts within schools. These constructs are not divorced from larger mechanisms of hegemony in U.S. society that encompasses school systems and big d Discourses (Gee 2011).

Disability Micro-Aggressions

- A second aspect of Sophia's lived experiences having an LD label was associated with receiving micro-aggressions. Micro-aggressions are subtle verbal insults that for Sophia, were emotionally laden due to her structural disability label of LD, and comments and responses to her ability differences by her teachers, siblings, and/or peers that were hostile to her sense of self and academic identity.

Disability Micro-Aggressions

- These disability micro-aggressions were interactional and interpersonal in nature, hence, socially constructed, and left negative feelings and emotions for Sophia. Sophia experienced micro-aggressions related to disability inside and outside schools. Disability micro-aggressions emerged in fleeting moments during everyday interactions with peers and family members.

LD as a double-edged sword

- Sophia viewed LD as a double-edged sword due to the positive and negative consequences of being labeled as such. How these positive and negative consequences manifested themselves in Sophia's life involved the interaction between intrinsic (e.g., individual) and extrinsic (e.g., structural) factors (Shakespeare 2006). For Sophia, internal factors included self-talk or meta-talk (meta-cognitive and meta-affective talk) about being labeled LD. These factors were largely negative. External factors included interactions with siblings and classmates in and outside of school that were negative in nature.

LD as a double-edge sword

- Lemke's (2013) term "meaning-feeling" characterizes Sophia's sense-making processes since it conceptualizes emotion as a form of meaning-making. The internal and external ways Sophia made meaning-feeling of her LD were bidirectional and not in isolation from each other. Sophia's meaning-feeling processes about what it meant to be labeled with LD involved a tension between the promise of LD and the confusion and negative emotionality of LD.

The polysemic nature of LD

- For Sophia, LD had more than one meaning. A prominent view of LD was the image of a slow learner. Sophia explained it with these words:

  - Probably like **am slow or something,** I don't know . . . That other kids can learn it *really* fast, like for say a math problem they can learn it *really* fast and if I have a learning disability, I can't learn it *that* fast, I have to learn it *really* **slow** (Sophia 10/14/14).

The polysemic nature of LD

- Sophia's statement here pointed to a problematic logic widely documented in the Disability Studies literature, namely that the self-concepts of people with a disability are in direct relationship to those who are not (Gill 1997). Further, Sophia seemed to conflate who she was with the educational label that was given to her: LD. This narrative merger speaks to how classification systems influence the *self-constructions* of those labeled as such. However, *what counts as LD* and how individuals such as *Sophia make sense of LD* and what it has to say about their *sense of self is not a seamless process or a one-to-one correspondence*.

The polysemic nature of LD

- Further, of significance, Sophia's statement reified a social hierarchy between disabled and non-disabled people as reflected in her use of intensifiers. She used the intensifier *really* three times as a means to contrast how non-disabled peers learn vis-a-vis how she learns—that is, other kids learn *really* fast and she learns *really* slow. She also intensified these differences by explaining that she "can't learn it *that* fast" compared to her non-labeled peers.

- An important insight is that although Sophia viewed LD as defined by slow learning, her experiences also made evident that institutional occasions made her LD identity visible. That is, social contexts played a significant role in making LD a relevant category in a learner's experiences.

Discussion & Implications

- Discursive practices of LD: *Infusing LD emotionality at the intersections*
  - Psycho-emotional disablement (Thomas, 1999) and the politics of hope
  - The pros, cons and fluidity of LD on the ground
  - Structure and Agency*: Operationalizing DisCrit*
- A systemic interdisciplinary and collaborative transformation towards humanization of Latina/o students with LD and **ALL** students with LD
  - Liberation Psychology (Martín-Baró, 1986)
  - **Disability Studies and Community Psychology Approach to Resilience (Runswisk-Cole & Goodley, 2013)**

Any further questions or concerns?

Gracias! Thank you!
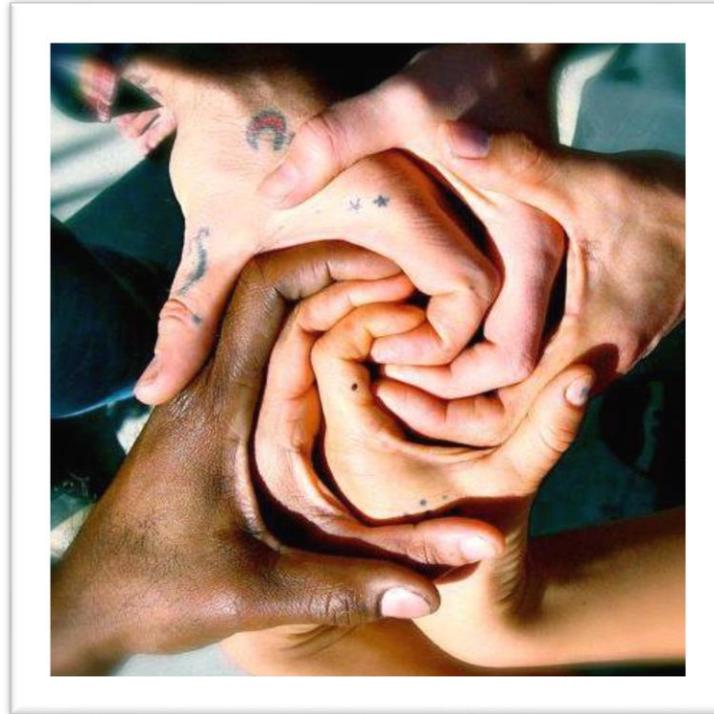
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