

ADRIA PADILLA-CHÁVEZ, PhD

University of Colorado, School of Education

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EDUCATION

2020 – 2025 University of Colorado, Boulder

PhD in Education: Learning Sciences & Human Development

Dissertation title: *Buscando la Luz: Children's Expressions of Dignity in a Co-designed Workshop*

Dissertation chairs: Dr. Susan Jurow and Dr. Ben Kirshner

2003-2005 University of Colorado, Boulder |

Master of Arts in Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Education

1998-2002 University of New Mexico |

Bachelor of Science in Bilingual Education

UNIVERSITY POSITIONS

August 2025 - Present Assistant Teaching Professor of Equity, Bilingualism and Biliteracy in Elementary Education | University of Colorado Boulder

June 2022 - July 2025 Instructor |University of Colorado Denver

January 2022 - June 2025 Instructor |University of Colorado Boulder

August 2020 - May 2023 Graduate Research Assistant | University of Colorado Boulder

K-12 EDUCATION POSITIONS

2023-2025 Newcomer Instructional Coach

Newcomer Center at Thornton High School | Adams 12 School District

2011-2020 Elementary teacher and Instructional Coach

Coronado Hills Elementary | Adams 12 School District

2009-2011 Owner, Director, and Lead Teacher

Nuestro Hogar Preschool: Reggio Emilia Inspired bilingual preschool

2005-2009 Elementary bilingual teacher and Instructional Coach

Adams 14 School District

2002-2005 Elementary bilingual teacher

Denver Public Schools

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2025-Present | Researcher | *Caminos hacia el Bilingüísmo*

The Caminos Project aims to support bi/multilingual youth in developing skills for research around and advocacy for bi/multilingual policy and programming in their schools and districts. We do this by creating structures for sustained partnership with youth. We meet regularly with students and use Youth Participatory Action Research methods to support multilingual students in pursuing inquiry projects most important to them. Through our partnerships with schools and districts, we create pathways and opportunities for students to share their results with relevant stakeholders in their communities in diverse ways.

Principal Investigator: Dr. Deborah Palmer

2019- Present | Senior Researcher | *Right2Learn Dignity Lab*

The Right2Learn Dignity Lab is an empirically minded and justice-oriented research collective. The most ambitious intellectual project we have undertaken is the creation of a “dignity handbook.” As the fruit of many years of collective study, we fashioned the concept of “educational dignity”: the multifaceted sense of a person’s value generated via substantive intra- and inter-personal learning experiences that recognize and cultivate one’s mind, humanity, and potential. As a kind of North Star, educational dignity is now a vital part of our argument to amend the “education clause” of the Colorado constitution.

Principal Investigator: Dr. Manuel Espinoza

2021 - 2023 | Research Assistant | University of Colorado, Boulder | *EPIC Futures*

EPIC was a design-based research project examining the learning and development that occurs for pre-service teachers and minoritized youth, with the use of digital tools, across the sites of school, home, and community. The primary research sites include a university-based teacher education program, an afterschool making & tinkering lab at a Latinx-serving elementary school, and a custom-designed digital social network called EPIC Friends.

Principal Investigator: Dr. José Lizárraga

2020- 2022 | Graduate Research Assistant | University of Colorado, Boulder | Renée Crown Wellness Institute | Family School Partnership | *The Belonging and Trust Study*

The Belonging and Trust research study engages Latinx families and public-school educators with the aim of developing and enhancing systems and programs that promote equitable family-school partnerships in the Boulder Valley and Roaring Fork School Districts. Using qualitative methods, the study is identifying sources of trust, distrust, connection, and disconnection between Latinx families and schools. Analysis is focused on identifying assets that can be leveraged and barriers that can be addressed in the collaborative design of structures and programs that promote trusting family-school partnerships.

Principal Investigator: Dr. Adriana Alvarez

COURSES TAUGHT

Language Acquisition for Bilingual Learners

School of Education

University of Colorado Boulder

Foundations in Bilingual/ Multicultural Education

School of Education

University of Colorado Boulder

Social Studies Methods in Elementary Ed

School of Education

University of Colorado Boulder

Practicum in Bilingual and Multicultural Education

School of Education

University of Colorado Boulder

Educational Psychology for Elementary Teachers

School of Education

University of Colorado Boulder

Foundations in Language, Literacy and Culture

School of Education and Human Development

University of Colorado at Denver

Language Development for Multilingual Learners

School of Education and Human Development

University of Colorado at Denver

History and Law of Bilingual and Immigrant Education

School of Education and Human Development

University of Colorado at Denver

Equality, Rights and Education

School of Education and Human Development

University of Colorado at Denver

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Padilla-Chávez, A., Meinzen, L., Palmer, D. & Renée Valladares, M. (2026, accepted) *High school newcomer youth as language policymakers: Translanguaging in a Multilingual Student Advisory Council*. Paper in Symposium “Translanguaging as embodied language policy...”. AERA, Los Angeles, CA.

Meinzen, L., **Padilla-Chávez, A.**, Quan, T. & Palmer, D. (2026, accepted) *Disrupting Hegemonic Language Ideologies through Action Research: Multilingual YPAR with high school newcomer students*. Paper Presentation in colloquium “Naming, Measuring, Acting: Language Ideologies and Systems of In/exclusion.” American Association for Applied Linguistics, Chicago, IL.

Meinzen, L., **Padilla-Chávez, A.** & Palmer, D. (November 2025) *Disrupting hauntings of linguistic ideologies in educational soundscapes with newcomer students using multilingual Youth Participatory Action Research*. Paper presentation in symposium “Hauntings of soundscapes in educational settings.” American Anthropological Association, New Orleans, LA.

Padilla-Chávez, A. (2025). *Buscando la Luz: Children's Expressions of Educational Dignity*. American Educational Research Association (Denver, CO).

Stickney, D., Makooi, M., Burns, C., Hipolito-Delgado, C., Jones-Ahmed, C., Adler-Eldridge, A., Morales, E., McPartlan, D., Lopez, S., Mendoza, E., Hunter, L., Kirshner, B., Salazar, B., **Padilla-Chavez, A.**, Jurow, A. S., Aguilera, B. E., & Palomar, M. (2024). *Reclaiming Radical Healing: The Role of Youth Activism in Understanding Oppression and Building Resilience*. In Lindgren, R., Asino, T. I., Kyza, E. A., Looi, C. K., Keifert, D. T., & Suárez, E. (Eds.), Proceedings of the 18th International Conference of the Learning Sciences - ICLS 2024 (pp. 1989-1996). International Society of the Learning Sciences.

Stamatis, K., Clarke, S., Polman, J., Gates, Z., Lee, U.S., Van, M., Nagashima, T., Yadav, G., Aleven, V., Oswald, E., Esborg, L., Pierroux, P., Riedy, R., Farrell, C., Penuel, W., Fox-Resnick, A., Sushil, S., Sommer, S., Tran, T.C., Palomar, M., McKoy, A., **Padilla-Chavez, A.**, Widman, S., Yu, J., Chan, J., Y.C., Closser, A., Ngo, V., Smith, H., Liu, A.S., and Ottmar, E.R. (June 2023). *Designing to Disrupt While Encountering Disruption: Engaging with the Unexpected in Educational Research and Practice*. International Conference of the Learning Sciences. (Montréal, Canada).

A., Padilla-Chavez, Aguirre-Ortega, B., McKoy, A., Palomar, M., Tran, T. C., (2023). *Tracing the Women of Color Plática: A Loving and Healing Circle*. American Educational Research Association. (Chicago, IL).

Álvarez, A., **Padilla-Chávez, A.** & Shedro, M. (2022). *Multimodal Testimonios with 5th Graders: Co-designing with Teachers to Integrate Students' Identities, Experiential Knowledge, and Families*. Research Seminar. Renée Crown Wellness Institute, University of Colorado Boulder.

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

Padilla-Chávez, A. (2025). *Developing and Sustaining Thriving Human Ecosystems: Leveraging Cultural Practices for Human Connection*. Keynote Speaker. The BUENO Center's Family Liaison and Paraeducator Institute. Boulder, CO.

Guest Panelist, *Webinar: Welcoming Newcomer Students into the Classroom*, University of Colorado at Denver, Virtual, September 30, 2024.

Padilla-Chavez, A., Alvarez, A., Shedro, M., Peña Teeters, L. (2022). *The Multimodal Testimonios of 5th Graders: Co-designing with Teachers to Integrate Experiential Knowledge*. Paper session. American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting (AERA). San Diego, CA.

Espinoza, M., **Padilla-Chávez, A.**, Alali, L. (2022). *Amending the Colorado Constitution: Fulfilling the Promise of Public Education*. Keynote Speaker. University of Denver Morgridge College of Education. Denver, CO.

Espinoza, M., **Padilla-Chávez, A.** 2021. *Exploring the ethics of Right to Learn Collective [Guest Lecture]*. University of Colorado Boulder.

Literacy Squared ® (2020). *Trajectories toward Biliteracy Orientation and Introduction to Literacy Squared; An Introduction to the Dictado*. School districts and sites: San Antonio ISD; Austin ISD; Tucson Unified SD.

PUBLICATIONS

Padilla-Chávez, A. (2025) (chapter accepted, under review) Re-mediating for the Possibility of Sanctuary and the Experience of Educational Dignity. In *The U.S. Public School as a Sanctuary Site: The Cultural Politics of Providing Safe and Protected Spaces for Minoritized Students*. Emerald Publishing Group.

Meinzen, L., **Padilla-Chávez, A.**, Quan, T. & Palmer, D. (abstract accepted, under review). Disrupting Hegemonic Language Ideologies through Action Research: Multilingual YPAR with high school newcomer students. In: *Handbook of language ideologies*. Bloomsbury Press.

Meinzen, L., Palmer, D., Renée Valladares, M., & **Padilla-Chávez, A.** (abstract moved forward, in preparation) Translanguaging as Embodied Language Policy in Critical Inquiries with Multilingual, Transnational Youth. *Journal of Language, Education and Ideology Special Issue – “Language, Education, and Rights in Motion: Decolonial Perspectives on Ideologies and Displacement”*

Mendoza, E., Salazar Medina, B., **Padilla-Chavez, A.**, & Jurow, A.S. (2024). Bringing Learning and hummingbird medicine into dialogue to heal academic harms. *Special issue of Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*.

Padilla-Chávez, A. (2024). Amending Colorado's Constitution: A Scholar's Perspective. *Denver Journal of Education & Community*.

R2L Select Committee (2022). So Say We All: Equity and Meaningful Participation in PreK-12. *Paper commissioned by the National Academy of Sciences*, authored with Manuel Espinoza and Spencer Childress.

FEATURES:

Strain, D. (2024). Meeting the Needs of Colorado's 'Newcomer' K-12 Students. *CU Boulder Today*.

Robles, Y. (2019). Adams 12's First Newcomer Center Offers Students Support and a Path to Graduation. Colorado Public Radio.

GRANTS:

Community Impact Grant. (2023). *Buscando do la luz: Co-designing learning workshops with children*. University of Colorado, Boulder.

AWARDS:

Mile High Teacher of the Year| Denver Public Schools | 2005

Outstanding Certified Employee of the Year | Adams 12 Superintendent's Hispanic Advisory Council | 2013

FELLOWSHIPS:

Miramontes Doctoral Fellowship 2020-2025