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Editors' Dialogue

Yesenia Fernández, PhD., Associate Professor, School Leadership Program
California State University, Dominguez Hills

Margarita Landeros, Ed.D., Assistant Professor, School and College
Counseling Department, California State University, Dominguez Hills



Without a community of care, we cannot care for our communities. Webs of care have long shepherded our building of solidarity with one another to foster endurance during our most difficult times. This solidarity building and flow of reciprocity in webs of care as defined by the concept of *comadrismo* is what strengthens us to endure and fight back. Barragan Santoyo & Perez (2023), explain that *comadrismo* describes the relationship between

“...women who share common goals, values, and seek to utilize their bond to advance the betterment of their surrounding community.” (p. 44)

and that women use their lived experiences to build community and trust while taking care of each other. We extend this spirit of *comadrismo* to describe the webs of care we develop to resist current attacks on our communities. In addition to the presence of federal law enforcement agencies which racially profile and violently kidnap and sometimes disappear members of our communities, we are experiencing a top-down hegemonic xenophobic distrust in education, in educators, and in critical thinking, coming from a place of fear and racist ideologies often masked in Christian conservatist ideals (Miller et al., 2023).

It is movements like the Civil Rights Movement, A Day without Immigrants, and other grassroots movements such as the recent resistance as response to the attacks on our educational system and our immigrant communities which ultimately define generations. Indeed, our response to these racist and ill-informed attacks fueled by the current sociopolitical turmoil will continue to inform generations to come. Public K-12 schools were created to be institutions for learning for our youth to become informed participants and contributors to society as they begin to develop their identities; whereas institutions of higher education have historically served as vessels for liberation in learning and self-expression, self-exploration, and finding one's purpose. Schools and community spaces attempt to insulate young people from the toxic political landscape we are experiencing as well as prepare them for it, but this work has become increasingly difficult to navigate in a climate that criminalizes this very work. Our young people will inherit what ultimately becomes of our institutions as a result of this tension.

It is through the webs of solidarity which we form with colleagues, families, and community members, that we can find the strength to resist, fight back, and ultimately change the trajectory of our generation. This journal has created its own web of care as it brings into dialogue/diálogo the perspectives and leaders who shape our educational settings:

students, teachers, counselors, researchers, practitioners, and community members. In this issue, *juntos*, we want to extend the ideology of comadrismo, to harness its spirit and attempt to describe our newly created realities by webs of care, endurance, and solidarity which folks are creating to resist the ongoing assaults on our communities. In the following pages, we highlight experiences, contributions, and *tejidos* across K-16 that serve as testament to the endurance of our collective communities.

This current issue is being released during a time when schools, colleges, and community spaces are at a crossroads and feeling immense pressure. These places which aim to foster liberatory experiences that include culturally-responsive curriculum, and protect free speech, defend students' rights to a free and public education and also serve as shelters during ICE raids to continue to live out their purpose of being safe havens for all students, must now do so while managing decisions that may impact federal funding streams. We are witnessing moments that feel familiar to previous historical events but are even more heightened as communities of color are under attack from multiple angles- their liberties are being threatened at the same time as they or members of their communities are being violently stripped of their freedom, at the same time as their livelihoods are threatened, at the same time as there are rising prices in the cost of living and at the same time that their children's access to an

equitable education is uncertain. Yet, we are continuously shown how in the midst of this, our comadrismo has built a movement of love thy neighbor, fight for those who are living in fear, and take care of your communities especially since we know those in power who were tasked with caring for us have continuously forsaken us and are even often the aggressor. Together, we are also combating the mischaracterization of these webs of endurance as lawlessness though we know these webs of solidarity are truly signs of hope for change.

Tejidos exist because of those who find the courage to lead and respond to the needs of their communities. In our schools, we see teachers tirelessly developing curriculum that addresses educational standards and explore teaching methods that scaffold their students' strengths, identities, and stories. There are teachers who serve as trusted adults when their students have no one else to turn to as they struggle with the pressures in their lives, and who are creating safe spaces for learning. School counselors are deepening the opportunities for students to explore how moments in their lives manifest in their academic selves, and equipping students with skills and mindsets that translate into behaviors that contribute to their academic success. College counselors serve as connectors to resources, opportunities, and goals. There are also higher education faculty who are promoting collective consciousness and preparing their students to inspire hope.

Cultural centers on campuses have become hubs of safety and resistance not only for students but also for their families as well as faculty and staff on campus. Community spaces continue to fill the voids left by sometimes inept and ineffective city politicians and policies that fail to provide resources for and protect our communities. Together, we are community members who create webs of care and resistance—and one without the other cannot persist.

The offerings in this issue underscore this interconnectedness. We highlight multicultural voices from the field, educators, students, who wrestle with the realities of the persecution we continually experience on campuses and off, and develop networks of care, exemplify comadrisimo, and remind us that together we are stronger and that it is our responsibility to protect one another. The pieces include poetry which reflects the raw emotions of teachers as well as counter-storytelling to center students' empowered voices. This issue highlights that the educational journeys of young people on school campuses intersect with not only one another, but also with teachers, counselors, administrators, and other campus staff. It takes each one of us to craft the experiences with them and the resulting tejidos, the tapestries, would not be possible without each one of us.

To begin, in a time where innovation in education is being hindered, Minhye Son engages in diálogo through a collection

of poems from her teacher education classroom. The poems are expressions of the essence of comadrisimo – care, community, and support – and allow future teachers to reflect on their own identities, their longing for justice, the power of education, and “show a little madness” (Gloria as quoted in Son, 2025) as they “strive to learn and improve their minds” (Jennifer as quoted in Son, 2025). They use poetry to convey their frustrations, hope, dedication, and pursuit of justice, equity and care.

Aubrey Uresti depicts a counseling group of middle school Chicana girls as a

“network of care and comadrisimo.”

“Counter-storytelling Archetypes: A School Counseling Intervention for Chicana Girls” illustrates how a Chicana school counselor helps them embrace their own identities and utilizes counter-storytelling as the girls use Mexican archetypal female characters to narrate their own journeys. Uresti's piece brings two critical matters in education into practice, creating culturally inclusive and responsive spaces in education that are also culturally sustaining, and fostering student empowerment to encourage them to show up as their authentic selves.

Aligned to the spirit of *comadrismo*, Margarita Landeros, Karla Celeste Martinez, and Janet Garcia deepen this insight into the role of the K-12 and higher education counselors as webs of endurance with reflections on their own work. In “Counselors as Webs of Endurance in Higher Education,” they highlight the choice one makes to show up in service of others as a calling and how counseling is “a practice of love.” Together, they capture counseling as a profession that facilitates student empowerment, champions success for their students amidst uncertainty, engages in radical empathy, and creates “visual representations of alliance” to “foster trust and safety the moment students walk into academic space.” These reflections of practitioners as they grapple with the reality of a profession that means so much to students and their families and the emotional toll it takes on them to navigate the toxic political climate remind us to be resilient because the stakes are so high.

Similarly, Cristina Stephany, Alohilani Okamura, and Sarah Lara, further illustrate how they use place-based education to integrate Hawaiian principles: pili, kuleana, and aloha. “Aloha ‘Āina and Place-based Education as Transformative Practice with Students from Los Angeles Urban Schools” examines how using pili, kuleana, and aloha offer students the opportunity to reflect on their own identities by centering “aloha ‘āina, a reciprocal relationship with place,” and Hō’ike as a form of assessment that is culturally meaningful for their students to develop

their own identities. Moreover, students were able to notice shifts in dominant power structures and develop relationships between students and their communities, and their land— a shared bond with the community which includes the land as part of that *comadrismo*.

Anna Baird extends the notion of empowered authenticity in educational settings that Uresti and Stephany, Okamura and Lara highlight in their contribution.

“Empowered Authenticity: Promoting Collective Consciousness Raising in Educational Settings,”

proposes two ways in which raising collective consciousness empowers students to deepen their connection to their learning and their classroom community. Baird shows us how bringing vulnerability through creative expression in the classroom enables students to feel safer and embrace showing emotions in their classroom engagement and assignments. She also highlights how drawing connections between the content and relevant student experiences further contrasts the traditional forms of learning that reinforce patriarchal structures and impede emotional expressions in classrooms. Classes become spaces

where students see themselves as part of the curricula which is the ultimate form of community care in the classroom.

Finally, in “Preventing Bullying of Students with Disabilities: Teachers’ Definitions of Bullying and Use of Anti-bullying Strategies,” Jenny C. Chiappe and James Koontz provide context to ways in which teachers are defining bullying in their classrooms and creating more inclusive spaces. They call on educators to meet the moment and address students’ respective needs as they reveal them to be not what our assumptions of their needs are. The current socio-political climate has attacked diversity, access, as well as equity and inclusion efforts that support students with disabilities. These attacks have also heightened student-to-student harassment and bullying in schools. Through this contribution, Chiappe and Koontz offer an opportunity for teachers to address bullying in their classrooms to promote more positive learning environments. They also highlight the *tejido* between teachers and administrators to ensure teachers receive training and support to address increased bullying in schools.

As you read through the voices of our authors, we invite you to become part of the dialogue by extending your thoughts, questions, reflections and learnings onto your own work. Consider how you are part of the *tejido* in the educational settings around you, and

how you can further foster communities of care today and tomorrow. Take this issue as our own call for us to collectively

“generate a new social fabric for change,”

engage in *comadrismo*, and actively resist the attacks on our communities.