

2026 Social Justice in Education Conference Presentation Summaries

Session 1

Abuelitas, Lolas, and Kokums: Read Alouds Celebrating Grandmothers as Knowledge Keepers

Presenter(s): Nicole Amato and CSUCI's Multisubject Credential Candidates

Abstract: This session offers participants the opportunity to read and engage with stories about the power of learning and loving from our elders, specifically, our grandmothers. This session is for teachers, counselors, and community members interested in building a collection of picturebooks that celebrate grandmothers as knowledge keepers, storytellers, and cultural educators. Participants will leave with book lists, discussion questions, and teaching strategies.

Serving Undocumented Students at an Emerging HSI

Presenter(s): Diego Castro Gomez, Daniela Cortez Bravo, Jerusalem Davila, and Cinthya Salazar

Abstract: Centering the reflections of emerging scholars at an HSI, our plática centers how immigration and educational policies influence undocumented college students trajectories. We will discuss ways that higher education settings can develop “undocuserving” (Salazar et al. 2024) - culturally sustaining practices that promote critical consciousness, student agency, and success.

Beyond Trauma-Informed: Designing Safe Spaces Through Cultural Wealth

Presenter(s): Lucero Benitez

Abstract: This session moves beyond trauma-informed practices to explore how educators can design safe spaces through community cultural wealth. Participants will learn how relationships, culture, and collective care support nervous system regulation, foster belonging, and create school environments rooted in dignity, healing, and educational justice.

Poetry and the Power of Language in the Land of the Free

Presenter(s): John Puglisi and Jeffery Hudson

Abstract: Poetry and the Power of Language in the Land of the Free is a workshop focused on the use of literacy practices in schools that promote healing, justice, and critical consciousness aimed at the development and support of wellbeing for immigrant children, families, and their schools. Poetry will serve as the central literacy practice in the workshop and will afford participants to learn and engage in poetry meaning making and creation.

Meaningful Student Engagement: Student Inquiry Projects for Antibias & Antiracism

Presenter(s): Danna Lomax and Sarah Gluck Perez

Abstract: Students from seven schools in Ventura Unified School District (grades 4–12) will share a three-year inquiry cycle sparked by a CDE Anti-bias Grant. In their student-led projects, students addressed racism and bias on their campuses. Student and Teacher Ambassadors present their process, projects, results, and a model replicable by other students and educators.

Ensuring Equitable Access to Counseling and Mental Health Services in Oxnard School District

Presenter(s): Maria C. Magana, Raudel Flores, Vanessa Ruiz, Lisette Robles

Abstract: This workshop explores equitable access to counseling and mental health services, focusing on barriers such as stigma, language, socioeconomic disadvantages, and inequitable practices. Highlighting Oxnard School District's multi-tiered, culturally responsive supports and community partnerships, participants learn strategies to expand access, reduce disparities, and advocate for equitable outcomes for all students.

Trauma, Acculturation, and Healing in Higher Education

Presenter(s): Josefina L. Sierra

Abstract: This interactive session invites participants to reflect on how trauma and acculturation shape learning experiences in higher education. Grounded in Latinx immigrant narratives, the session centers student voice, identity, and lived experience while offering trauma-sensitive strategies that promote connection, belonging, and healing within academic spaces.

Session 2

Un espacio para todos: Leveraging families' funds of knowledge through monthly Storytime

Presenter(s): Assadullah Sadiq, Denise Lopez-Heredia, Alicia Mariscal, Yasmina Martinez, Gladys Perez, Crystal Pinedo, and Charlotte Robles

Abstract: This presentation highlights a monthly bilingual Storytime led by a professor alongside university students and their families. Grounded in funds of knowledge and culturally sustaining practices, Storytime creates an inclusive space where children, caregivers, and students share stories, languages, and cultural knowledge while building relationships across home, community, and university contexts.

Joy as Resistance: Healing-Centered, Culturally Rooted Practices for Schools

Presenter(s): Corin Musgrove

Abstract: In this interactive session, participants will explore how joy functions as a culturally responsive and trauma-informed practice that supports healing, belonging, and academic engagement. Learn actionable strategies to cultivate joyful classrooms and campus cultures that honor student experiences, uplift diverse identities, and advance educational justice.

Critical Consciousness in Action: Healing Circles as an Immigrant Adolescent's Cultural Coming-of-Age

Presenter(s): Damaris Munoz Bello and Vanessa Mendoza

Abstract: This interactive session utilizes Community Cultural Wealth and LatCrit to examine the "cultural coming-of-age" of Latinx immigrant adolescents. Through an immersive demonstration of Pláticas and healing circles, participants analyze practices that foster critical consciousness and identity. Attendees will gain research-informed strategies to dismantle deficit narratives and promote agency.

Cultural Influences in 1930 & 1940 La Colonia Oxnard

Presenter(s): Joe I. Mendoza

Abstract: A historical view of the segregation and racism experienced in La Colonia of Oxnard in the 1930's and 1940's will be shared. Participants will improve their understanding of the influence culture has on students, parents, and community, in their efforts to gain an education. While this presentation considers Mexican culture, the ideas are applicable to all people. Bring your wit and humor.

Building Authentic Youth-Adult Partnerships in Ventura County

Presenter(s): Kate English

Abstract: This interactive workshop explores how shared power between youth and adults supports healing and educational justice in immigrant and culturally diverse communities. Through reflection and small-group activities, participants will learn practical ways to co-design programs with youth and center the voices of those most impacted by educational inequities.

Vehicles for Arts in the Community: Self Help Graphics and the Barrio Mobile Art Studio

Presenter(s): Theresa Avila

Abstract: The Barrio Mobile Art Studio (1975-present) aims to develop cultural pride and a positive self-image through cultural expressions, aesthetic development through the examination of formal expressive properties, and hands-on practice. This presentation of an historic art education program offers insights into accessible resources and creative practices for k-12 classroom activities.

