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I am mixed-race, Mexican and European. Raised in Southern California, I was born in the United States to my immigrant father, a naturalized citizen as a young adult from Mexico, and my U.S.-born mother, with her German and English background. I was bilingual until I entered school, after which English became my primary language. Being mixed-race, I was occasionally the target of, but more often the witness to, racism. For example, with my English proficiency and lighter features, I found myself included by those whose culture and norms dominate society, mistaken for an “insider,” while they made racist remarks about or to Latinos, Mexicans, Chicanos, and my own family members. Today, I identify as Chicana or Chicana. Ever learning greater humility, I acknowledge my privilege as light-skinned, able-bodied, middle-class, straight, with a gender identified from birth.

### **Social Justice in Teaching**

There have been two primary ways that social justice has become a basis for my teaching. First, to advance my own skill as an instructor, I observed a number of social justice teaching environments. For example, I volunteered for an organization to assist middle and high school Native American students in the Seattle Public School District. An afterschool and weekend program in a multi-generational setting, the Urban Native Education Alliance (UNEA) works to address issues that arise in schools where Native American students may be forgotten or targeted. Second, as an instructor, I employed instructional approaches that advance social justice and I learn from my students which best enhance their own understanding. For instance, assuming I’ve built sufficient safety in the classroom, I use “speaking order,” a way to conduct a discussion that allows those who come from societally oppressed groups to speak before those from the more dominant groups. I learn most when I collect reflection papers afterwards that ask, “How did today’s speaking order go for you?” For course syllabi, I include articles that join the subject of the course with a social justice perspectives. For example, for my Poverty and Inequality class I include an article by Hughes (2010) titled “The Elephant in the Room: Poverty, Disability, and Employment,” exploring disability as both cause and effect of poverty. The discussions in the classroom that follow build my understanding of those with disabilities and the teaching the topic.

### **Social Justice in Research**

Building and taking part in research teams that produce scholarship centering social justice are the most compelling. I enjoy working with a diverse group of researchers best. In my own

scholarship, I intentionally examine factors that shine light on societal inequities such as those that identify race, ethnicity, LGBTQIA+ statuses, those with a disability, sexism, and other forms of economic exploitation. Just as important, I utilize the language of resilience and perseverance in reporting findings on marginalized populations. Using data visualization frameworks that de-center the white, male, heteronormative group as a default for comparison, I take a small part in the unraveling of an oppressive society, and hopefully help build new foundations where everyone can thrive.