

# Blanca Elena Trejo Aguilera

University of Colorado at Boulder

School of Education • Learning Science and Human Development

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## BIOSKETCH

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I was born/raised on the traditional homelands of the Očhéthi Šakówiŋ, hinono'eino' biito'owu', Tsésthó'e and Núu-ágha-tuvu-pu and +48 Indigenous Nations, aka Denver, CO. My ancestral lineage is Mexica, Totonaca and Spaniard. I identify as Mexican-American, Xicana and Latina and use She/Her/Ella pronouns. I am first generation to hold U.S birthright citizenship; first gen to earn a BA, an MA and now a PhD.

Because of my personal and familial lived experiences, I am intimately aware of intersecting societal systems that marginalize and oppress BIPOC communities historically and contemporaneously. At age 15, I became involved in Youth Organizing, working on issues of educational justice and immigrant rights at the federal, state and local level. I have been a community organizer, non-profit leader, and a state employee charged with implementing state law won by grassroots campaigns.

I seek to decolonize and re-indigenize the field of youth organizing and engage BIPOC youth in healing, power building, and collective action. I believe in the power of intergenerational imagination to usher us toward a future of abundance, liberation and relationships of balance with human and more-than human relations.

## EDUCATION

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**School of Education, University of Colorado**

Boulder, CO

PhD, **Learning Sciences and Human Development**

Spring 2025

Dissertation Committee: Chair: Dr. Ben Kirshner; Dr. Susan Jurow; Dr. Kalonji Nzinga; Dr. Clint Carroll; Dr. Natalie Avalos; Dr. Leah Pena-Teeters

Trejo Aguilera, Blanca E. (2024). Healing from the Harms of Schooling. University of Colorado at Boulder ProQuest Dissertations & Theses. <https://www.proquest.com/docview/3205386727>

**University of Colorado**

Boulder, CO

M.A., Educational Foundations, Policy and Practice

Summer 2017

**University of Denver**

Denver, CO

B.A., Political Science

June 2010

B.A., Spanish

B.S.B.A., International Business

**West High School – Denver Public Schools**

Denver, CO

Center for International Studies- Dual Diploma

June 2005

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As an academic/organizer my research centers a re-connection to Indigenous knowledge and medicines that help all people heal from the generational traumas inflicted by White supremacy and colonization.

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### **AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION**

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Community Based Research | Youth Organizing | Youth Activism | Youth Leadership  
Youth Participatory Action Research | Indigenous Thought and Theory | Curanderismo Practices  
Traditional Indigenous Knowledge | Radical Healing

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### **RESEARCH APPOINTMENTS**

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GRA. Circles De Confianza. Belonging and Trust Research Team. Renee Crown Wellness Institute.  
University of Colorado- Boulder, Fall 2019 – Summer 2022

GRA. Pipelines to Power – Funders Collaborative for Youth Organizing. The Research Hub for Youth Organizing and Education Policy. School of Education. University of Colorado- Boulder. Fall 2017- Spring 2019

GRA. Aurora Education Coalition – Rose Community Foundation. The Research Hub for Youth Organizing and Education Policy. School of Education. University of Colorado- Boulder. Fall 2017- Summer 2018

GRA. Urban Research-Based Action Network (URBAN). - Colorado Node. The Research Hub for Youth Organizing and Education Policy. School of Education. University of Colorado- Boulder. Summer 2017- Fall 2019

Communications Coordinator. Urban Research-Based Action Network (URBAN) – Colorado Node. Fall 2023 – Summer 2024.

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### **PUBLICATIONS AND WORKING PAPERS**

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#### **Peer Reviewed Articles**

Teeters, L. P., Shedro, M., Alvarez, A., Schultz, K., Gleason, E., Zigarelli, J. C., & **Trejo, B.** (2023). Circles de confianza: using multimodal *testimonios* to build culturally sustaining schools. *Ethnography and Education*, 18(4), 356–375. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17457823.2023.2252547>

Teeters, L. P., **Trejo, B.**, Gleason, E., Zigarelli, J. C., Shedro, M., Alvarez, A., & Schultz, K. (2022). Circles de Confianza: Promoting the Well-being of Latine Youth via Multimodal Testimonio. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 22(5), 2151–2163.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2022.2096028>

#### **Book Chapters**

Hunter, A., Kirshner, B., (2025). Encyclopedia of Social Justice in Education – Language, Literacy, Youth and Culture. Vol. 6. Bloomsbury.

Trejo, B., Kirshner, B., & Salazar, B. (2023). Youth Activism (D. Fisher, A. Garcia, & E. Gargroetzi, Eds.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781138609877-REE237-1>

**Conference Papers and Presentations**

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. <https://doi.org/10.22318/icls2024.656202>; <https://repository.isls.org/handle/1/10848>

**Trejo Aguilera, B.**, Gleason, E., Resendiz-Salazar, A., Cosentino, C., Colin, E., Ramirez, I., Nunez Carrasco, J., Contreras, L. (2022, October 27). Circles de Confianza: Latinx Youth Co-creating Spaces of Healing and Confianza in Schools. Presented at the All-In Conference: Co-Creating Knowledge for Justice. Presentation. Institute for Social Transformation. University of California-Santa Cruz. Santa Cruz, CA. <https://transform.ucsc.edu/all-in-conference-sessions/>

**Trejo, B.E.**, Pena Teeters, L., Zigarelli, J. C., Shedro, M., Alvarez, A. (2022, April 24). Circles de Confianza: Promoting the Well-Being of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Youth via Multimodal Testimonio. Roundtable Presentation. 2022 annual conference of the American Educational Research Association. (Virtual). <https://doi.org/10.3102/1885750>

**Trejo, B. B.**, Kirshner, B., Valladares, S. (2020, April 18). Building Power, Transforming Communities: Developing a Framework for Understanding Models of Youth Organizing. Session Paper. 2020 annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. San Francisco, CA (Cancelled due to the COVID-19 Pandemic).

**Trejo, B.**, Mackey, J., & CdeBaca, C. (2019, April 7). Real Talk: The Pain and Love of Youth Organizing. Paper presented at the 2019 annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. Toronto, Canada. <https://doi.org/10.3102/1445610>

Ruiz-Martinez, M. J., Flores, R., **Trejo, B. E.** (2019, April 5). Education, Activism, and Social Change: Strategies and Tensions in the Work of a Nonprofit Organization. Paper presented at the 2019 annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. Toronto, Canada. [https://www.aera.net/Portals/38/05\\_schedule\\_final.pdf?ver=O4G-4zwNNifzOMXAzdTbiw%3d%3d](https://www.aera.net/Portals/38/05_schedule_final.pdf?ver=O4G-4zwNNifzOMXAzdTbiw%3d%3d)

**Publication Reviewer**

Journal of Latinos in Education – 2023-2024

**INVITED SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS AND GUEST LECTURES**

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“We Don’t Go Alone”. Keynote Speaker (2024, May 19). DSST Cole High School Graduation. Denver, CO.

“The First, But Not the Last”. Keynote Speaker. (2022, August 6). Volunteers in Partnership. Summer Link. University of Denver. Denver, CO.

“Where you are from, Who you are becoming, and Where you are going”. Keynote Speaker. (2021, February 9). Empowering the Leaders of Tomorrow: Conference for High School Latinas. Pi Lambda Chi Latina Sorority, Inc. University of Denver. Denver, CO.

“The First, But Not the Last”. Keynote Speaker. (2018, October 24). Commerce City Youth Commission. Commerce City, CO.

“Story of Self.” Keynote Speaker. (2018, August 1). Volunteers in Partnership. Summer Link. University of Denver. Denver, CO.

“Living My Full Self”. Keynote Speaker. (2018, February 16). Empowering the Leaders of Tomorrow: Conference for High School Latinas. Pi Lambda Chi Latina Sorority, Inc. University of Denver. Denver, CO.

Panelist for Community Organizing Training Session. (2017, January 06). Korbel Latin America Center. University of Denver. Denver, CO.

“Planting the Seeds of Change”. Keynote Speaker. (2014). Annual DCIS Foundation Luncheon. Denver, CO.

“Story of Self”. Keynote Speaker. (2014, October 3). 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Community Organizing Institute. Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning. University of Denver. Denver, CO.

### **Guest Lectures**

Counseling Undocumented Students to College. CU Denver Counseling Practicum. University of Colorado-Denver. Instructor: John Happs . Fall 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018.

1-1 Relational Visits: Why they Matter and Practice. Puksta Scholars Class. University of Colorado-Boulder. Instructor: Dr. Roudy Hildreth. Fall 2019

Story of Self. Introduction to Sociology. Regis University. Instructor: Dr. Jazmin Muro. Spring 2018

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## **POPULAR MEDIA, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP**

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### **Popular Media**

Interview. (Magazine). Fletcher, H. (2019). Youth Rising. Voices: School of Education Magazine. University of Colorado- Boulder. Boulder, CO. Retrieve [HERE](#)

Featured. (Annual Report 2014-2015, Presented 2015, August 27). Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning. University of Denver, Office of the Provost. Denver, CO

Profile. (Press Release). Bond, L. (2015, October 26). The Denver Foundation Honors Four Outstanding Community Leaders. The Denver Foundation. Retrieve [HERE](#).

Quoted. Robles, Y. (2015, February 16). Growing efforts to help college students in country illegally. The Denver Post. Retrieve [HERE](#).

Interview. (Student Newspaper). Balakrishnan, A. (2013, October 22). Impovershing Policy Series Part III: Alum Implements Bill for Undocumented Students. The Denver Clarion Retrieve [HERE](#).

Interview and Profile. Card Chmel, J. (2007, November 5). Puksta Scholar Helps Community Improve. University of Denver Magazine. Retrieve [HERE](#)

### **Community Presentations and Public Scholarship**

Rojas-Arauz, B., Bottomly, M., **Trejo Aguilera, B.** (2024, March 15). Decolonizing Psychological First Aid. Our Voices, Our Power United. Community Training. Denver, CO.

Arroyo Holmstrom, L., & **Trejo Aguilera, B.** (2019). Emerging Educator Narratives for high school, undergraduates and graduate students. Session facilitated at the 2019 Teachers of Color and Allies Summit. University of Colorado- Boulder. Boulder, CO.

Trejo, B. (2019, June 30). Youth Advocacy, Organizing and Civic Engagement. Workshop presented at the BOLD Center GoldShirt Summer Bridge Program. University of Colorado- Boulder. Boulder, CO.

Trejo, B. (2019, March 12). Colorado ASSET Presentation. College In Colorado, a division of the Colorado Department of Higher Education. Presentation Available [HERE](#)

Trejo, B. (2019, October 11). Youth Voice Presentation. Workshop presented at the Youth Leadership Conference. Boulder, CO.

Trejo, B. (2018, September 1). "Self Advocacy for the Class of 20...". Session presented at the Pioneer Leadership Program. University of Denver. Denver, CO.

Trejo, B. (2015, October 24). Como Ayudar a Tu Hijo/a. Workshop presented at the Parents and Families Supporting Your Student to College Conference (Spanish). Keeping the Dream Alive and INSPIRE. University of Denver, Denver, CO.

Trejo, B. (2015, October 23). Youth Empowerment and Self-Advocacy. Workshop presented at the DREAMer Day College Readiness Conference (Youth Conference). Keeping the Dream Alive and INSPIRE. University of Denver, Denver, CO.

Trejo, B. (2015, October 2). Best Practices for Recruitment, Admission and Retention of ASSET/DACA Students. Workshop session presented at the 2014 Keeping the Dream Alive: Advising the Immigrant Student to College conference. Denver, CO. Conference Proceedings Retrieve [HERE](#).

**Trejo, B.** & Armendarez, C. (2014, October 24). Best Practices for Recruitment, Admission and Retention of ASSET/DACA Students. Workshop session presented at the 2014 Keeping the Dream Alive: Advising the Immigrant Student to College conference. Denver, CO. Conference Proceedings Retrieve [HERE](#).

Trejo, B. (2014, September 19). Self Advocacy and Power Mapping. Workshop presented at the 2014 DREAMer Day Conference for Undocumented High School Youth. INSPIRE, EDUCA Radio, Pi Lambda Chi Latina Sorority Inc., Keeping the DREAM Alive. University of Denver, Denver, CO.

Salazar, A. & **Trejo, B.E.** (2013, October 13). Plenary Lunch Facilitators. Session presented at the 2013 Keeping the Dream Alive: Advising the Immigrant Student to College conference. Denver, CO. Conference Proceedings Retrieve [HERE](#)

## TEACHING

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**University of Colorado Boulder** (2014–present)

*Undergraduate and Pre-Collegiate Courses:*

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|-----------------------------|---|
| Fall 2020, '22,<br>'23, '24 | <b>LEAD 1002: Becoming a Leader-</b> Intro to leadership theories. Core course for first year undergraduate students in the Leadership and Community Engagement Major.                                  |
| Fall 2022<br>Spring 2023    | <b>EDUC 3013: School and Society-</b> Undergraduate foundations course in the School of Education; also part of university core curriculum.   |
| Fall 2024<br>Spring 2025    | <b>LEAD 4500 and 4502: Leadership Major Capstone-</b> Culminating course for senior undergraduate students in the Leadership and Community Engagement Major.  |
| Spring<br>2021, '24, '25    | <b>EDUC 2500: Strategies for Social Change-</b> Serves as core course for undergraduate students across the university, especially for Leadership and Community Engagement Majors and Leadership Minors |
| Summer<br>2021              | <b>Pre-Collegiate Summer Institute-</b> Identity, Stories & Testimonios: Who we are, where we come from and why it matters. A course for high school students enrolled in the pre-collegiate program.   |
| Summer<br>2022              | <b>Pre-Collegiate Summer Institute-</b> College essay applications writing course for high school seniors enrolled in the pre-collegiate program.   |

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

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***School of Education-*** University of Colorado Boulder

Graduate Student of Color Collective. Member. (2018-2025)

Doctoral Mentorship Pathways Program – Mentor. (2020, 2021, 2022, 2023)

Graduate School Mentor. The Graduate School. University of Colorado, Boulder. (2019)

School of Education Doctoral Student Finalist Weekend Volunteer (2020)

Building Committee. School of Education . (2019)

***Community Service (Boulder, Denver)***

Boettcher Scholar Alumni Board (2015-2017) and Class Representative (2017-Present)

School Accountability Committee. DCIS-Fairmont. Parent Representative (Elected). (2023- Present).

Letras de Colores – Multilingual Education School Accountability Committee. DCIS- Fairmont. Parent Representative. (2024-Present).

Parent-Teacher Association. DCIS-Fairmont. Parent Member. (2024-Present).

Multilingual Education- District Accountability Committee. Denver Public Schools. (2024- Present).

Our Voices, Our Power United Collective. Member. (2024-Present)

Student Voices and Leadership- Challenge 5280. Denver Public Schools. Judge. (2020, 2022)

Bilingual Generation. Alumni Advisor. (2022-2023)

Montessori on Wheels. Member of the Board of Directors. (2022-2023)

Moonshot EdVentures, Advisor. (2021)

Keeping the DREAM Alive Conference Series (Planning Committee Member 2012, 2013, Co-Chair 2014, 2015, 2017 and Founding Board Member for 501c3 non-profit status 2017-2019)

Queens of Hip-Hop, Documentarian, Denver, CO and Uberlandia, Brazil . (2018-2019)

Lumina Funded- Denver College Attainment Network Collective Impact (2015-2016)

Ford Funded- Corridors of College Success Collective Impact (2015-2016)

College Summit Alumni, Alumni Leader, Writing Coach and Writing Coach Coordinator (2004, 2006, 2009-2014)

Pi Lambda Chi Latina Sorority, Inc.- Epsilon Chapter, Co-founder (est. 2006), President (2009-2010), Alumna Mentor (2025)

### ***National Service***

Board Member. United We Dream, Dreamer Educational Empowerment Program Advisory Board (2015-2016)

Pi Lambda Chi Latina Sorority, Inc., National Board Representative. (2010-2011); Alumna Association Member (2021-2023)

### **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

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American Educational Research Association (AERA)

*Divisions and Special Interest Groups:*

Graduate Student Representative (elected) – Grassroots Community and Youth Organizing for Educational Justice – 2023-2025

Grassroots Community and Youth Organizing for Educational Justice –Member (2017- Present).

Indigenous People's of the America's – Member (2018- Present).

Division G – Social Context of Education – Member (2017 –Present).

International Society of the Learning Sciences (ISLS)

Member (2020- Present)

URBAN Research Network

National Planning Team. 2019 – 2024.

Communications Coordinator. Colorado-Node. 2022-2024

Summer Community Based Research Institute Participant and Co-Facilitator 2024

Colorado Node Conference Assistant Coordinator. URBAN Colorado. 2017-2018

## **HONORS AND AWARDS**

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The Bilingual Generation. Denver Families Collective. (2022)

Iterative Space Summer Residency Fellowship (2021)

Young Aspiring Americans for Social and Political Activism Book Scholarship Award 2019

Learning Sciences and Human Development Fellowship (2017)

Sheridan School District 2 Appreciation Award (2016)

Anti-Defamation League Sturm Fellow Leadership Program Fellow (2015)

Swanee Hunt Leadership Award- Denver Foundation (2015)

Pioneer in Action Award- DU Student Life Division and Diversity Action Team (2007)

Joe Camp Award for Positive Social Change- DU Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning (CCESL) (2007)

Gates Millennium Scholarship Recipient (2005- 2010)

Boettcher Foundation Scholarship Recipient (2005-2009)

Honorary Puksta Scholar (2006-2008)

## **EDUCATION CONSULTING EXPERIENCE**

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Consultant. Office of Science Education. Denver Public Schools. 2023

Consultant. Latin American Center. University of Denver. 2017

Consultant. Climb Higher Colorado. Rose Community Foundation. 2016

## **PHILANTHROPIC GRANTS AND FUNDING**

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Rose Community Foundation. Keeping the Dream Alive. 2017. \$5,000

Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative, INSPiRE, 2015 – (Requested) \$217,680- Funded after my departure from the organization

Latino Community Foundation of Colorado, INSPiRE, 2015 – (Requested) \$22, 694 – Funded after my departure from the organization.

Chinook Fund, INSPiRE, 2015 – (Requested) \$4,000 - Funded after my departure from the organization



**RELEVANT EXPERIENCE**

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**Indigenous Science and Foodways Coordinator**

April 2025- Present

**Spirit of the Sun**

Denver, CO

**Adjunct Lecturer**

January 2025- May 2025

**School of Education, University of Colorado - Boulder**

Boulder, CO

**Co-Founder and Chief Financial Officer**

August 2015- May 2016

**INSPIRE (501(c)3 Non-Profit Startup)**

Commerce City, CO

**Outreach and Access Coordinator:**

November 2013- July 2015

**Statewide Parent Engagement and ASSET Education****College In Colorado; An agency within the Colorado Department of Higher Education**

Denver, CO

**Community Organizer/ Higher Education Access Alliance Coordinator**

August 2011- October 2013

**Together Colorado (Formerly Metro Organizations for People)**

Denver, CO

**Incubator Assistance**

November 2010- July 2011

**Businesses United in Lending and Development (BUILD)**

Washington, DC

**Summer Youth Case Manager**

June 2009- October 2010

**Summer Youth Employment Program, Denver Housing Authority**

Denver, CO

**Youth Organizer**

June 2006- May 2009

**Metro Organizations for People**

Denver, CO

**RESEARCH METHODS TRAINING**

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Quantitative: STATA, Excel

Qualitative: DEDOOSE, MAXGDA, Qualtrics, Indigenous Methodologies

**LANGUAGES**

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Fully Bilingual Spanish (Mexico/ US-Southwest) and English (US-Southwest)

Beginner – Nahuatl (Huasteca Dialect)