

Learning Sciences Brown Bag Colloquium Series
-Co-Sponsored by MPES-

Manuel Espinoza – The University of Colorado at Denver
Thursday, October 8, 12:30-1:30 pm, Annenberg 303



Crucibles and Intangibles: Thinking/ Writing about Dignity and the Educational Process

What role - if any - could educational dignity play in bearing the ethical and pedagogical imperatives of the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* rulings of the mid-1950s? As a staple concept of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), we can emphatically state that dignity is "an expression, perhaps the most prominent in the history of man's [sic] self-reflection, of self-evaluation." Domestically, the use of dignity as a precept in constitutional interpretation is extensive. Socially, it is a "symbol of demand" for the presence of certain kinds of treatment and the absence of others. Yet, the idea and language of dignity are largely absent from current educational policy discourse. Through a discussion of educational dignity - *the profound sense of self-worth that emanates from intellectually substantial and interpersonally affirming pedagogical encounters in, among other places, public school classrooms* - Dr. Espinoza will explore the ways that a social interactional approach to educational dignity, one that can identify the sources of dignity within the educational process, could rejuvenate the conversation regarding the constitutionally fundamental character of quality education for all persons.

Manuel Luis Espinoza is an Associate Professor at the University of Colorado at Denver in the School of Education and Human Development, where he works on issues of learning and civil rights. He is a child of desegregation (*Keyes v. Denver School District No. 1, 1973*) and a Chicano ethnographer and philosopher of education working in the scholarly tradition that emerged during the 20th century struggle against racism in the United States. Building on his work as a postdoctoral fellow with the National Academy of Education (2012-2013), he and his undergraduate research team are developing a social interactional and legal approach to the study of learning and educational dignity.

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