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### Description

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### Keywords

Foucault, teacher education, teachers of color

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# Biopower, disciplinary power, and the production of the 'good Latino/a teacher'

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This inquiry explores who is the 'good teacher of color'. Through Michel Foucault's notion of biopower and disciplinary power, the analysis attempts to problematize the subject-position of 'teacher of color' by exploring how a Latino intern and a Latina intern negotiated their subjectivity in a large diverse school district. Participants' construction of subjectivity was found to be located within the nexus of the school district, the university, and the Latino counter-discourse through which biopower and disciplinary power operated.

**Keywords:** Foucault; teacher education; teachers of color

The lack of teachers of color is a national urgency in the United States (Sleeter & Thao, 2007). The trickle-down effect of this urgency is illustrated in the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education's (NCATE) – an agency that evaluates and accredits teacher education programs in the US – requirement that teacher-education programs demonstrate diversity in its faculty and student population. This effect is also illustrated in school districts' innovative campaigns to hire and recruit teachers of color. Mahrouse (2005) describes and unpacks assumptions about teachers of color that motivate this movement, including the belief that, as role models, teachers of color possess special skills and characteristics. In her review of the literature and analysis of teachers of color as role models, she suggests that for teachers of color, 'their identities are invariably tied to their race' (p. 32), no matter how they are constructed or the quality of their work. Yet, there are still questions to be answered: How are these special skills and characteristics constructing teachers of color as role models recognized by the dominant white society? What conditions determine and name their success? Who is the 'good teacher of color' and how are they constructed through relations of power?

This analysis deconstructs the concept of teachers of color as role models by analyzing the conditions of power naming the 'good' Latino (male of Latin American descent) and Latina (female of Latin American descent) teacher (referred to as Latino/a teacher in this inquiry) within the specific context of a partnership program between a

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teacher-education program and a local school district. By applying Foucauldian (1979/1975; 1990/1976; 2003/1976) concepts of biopower and disciplinary power, we illustrate how Latino/a teachers are deemed 'successful'. We describe how, in this context, the 'good Latino/a teacher' is positioned at the nexus of biopower and disciplinary power between a school district, a university, and a Latino counter-discourse. We demonstrate how such a positioning both limits and opens up possibilities for the teachers of color in this study.

This analysis serves as an entry point into a Foucauldian critique of how biopower and disciplinary power work to construct the 'good Latino teacher'. We focus on the construction of race, but gender is ever present. Feder (2007) suggests that like a 'reversible figure-ground' drawing used by Gestalt psychologist, there is difficulty in '“seeing” both race and gender simultaneously, even as the production or operation of one kind of difference actively informs another' (p. 90). While we focus this analysis on race, gender is actively being constructed as well, working in and on the construction of race. There is a looking back and forth between race and gender in this analysis, even as the focus remains on the race construction of 'the good Latino/a teacher' as 'role model'.

We begin with a description of the context and methodology for this study. This is followed by a discussion of biopower and disciplinary power and then a description of these powers and how the school district, the university, and the Latino community enact them. Two case studies illustrate how the nexus of these powers come together to define the 'good Latino/a teacher'.

## Context for the analysis

A school district and university in the Northwestern U.S. negotiated a partnership to recruit more bilingual and Latino/a teachers. The negotiated program recruited bilingual and primarily Latino/a para-professionals with a bachelor's degree that had been working in the district and who had expressed interest in becoming licensed teachers. The goal was to place recruited teachers in schools with high numbers of bilingual/racially diverse communities. Placing such teachers in dominant white, middle and upper class schools to enrich the experience of such students and communities was never considered.

The selected seven candidates enrolled in a Master of Arts in Teaching program. In addition to their tuition being paid-in-full by the school district, the teachers-in-training also received an internship and an emergency teaching license. The emergency license allowed candidates to teach an entire school year while completing teacher-education courses and receiving two-thirds pay of a fully contracted teacher.

The authors of this paper were primary professors for this program; they interacted with all students both as instructors and as supervisors during different teaching practicum.

## Methodology

All students signed informed consent for this research. Data collection began in the first semester of the five-semester program. Data was collected to chronicle the journey of

students of color becoming teachers in the presence of whiteness and diversity. Data collected included written formative assessments based upon required assignments, online responses to course activities, biographical writings, reflections on teaching units, anecdotal notes during class sessions, and one formal audio-recorded interview. Biographical writings included a self-interview (Phillips & Carr, 2006) and the creation and narration of a life map illustrating discourses influencing each participant's decision to become a teacher. Interview questions were developed based upon a review of data collected up to the mid-study point. Students were asked to describe in more detail perspectives or stories found in the data. We also maintained an annotated timeline of all meetings and interactions between the school district and ourselves pertaining to the partnership program. This timeline provided context for the study. We conducted formal on-going analysis twice during the data collection phase, at the end of the second semester and third semester, and completed final data analysis and interpretation when the program ended.

We followed Clarke's (2005) guide for situational mapping and analysis, a postmodern form of grounded theory. During on-going discourse analysis, we constructed 'messy/working' situational maps which included 'all the analytically pertinent human and nonhuman, material, and symbolic/discursive elements of a particular situation as framed by those in it and by the analyst' (p. 87). We developed maps for each student, using all collected data. We worked through these maps first individually and then together, creating and recreating several versions. 'These relational maps help the analyst to decide which stories – which relations – to pursue' (p. 102). After each situational map, we wrote and then rewrote analytic memos as we continued to add to the situational maps until consistent relations in the data were established.

Through the use of situational mapping and analysis, patterns of biopower and disciplinary power's work to construct the 'good Latino/a teacher' as 'role model' in this specific context and scenario emerged. While these patterns are evidenced in all of the data, we develop two case studies as working illustrations of biopower and disciplinary power based upon these patterns in this study. The two case studies are representative of the data as a whole; they are not meant to create a binary, but rather to reflect one another in demonstrating how biopower and disciplinary power function in constructing racial and teacher identity.

Definitions of biopower and disciplinary power and the relationship of each to the school district, the university, and the Latino counter-discourse follow.

### *Biopower*

Biopower is power that attempts to control a population otherwise considered a threat to a dominant race. In her genealogy of race and sex, McWhorter (2004) describes how, by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, biology had established the 'idea that bodies were essentially developmental', an idea that had a 'huge impact on all sorts of disciplines, practices, and institutions' (p. 44). Measurement and statistical analysis established norms of human development. Those who did not fit the norms were considered 'deviant', resulting in the production of race and racism (Foucault, 1990/1976; 2003/1976). Biopower works, then, to control 'deviant' or 'abnormal' populations. By using statistical analysis and

developmental measurements to establish such norms, biopower wrests its authority through the use of 'science'.

### *Disciplinary power*

While biopower seeks to control a population, disciplinary power works specifically at the site of the individual. Disciplinary power 'centers on the body, produces individualizing effects, and manipulates the body as a source of forces that have to be rendered both useful and docile' (Foucault, 2003/1976, p. 249). Discipline as a function of power 'makes possible the operation of a relational power that sustains itself by its own mechanism and which ... substitutes the uninterrupted play of calculated gazes' (Foucault, 1979/1975, p. 177). The gaze normalizes the individual through comparison, and disciplines anyone outside of the norm. For example, King (1995) illustrates how 'teacher' is established through the work of disciplinary power. He identifies techniques used to regulate the body, time, and space, resulting in disciplined teachers who conform to norms and assure the proper transfer of knowledge to students.

### *Biopower, disciplinary power, and the school district*

McWhorter's (2004) descriptions of biopower and the construction of race as a function of social control through the identification of, and the subsequent goal of, normalizing deviant individuals, are useful in recognizing the local school district's drive to recruit and hire Latino/a teachers. Statistical analyses measures how Latino/a students, clustered in high-poverty schools, are failing to meet required standards in almost every content area. The same kind of analyses demonstrates how schools with higher concentrations of Latino/a students incur more violent actions and have higher rates of expulsions and gang activity. The growing Latino population is situated as a threat to the district for these reasons. Latino/a teachers who have succeeded in overcoming their own urges and desires otherwise considered deviant from norms are positioned as worthy role models, capable of controlling the Latino/a and other racial minority students (Mahrouse, 2005).

Normalization of biopower at the macro-level functions by passing and enforcing educational policies whose aim is to influence statistical norms of the population. Normalization is next implemented at the local level through the school district's disciplinary power and is then enforced via teachers. For example, a primary disciplinary function of the newly recruited interns is the charge to teach and enforce the English language. Being fluent in English is regarded as the norm; subsequently, it is one way to control the deviant population.

### *Biopower, disciplinary power, and the university*

The university is situated in a State where the Latino population represents the fastest growing population and where the State government dictates that the recruitment and hiring of teachers of color be a priority. Within this same context, the university sought

NCATE accreditation. It had few faculty of color in its employment, and the teacher-education program lacked even a single student of color enrolled in its graduate program. Biopower's construction of race is evident at the university. Like the school district, the university expresses a value of diversity through its mission statement. Both institutions proposed people of color as teachers to challenge prevailing stereotypes and to act as role models to students of color (Mahrouse, 2005). Thus, partnering with a local school district in the recruitment of Latino/a teachers became a necessary opportunity for the university.

The very goal of teacher education or 'training' is the internalization of acceptable behaviors of the 'good teacher' and the acculturation of the teacher-candidate into the dominant culture of schooling (Alsup, 2006; Britzman, 2003; Weber & Mitchel, 1995). The work of disciplinary power is, therefore, prominent through the teacher education program. Specifically, the university's job was to train the partnership-program interns in methodologies for teaching English to non-native speakers, as well as to ensure that all interns met licensure requirements as mandated by the State.

Both the university and the school district did the work of surveillance, and a gate-keeping system was established, with specific assessment points to determine if an intern might continue in the program. The university and the school district provided supervisors to observe and mentor the interns, and stayed in contact to report on how the interns were progressing towards desired goals.

### *Biopower, disciplinary power, and the Latino counter-discourse*

Latino discourse works to fashion the identity of the interns in this study. This discourse names the 'good Latino teacher' as one who nurtures bicultural identity and voice, actively supports Latino/a families and cultural communities, and works to grow future Latino/a political leaders through the work of advocacy (Darder, 1995). This discourse positions the 'good Latino/a teacher' as one who practices critical pedagogy (Darder, 1995; Freire, 1984; Giroux, 1983) in order to 'assist students to engage the world within its complexity and fullness in order to reveal the possibilities of new ways of constructing through and action beyond the original state' (Darder, 1995, p. 330). This discourse also gives value to the assumption of 'role model', where the teacher of color is a role model because he or she is able to understand oppression and the experiences of the bicultural student. We refer to this as a *counter-discourse* since it stands in opposition to biopower and disciplinary power discourses seeking to normalize the Latino population.

Biopower functions through the school district and the university to define the 'good Latino/a teacher' as a role model of one who has 'overcome' delinquencies associated with their race. Under biopower, test scores, dropout rates, and the number of disciplinary referrals written statistically 'prove' a successful teacher. The disciplinary work of the university and the school district seek to normalize the 'good Latino/a teacher' through specific training so that they do not 'backslide' into deviant desires and behaviors as defined by biopower. The counter-discourse of the Latino community fashions the same interns into those who embody critical pedagogy and nurture the bicultural voice and identity of Latino/a students.



Diego, one of the program's selected candidates, demonstrates how biopower and disciplinary power function to fashion acceptable teacher identity. Diego is positioned, and accepts this positioning, within the nexus of the school district, university, and Latino counter-discourses, thereby becoming the 'good Latino teacher'. Another selected candidate, Elena, is not positioned in the same way as Diego; her acts of defiance set her outside of the rings of power. The subject positions of Diego and Elena both open up and limit possibilities of who they can become as raced or socially constructed teachers (Ehlers, 2008; Feder, 2007).

## Introduction to Diego

Diego arrived in the US when he was 12 years old and commenced working in migrant agricultural labor with his parents. He began the eighth grade without knowing any English. Diego is articulate in English and proud of his Mexican heritage. His mother taught him that teaching is 'caring for others and the community'. A constant discourse for Diego is maintaining Mexican cultural pride while living in the US. Diego regularly used phrases such as 'passion for students', 'challenging assumptions', 'promoting change', and the 'need to prove [the dominant and racist society] wrong'. He writes, 'As a future teacher, I am strongly motivated to support unprivileged individuals ... to overcome some of the barriers that stood in the way of many'.

When Diego wrote about recent immigration policies in the US, he noted how these policies position communities in a 'chaotic cycle where stereotypes of earlier years have come to live again'. Diego believes in the value of education, teaching and living diversity, advocating for unity, while nurturing the cultural identity of Latino/a students to overcome these injustices. Diego finds his voice in critical pedagogy: 'Critical pedagogy will give my students the right to feel empowered; I can promote democracy and create a trusting environment for learning to take place. I realize teaching is my calling!'

Diego lived his convictions in his role as a migrant para-professional for the school district; as an intern, he maintained this role in a limited capacity. Although Diego was entitled to be reimbursed for his work as a migrant para-professional, he did not submit his hours to receive pay. Diego's strong sense of responsibility, destiny to promote change and advocate for justice is a key discourse that he internalizes. This internalization positions him as the 'good Latino teacher' by the school district, the university, and the Latino counter-discourse.

### *Diego: The fashioning of the 'good Latino teacher' through biopower and disciplinary powers*

Biopower appears to position Diego as a salient example of one who has risen above the delinquency of the Latino race as defined by biopower through statistical analyses. For this reason, he is viewed by the school district and the university as the ideal role model and Latino teacher. While Latino students seem to populate negative district statistical categories (for example, 'drop-out rates'), Diego's positive image is important as a role



model. His fluent English places the white English-speaking communities of the school district at ease. Having attended a well-respected local private university, Diego is viewed as 'safe', as having overcome what the white dominant culture may view as his more dangerous migrant background. Diego is willing to agree to the district's many requests for volunteer-hours, and he is willing to work without pay when the focus of his involvement is toward the Latino community.

Likewise, Diego appears positioned favorably by the Latino community and is viewed as an ideal role model for Latino/a youth. The school district, acting through biopower, views a 'role model' as being necessary for controlling Latino/a students, acculturating them into society through the acquisition of English language skills, and disciplining their otherwise perceived delinquent behavior. For the Latino counter-discourse, however, a 'role model' is key in empowering Latino/a youth, assisting them in their bicultural identities, growing their voice, encouraging Latino/a political power through nurturing future community leaders, and connecting with families and the Latino community. Additionally, Diego's acquisition of critical pedagogy gives him a common language among his Latino/a colleagues in the district.

Disciplinary power is 'deploy[ed] by individual subjects who direct their power inward, applying it to their own bodies, their own selves' (Feder, 2007, p. 61). Diego occupies the site of role model both as one who has 'overcome' deviancy and as one sustaining bicultural identity and voice. Power happens and exists in tensions between competing goals, and resistance is integral part of any event (McWhorter, 2004). This resistance is seen in the way Diego internalizes the counter-discourse of the Latino community and embraces the subversive goals of Latino power even as he internalizes the district's discourse of a role model who has overcome deviancy.

### *Diego and event of power (1)*

Diego's entrance into the partnership program is one event where the competing disciplinary powers of the school district, the university, and the Latino community merge to ignore gate-keeping points applied to typical candidates. By ignoring standard practices, all groups ensured Diego's acceptance and continued participation in the program.

The joint policy of the district and the university requires all candidates successfully pass a required basic-knowledge exam in order to be considered a candidate for the program. While a clause allows this standard be excused under extraordinary circumstances, the exam must be passed in order for a student to progress to the second semester of the program. An 'absolute' requirement is that all exams (including content area exams) be passed prior to internships. Despite Diego having met none of the requirements, the school district, university, and the Latino community advocated for his entrance and continuation in the program.

Although the biopower and disciplinary powers of the competing institutions and community may define 'role model' with varying nuances, Diego is positioned as the 'good Latino teacher' because he meets their differing goals, even if the goals vary. As one white male administrator stated early in the admission's process, 'Diego is someone

we need in education'. And, while this position privileges Diego, it also positions Diego in a place of vulnerability.

Diego internalized the discourse of the 'role model', and this affords him a privilege. But this same privilege granted by the district turns on itself becoming 'racist', by denying him support necessary to pass the exams and secure tenure as a legitimate teacher. Without proper teacher-certification, Diego cannot share the same benefits as a licensed teacher. The school district maintains his services under emergency licensing, but may also remove him with little due process. His failure to pass the exams is also a failure to 'prove them [dominant white power] wrong' and to live up to the role-model status of the Latino counter-discourse.

The regulated gaze of disciplinary power 'relies ultimately on internalization of standards, rules, and norms' (Feder, 2007, p. 61). Butler (1997) writes, 'A power *exerted* on a subject, subjection is nevertheless a *power assumed* by the subject, an assumption that constitutes the instrument of that subject's becoming' (p. 11, emphasis in original). Diego, as a racial subject, becomes the 'good Latino teacher' through discursively constituted identity. This identity, negotiated between competing disciplinary powers, acts to both limit and open up possibilities.

### *Diego and events of power (2)*

Diego's first teaching assignment in a local suburban middle school was to occur while he was still employed as a full time para-professional with the school district. In a series of power moves, a Latina administrator arranged for Diego to complete this teaching assignment during the summer migrant program. This arrangement involved a last minute cancelation of the middle school placement, a change in supervision, and an 'incomplete' in the corresponding teacher-education course. The Latina administrator became both Diego's mentor and supervisor for the assignment, and Diego completed the teaching assignment in the migrant program.

Gazes of surveillance selectively ignore when the end-goals of power are achieved. Framing this event through biopower, it demonstrates the subversive nature of the Latino counter-discourse power, which, while functioning under the school district's surveillance, worked to, arranged for, the direct mentorship of Diego, by a chosen candidate for Latino leadership. The school district, as a function of biopower, looked the other way: their goal remained the control and normalizing of Latino/a students; the change in placement furthered this goal. The university waived its policies as a way to support their graduate student of color, Diego, a role model for migrant students.

### *Embodiment and becoming*

Diego constructs his 'own existence through the adoption of various practices' (Mahrouse, 2005, p. 38). Yet who Diego becomes as a teacher is 'constrained in advance by a regime of truth that decides what will and will not be a recognizable form of being' (Butler, 2005, p. 22). Yes, the district sends him to special training in Mexico and waives standard practices—because he is the 'good Latino teacher' and they need him as a role

model to control Latino/a youth. In Ehlers' (2008) words, the 'subject is called into being through various processes of constraint that determine and set the limits of the enunciative possibilities of the subject ... one must occupy the site within which one is placed' (p. 338).

The biopower and disciplinary powers of the school district, the university, and the Latino counter-discourse place Diego at a particular site in this particular context; these combined powers script his story and define the site of Diego, as the 'good Latino teacher'.

In order to perform the 'good Latino teacher', Diego must stay within the nexus of powers by internalizing and embodying competing goals. What happens then when a Latino/a teacher resists these norms? What might such 'acts of disciplinary defiance' (Ehlers, 2008, p. 342) mean?

Elena's acts of disciplinary defiance threaten the district and Latino counter-discourse of the 'good Latino/a teacher'. By resisting these norms, she disrupts being recognizable, as Latina and teacher; she does not occupy the place disciplinary power has constructed for her. Elena illustrates the

... various and contradictory discourses that inform conceptualizations of race, and the subsequent methods of control that are instituted to maintain subjects within certain racial designations [creating] fissures that can result in contestations of power. (Ehlers, 2008, p. 342)

## Introduction to Elena

Elena is a second-generation Latina, and older than other participants in the program. Elena is the eldest daughter of 12 children. Her family migrated from Mexico to Texas where her father taught her to pick cotton. She harvested crops every summer between the ages of 5 and 19. In Elena's words, 'You have to work for what you want; nothing is free'.

Elena is an outspoken advocate for English Language Learners (that is, students who are learning English in addition to a native language). Elena's siblings were often regarded as less than bright in school:

[F]our of my five brothers were retained twice in different grades ... not because they could not learn, but because they did not speak and understand the language they were forced to use ... How cruel was that?

Elena is not timid in sharing the anger she still feels: '... [N]ot toward anyone in particular, but at the social structures that permeated society and in school cultural in particular'. For this reason, she is vocal in criticizing district practices that do not, in her opinion, support ELL.

Elena resisted the research she read in her university classes that supports the teaching of a native language while learning English, and she believes English immersion benefits English Language Learners the most. While she is proud of her cultural background and views it as an asset in building relationships with children for whom this is a shared experience, Elena is opposed to being a teacher of the Spanish language and only speaks to children in Spanish when absolutely necessary. Elena feels that all ELL

children should listen to her advice because she understands the migrant life, has risen above upbringing's expectations, and is now successful as an American. Elena's resistance to advocate for the maintenance of language, cultural identities and leadership in Latino communities gives her 'elder' status rather than that of a 'role model'. She writes:

I consider myself 'Americanized' because even though some of my grandparents were born in another country, my parents were born in the U.S. and so was I. In addition, even though I spoke only Spanish when I started school, I learned English and considered myself an American ... state tests are in English, college entrance exams are in English, business applications are in English, etc. and English is the language ... to be academically proficient.

### *Elena and events of power (1)*

Given Elena's migrant childhood background, ability to speak Spanish and to communicate well in English, her advocacy for English Language Learners, and the fact that Elena has passed all required exams, it would seem she would be considered a prime candidate for the teacher education program. Yet, she is not positioned at the nexus of the school district, university, and Latino community powers; therefore, she does not appear suitable by dominant white power as the 'good Latina teacher' or as a role model.

During the application review process, white and Latino male administrators noted Elena's adverse nature. These administrators characterized her as too 'outspoken' and as lacking the 'nurturing' abilities that befit a female elementary teacher (Walkerdine, 1992; Weber & Mitchel, 1995). Ehlers (2008) notes that

... within disciplinary panoptic power, vision is central and privileged ... visible corporeal cues become the principal means through which subjects are individualized, hierarchized, and regulated. It is the body, then, that bears the limits of subjectivity (p. 340).

As a result of these commanding acts of disciplinary defiance, Elena is not acknowledged by district officials as a potential teacher. It does not matter that she is an ardent supporter of ELL, nor does it matter that she holds a strong belief in the ability to command English as necessary for success (as is consistent with biopower and disciplinary powers of the district).

Elena also is not recognized by the Latino counter-discourse as a potential teacher. She does not speak of empowering Latino/a children through the nurturing and maintaining of cultural identity, and, in some instances, she even refuses to speak Spanish. Elena is not as passionate about educating future Latino/a leaders as much as she is in making sure Latino/a children can grow up to be successful Americans. Disciplined by the Latino counter-discourse, Elena is not recognizable or positioned as the 'good Latina teacher'.

Elena's consideration for the program occurred only as a result of the university's intervention. Once the final interview process for program participation began, the university only had six (not including Elena) of the ten promised interviews scheduled. The university 'pushed back', at the district, hinting at the need to drop the partnership agreement if they did not have at least seven candidates for the program.

‘Pushing back’ is a function of biopower—as the university needed NCATE evidence of ethnic diversity, in addition to funding the program. To meet the minimum of seven candidates, the university found one Latina official who supported Elena’s application to the program and Elena was admitted into the program. Elena, however, remains in the vulnerable position of being unrecognized by the disciplinary powers of both the school district and the Latino community.

### *Elena and events of power (2)*

The program required a short teaching practicum at one grade level, prior to the full year internship at a second grade level. After successfully completing this teaching practicum at an elementary school, Elena requested to complete her internship in a middle school. Several middle-level principals refused to interview her for an intern position based on poor district recommendations, thus jeopardizing her future in the program.

The university, along with a single advocate from the district, found an elementary principal who agreed to hire her as an intern. This, however, required Elena to re-do her short teaching practicum at the middle level prior to the elementary internship. While Elena was not happy about this situation, unlike Diego, she did not have the support or resources from the Latino counter-discourse, nor was she positioned as the ideal role model by the school district. Outside of these positions, she had little recourse; she repeated the teaching practicum.

Elena’s identity as a teacher is discursively fashioned through the disciplinary acts of the district, the university, and the Latino counter-discourse. It is ‘important to consider what are the normalizing conventions that police teacher identifications, [and] what are the dominant ideological frameworks whose gaze maintains particular psychosocial identifications of teaching’ (Atkinson, 2004, p. 388). Elena’s acts of disciplinary defiance (not acting or thinking like a ‘good Latina teacher’) place her outside of what is recognizable to those in power. She is policed by disciplinary powers; the goal is ‘normalization’ and alignment with recognizable images of ‘Latina’ and ‘teacher’.

Like Diego, who Elena is and who Elena can become depends upon the shifting positions made available through the disciplinary power of the school district, university, and Latino counter-discourse. These biopower and disciplinary powers work to create a recognizable ‘good Latina teacher’, and, without subjecting herself to these powers, Elena risks being unrecognizable, written completely out of the story of the ‘good Latino/a teacher’.

## **Discussion**

An examination of the process of how biopower and disciplinary powers work within the context of this school district, university and Latino counter-discourse illustrates how raced and teacher identity is normalized and rewarded. Foucault (1988) wrote, ‘the practices of the self, these practices are nevertheless not something that the individual invents by himself. They are patterns that he finds in his culture and which are proposed,



suggested and imposed on him by his culture, his society and his social group' (p. 11). Diego and Elena demonstrate this very notion. It is not critical what 'special skills' Diego and Elena might possess or what these 'special skills' might even be. What is critical is how they respond to imposed patterns of culture as exercised through biopower and disciplinary powers. Because Diego responds by enacting the imposed pattern of 'role model' as constructed by biopower and disciplinary power in this context, he is privileged as the 'good Latino teacher'. Ehler's (2008) analysis further supports this concept:

... racial identity is not a reflection of innerness but a retroactive fantasy that is always conditional on the subject enacting the very power that marks them: the formation and maintenance of subjectivity is premised on the individual being formed and *forming themselves* in relation to a normalized identity site and is, thus, always an *action* (2008, p. 343 Emphasis in original)

Our critique shows how 'Latino/a role model' is defined by biopower and disciplinary power, and how these powers construct a normalized and legitimized racial identity for the 'good Latino/a teacher'. This normalization serves to fashion an Other, in this study represented by Elena, who is unable to occupy the privilege position of 'role model' since she does not subjugate herself to the nexus of biopower and disciplinary power as enacted by the school district, university, and Latino/a counter-discourse.

Ehler (2008) continues her analysis, 'As a consequence, it is in the realm of the embodied performance(s) of racial norms that these very same norms can potentially be re-worked' (p. 343). While this analysis delineates the limits of subjectivity as defined through boundaries and overlapping circles of competing power, it also demonstrates the potential of Elena's acts of defiance, over time, reworking who can occupy the position of the 'good Latina teacher'. Elena's acts of defiance rupture the storyline of 'role model', troubling the discursive fashioning otherwise sustained through biopower and disciplinary power. For example, if as a teacher in the school district, Elena is a 'successful teacher' based upon biopower's definition of children passing state exams, then her otherwise perceived defiant acts may force a re-working of who can be the 'good Latina teacher'.

Additional analysis is necessary to further problematize these case studies. For example, positioning gender at the forefront in additional analysis would illustrate how disciplinary power constructs gender and embodies race in constructing 'the good Latino/a teacher'. This analysis is an attempt to critique, as Foucault expressed (as cited in Rabinow & Dreyfus, 1993), the 'form of power that applies itself to immediate everyday life, which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him' (p. 212). Diego and Elena depict the construction of the 'good Latino/a teacher'. They show how teachers of color are positioned and named as ever-changing subjects within a nexus of competing and shifting powers.

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