

(Re)Writing Migration Stories Across the UC

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Project Summary

The (Re)Writing Migration Stories Project, led by Dr. Laura Enriquez, aims to create a democratic educational space for individuals to develop a nuanced understanding of U.S. immigration policy and its impact on undocumented and mixed-status communities. It uses Healing Methodology to investigate the legal violence produced by immigration policies and healing produced through mobility across borders.

Launched in Fall 2023, the project engaged 23 UC Irvine students who were either undocumented immigrants or the U.S. citizen children of currently or formerly undocumented parents. Through testimonio, autoethnography, and art-making, we examined and contextualized our own narratives of growing up in an exclusionary socio-legal context to consider how our own and our family members' experiences inform our understanding of illegality and feelings of belonging. Eleven of the initial student participants then developed an art exhibit documenting key themes from our autoethnographic research. Our work together has shown us the critical possibilities that art-making holds to (re)imagine community and belonging from a highly politicized lived experience.

Impact

As 2024-2025 VOICE grant recipients, we expanded the reach of our project by arranging to exhibit our work and host workshops at three campuses: UC Irvine, UC Merced and UC San Diego. These activities successfully engaged over a hundred participants (consisting of students, staff, and faculty) in the creation of a democratic learning environment that promoted open and nuanced discourse about immigration-impacted communities. Our work has affirmed that art-based methods help people engage in conversation about complicated and emotional topics.