



Sentipensante (Sensing/Thinking) Pedagogy: Educating for Wholeness, Social Justice and Liberation

By Laura I. Rendón

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- * An inspirational and holistic approach to teaching by a renowned Latina scholar
- * Defines seven steps to unlocking the potential of teachers and their students
- * Deeply informed by the author's educational journey as a minority woman from a background of rural poverty

Laura Rendón is a scholar of national stature, known for her research on students of color and first-generation college students, and on the factors that promote and impede student success.

The motivation for the quest that Laura Rendón shares in this book was the realization that she, along with many educators, had lost sight of the deeper, relationship-centered essence of education, and lost touch with the fine balance between educating for academics and educating for life.

Her purpose is to reconnect readers with the original impulse that led them to become educators; and to help them rediscover, with her, their passion for teaching and learning in the service of others and for the well being of our society.

She offers a transformative vision of education that emphasizes the harmonic, complementary relationship between the *sentir* of intuition and the inner life and the *pensar* of intellectualism and the pursuit of scholarship; between teaching and learning; formal knowledge and wisdom; and between Western and non-Western ways of knowing. In the process she develops a pedagogy that encompasses wholeness, multiculturalism, and contemplative practice, that helps students transcend limiting views about themselves; fosters high expectations, and helps students to become social change agents.

She invites the reader to share her journey in developing sentipensante pedagogy, and to challenge seven entrenched agreements about education that act against wholeness and the appreciation of truth in all forms. She offers examples of her

own teaching and of the classroom practices of faculty she encountered along the way; as well as guidance on the challenges, rewards and responsibilities that anyone embarking on creating a new vision of teaching and learning should attend to.

Though based on the author's life work in higher education, her insights and approach apply equally to all teaching and learning contexts.

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By Laura I. Rendón **Bibliography**

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Editorial Review

Review

"For service-learning practitioners and scholars, *Sentipensante (Sensing/Thinking) Pedagogy* is one of those rare books that subtly but fundamentally alters the purpose and scope of our work. It is a book about the future of our community-based teaching, learning, and scholarship and the future of higher education. It is a future that is already upon us but one to which higher education has not effectively responded nor embraced. This is a book that recognizes that non-Western, non-traditional, highly diverse students and faculty increasingly are in higher education but not of higher education. Their ways of knowing and habits of being are not validated by the structures and cultures of the academy. Fundamental change is needed... Read this book. Read it now. Savor it and treasure it. If you are an educator who cares about the deeper public purposes of higher education; who cares about improving teaching and learning for an increasingly diverse student body; who cares about education as transformative, holistic, integrative, civic learning; who cares about the tenure-seeking woman of color as she enacts her faculty roles connected to social concerns and new ways of generating knowledge; who cares about changing the culture of higher education so it is better able to fulfill its academic and civic missions; and who cares about whether higher education two or three decades from now will be contributing meaningfully to solving social problems and building a more vibrant democracy – then read this book and put its wisdom into practice in your own work and lives as educators... Rendón's book, is the Pedagogy of the Oppressed for our time, bringing the lenses of feminist, postmodernist, anticolonial, and critical theory to bear on liberatory education." (*Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*)

"*Sentipensante Pedagogy* provides a helpful invitation and charitable contribution to the ongoing dialogue between different visions of pedagogy." (*Teaching Theology and Religion*)

"Challenging, inspiring, beautifully written, and unusual, this book calls readers to find ways to link mind and heart -- thinking and feeling -- to transform teaching and learning in higher education. I commend this book to readers. Laura Rendón has illustrated how one can unite one's deep beliefs, values, and feelings, with one's keen analytical and intellectual abilities. Many faculty members, and certainly many graduate students considering work in academe, are interested in how to shape careers where their passions and values are central, and how to find satisfactory and meaningful balance in their commitment to both the professional and personal dimensions of their lives. Laura Rendón's volume offers insights, examples, questions and inspiration that will help those grappling with such issues.

The book or any of its individual chapters can be used by individuals thinking through their own values and practice, in classes designed to prepare future faculty members, or in faculty development programs organizing dialogues about teaching and academic life...an important, thought-provoking, and unique addition to the literature on teaching, learning, and the academic life." (*The Review of Higher Education*)

"Rendón assists the transformation of teaching and learning in higher education into a balance, a harmony, between two concepts such as intellectualism and intuition, teaching and learning, the learner and the learned material, and Western and non-Western ways of knowing. She explores the need for a new dream of education, the experience of creating an integrative and consonant pedagogy, and the experience of using such a pedagogy rooted in social justice. Among specific discussions are learning from another's story, refashioning the dream, the courage to chart a different path, and sustaining the soul that embraces a different truth." (*Book News Inc*)

"This masterpiece...is about inclusion, one in which faculty and students become one in recognizing and accepting their responsibility [for] social justice and liberation. All who [teach] must read this book. It should be considered required material in diversity, social sciences and education courses. If I must select a word to describe this book, it would be *Magnífico! (Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education)*

"Teaching the whole student begins in clarity of language, but to even glimpse the possibility of stepping beyond knowledge (facts, figures, theories) toward the cultivation of wisdom, it must honor means of communicating that lie beyond language and do so with the same commitment to clarity?that is to say, honesty?that Nida's essay calls for. Rendón's pedagogical model takes a courageous step in that direction; hence, the amount of attention given to it in this issue." (James Rhem, Executive Editor, The National Teaching and Learning Forum (referring to Volume 18, Issue 2, February 2009, that is largely devoted "Sentipensante Pedagogy"))

"What would happen if educators eschewed the silent agreements that govern institutions and established a new set of working assumptions that honor the fullness of humanity? In this visionary study, Laura Rendón lays the groundwork for a pedagogy that bridges the gap between mind and heart to lead students and educators toward a new conception of teaching and learning. Grounding her work in interviews of scholars who are already transforming the educational landscape, Rendón invites the reader to join a burgeoning movement toward more inclusive classrooms that honor each learner's identity and support education for social justice. Her book is vital reading for anyone seeking to create more inclusive institutions for students and teachers alike." (*Diversity & Democracy (AAC&U)*)

"Laura Rendón has done a beautiful thing. She has mindfully, thoughtfully and with great clarity seen and named our familiar habits of thought, belief and practice that limit the dynamic evolution of how we lift up, honor, and educate the precious hearts, minds and bodies of our children.

Laura has sifted these complex threads through the lens of her fine mind and good heart, offering us a clear and colorful tapestry of guidance and companionship on a fresh, imperative educational adventure.

We cannot ever honestly claim to nourish a new generation of souls unless we ourselves are actively and vitally alive and well. Through beginner's mind, a contagious sense of wonder, and a deeply courageous vision for what is possible, she offers us the ultimate gift of education: The unlimited capacity to grow a world of human beings deeper, stronger, wiser, and more loving." (Wayne Muller, founder of Bread for the Journey, ordained minister, therapist, and author of the national best-seller *Legacy of the Heart*)

"Rendón has written a pedagogic masterpiece with immense potential to transform teaching and learning in the K-12 system. Her pedagogy gives voice to what teachers have been yearning for in their hearts and minds." (Héctor Garza, President)

"In this highly inspiring book, Laura Rendón offers a road map of what is possible if we are willing to embrace a vision of education that balances the inner life and ways of knowing and thinking with the outer life of just action and compassionate service to the world. She challenges us to embrace a pedagogy of wholeness that has the potential of totally transforming our schools and academies by reclaiming them as soulful places of relationship-centered learning and teaching rooted in social justice and equity. Through her moving and authentic examples of herself and others, Rendón creates promise, hope and inspiration by giving us the framework and tools to make this vision of education a reality." (Linda Lantieri, Director, The Inner Resilience Program and author of *Building Emotional Intelligence: Techniques for Cultivating Inner Strength in Children*)

“Reading this book is like taking a drink of cool, clear, fresh water?both refreshing and invigorating. Professor Rendón calls us to examine how higher education is and has been, and to envision how it is becoming and can be. A pedagogy that embraces wholeness, social justice, and liberation will prepare students to create and sustain a world in which social equity and justice, economic sufficiency, and a healthy planet?the triple bottom line in sustainable community building?can be achieved. And if we are to foster student success, the journey toward wholeness and authenticity must begin with we who teach, learn, lead, and serve in higher education.” (Stephen K. Mittelstet, President, and V. Sue Jones, Director, Center for Renewal & Wholeness in Higher Education)

“Anyone who has yearned for a fresh vision of teaching and learning for the 21st century should read *Sentipesante*. Laura Rendón has written a book that is both deeply personal and prophetic. She balances scholarly familiarity with educational theory and history with the demographic reality that is already upon us: the changing composition of our classrooms on all measures of diversity. This is the future, and much of the power of *Sentipesante* derives from the fact that the experience of all Rendón’s interviewees is in a range of public institutions. Written as a manifesto to her fellow faculty and kindred administrative spirits, Laura recognizes that not all will be up for the personal and professional challenge that this remaking of the academy entails. For those who are, it offers practical advice, courage, and inspiration. Like all work at the intersection of diversity and contemplative practice, this is a book that will change lives.” (Thomas B. Coburn, President)

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About the Author

Laura I. Rendón is Professor of Higher Education at the University of Texas at San Antonio. She is also a consultant and speaker on topics related to contemplative pedagogy and its applications in multicultural and social justice educational settings, and is nationally known for her work related to college access, retention, and graduation of low-income, first-generation students.

Mark Nepo is a poet and philosopher who has taught in the fields of poetry and spirituality for over thirty years. Nominated for the Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize, he has written several books. His *The Exquisite Risk* was cited by *Spirituality & Health Magazine* as one of the Best Spiritual Books of 2005. He now serves as a Program Officer for the Fetzer Institute in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

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