

What is a high quality education for urban students? Education for Liberation: Education as the practice of freedom

Under No Child Left Behind and due to large amounts of money being used to support charters and vouchers (Sirota, 2014) as well as to influence school boards (Brown, 2014), the move to “reform” public education by privatization has advanced. School reformers talk about a “high quality education” (Hoosiers for Quality Education, n.d) provided by “great schools” with “great teachers.” Although terms like “great” and “quality” sound good, school reformers offer no detailed definition of a quality education beyond test scores and Indiana’s A-F school and corporation accountability grading system.

However, this advancement and growth has an organized opposition. Those who support the public/civic purpose, not a private purpose of public education, point to 25 years of research on charters (Fitzgerald, 2015). The results of this research are rather blasé. Many charters fare no better than regular schools. This is alarming since traditional schools continue to struggle.

So, it is clear, schooling options are serving the needs of some, but not all children. The current “choice” idea reflects a false binary. It promotes a “one or the other” mentality that avoids open discussions on the limitations of either option. “School choice” justifies the kind of individualism and competition which undermines the common good (Loflin, 2012) cultural and racial minorities need to thrive. It also dodges the possibilities of a 3rd alternative, an option which is aimed specifically at helping urban centers engage those neither public nor public charter schools are reaching in the form of students and families who resist and reject schooling--even to their own detriment (Loflin, 2011.)

The theme of this paper is vital. Educators have to appreciate what a quality education is not by listening to the empty “Great schools!” chant, but by studying how and why certain inner-city students, including working-class whites (Finn, 1999), resist and/or reject schooling. The critical stance of these students is not an isolated phenomenon, but represents a similar reaction by youth around the world to public education (Sewell, 1997) and a school authority (Willis, 1977) that seeks to educate them not in their own self-interests, but in the interests of a dominate culture (Finn, 1999).

These insights compel debate among those who wish to move beyond questioning both charter and traditional schools. It suggests critics spend less time and energy on what they are against and more on what they are for. This can expose the colonial-political purposes of traditional education and the neocolonial-political function of charters, both of which reproduce social inequities and validate normalcy. The level of conformity required by school success gives unfair advantage to the mainstream and those cultural and racial minorities who are bamboozled into a subservient assimilation.

For those not confusing domestication, indoctrination, or colonialism with education, this paper offers examples of quality teaching and education for urban students: an education for liberation.

“Education is never neutral, Paulo Freire informs us; it either colonizes or liberates. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity, or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.”

~ Patrick Finn, Paulo Freire

“This is not about education. It’s about power.” ~ James Baldwin

“The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our peers, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom.” ~ bell hooks

A quality education for urban students is an education for liberation

Part I

“Education is indoctrination if you're white - subjugation if you're black.” ~ James Baldwin

School choice is the movement today. Parents can choose between traditional public schools or public charter schools. Yet, if what Baldwin says is true, is indoctrination or subjugation really a choice—or if it is, a choice between gasoline or dynamite?

On the surface this appears to be a no-win situation and the basis for the question: is a quality education possible that is neither indoctrination nor subjugation? This concept paper proposes an education for liberation.

What is education for liberation? To understand this question we have to first understand education that is not liberating, that is in fact actually colonial.

Introductory Vocabulary

- *education*: educate from Latin *ēdūcere*, present active infinitive of *ēdūcō*; to draw out, to draw forth or bring out, as something potential or latent
- *schooling*: represented by the “banking system” which refers to the metaphor of students as empty containers into which educators must deposit knowledge; the students are not called upon to understand, but to memorize the knowledge (and answers) given by the teacher; and, students are domesticated or trained to fit in to the system as it is
- *colonialism*: (orig. 1850) the control or governing influence of a nation over a dependent country, territory, or people; the system or policy by which a nation maintains or advocates such control or influence
- *neo-colonialism*: (orig. 1955) the dominance of strong nations over weak nations, not by direct military and political control (as in traditional colonialism), but by the economic, cultural, and educational policies which indirectly maintain its influence
- *assimilation*: (orig. 1570-1580) bring into conformity, absorb, naturalize
- *acculturation*: (orig. 1875-1880) adjustment to the dominant culture; the process of adopting the cultural traits or social patterns of another group.

Schooling vs. Education: Too much schooling, too little education?

Shujja (1993) articulates a conceptual distinction between schooling and education that is useful in trying to understand how urban schools can make an education for liberation curriculum work for families and students underserved by past and present public education.

Schooling as he understands it implies a tie to the social order and nation-state. Schooling, to Shujja, is a process intended to maintain the status quo. In America, it suggests an institution that represents the mainstream--the dominant white middle-class European culture and epistemologies (ways of knowing) of the Western Tradition. Schooling seeks to socialize/assimilate/acculturate children.

Schooling then appears to seek to transfer the core (facts) knowledge of the American culture to students so they will share a common background, basic vocabulary, language, skills, history, etc., and will help them to negotiate with/within “the system.”

On the surface, this makes sense: socializing children is the main purpose of institutions of learning in all societies from family to tribal to the complex. This is the norm. Advocates of a common American basic knowledge have made a point when they assert that too many students leave school without the common background and knowledge of the mainstream culture which is necessary to be successful in it.

“Education,” on the other hand, involves learning that transmits the cultural uniqueness of non-dominant groups (Black, Latino, white working class) to the next generation. Shujaa notes schools transmit from one generation to the next, knowledge of values, esthetics, spiritual beliefs and all other things that give a culture its uniqueness. This uniqueness is revealed when compared to the dominant middle-class European culture upon which our public education is based.

“Can we call the preparation to produce the cultural hegemony of European-elites, education?”

~ Mwalimu J. Shujaa

Finally, Shujaa’s points show that America’s public schools have an additional duty beyond mainstream socialization, and so by design need to create educational settings--formal and informal--where the variety of the unique cultural understandings (political, historical, literary, technological, religious, financial, health, law, etc.) of its students, families and communities are transmitted from one generation to the next.

Schools are political sites

Having a place (school) to socialize children, initially makes sense. As stated above, a society has a duty to prepare the young. Yet, *qui bono*: Who benefits from this set up? For example, who defines basic knowledge? In fact, who decides who defines what knowledge needs to be “common”? Whose interpretation of “facts” and history are perpetuated as reality? These questions must be asked because schools are political sites which reproduce the social hierarchy. Moreover, what is most disturbing and thus most challenging: was America’s public school system created to educate all children (Watkins, 2001; Loflin, 2012)? Also see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_reproduction

“Whoever controls the schools controls the future.” ~ Anonymous

Then, if education is never neutral and so it either colonizes or liberates, then the following statement needs to be considered: *education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity, or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.*

Understanding US urban education from a wide perspective (Loflin, 2006)

It is now common knowledge that the purpose of the education for those societies conquered by the Europeans after 1492 was to replace their values, culture, ways of knowing--and especially their language--with those of the colonizers.

To understand the current limitations of US urban schools (Holzman, 2006) to educate all students, it is necessary to frame this in terms of widespread global school disaffection. This paper argues that the source of this disconnect, discontent, and alienation is *the global use of public schools not to educate, but as political sites--tools to colonize (assimilate, acculturate, acclimate) so-called “minorities” and the working-class for the benefit of the mainstream.*

In order to affect change, American urban educators must be empowered to realize that the rejection of the assimilationist definition of public education by urban minority and working-class students is not an isolated phenomenon; *it is global*. In fact, this paper sees this resistance and rejection of schooling as a psychologically healthy response to a public school system which attempts to persuade children and youth to deny their own experiences and common sense (Hamovitch, 1990).

A review of the history, circumstances, and experiences of urban students of all colors, and Black students in particular, shows similarities to the history, circumstances, and experiences of students everywhere who bring to school a culture that is different from the school's culture. This does not happen in situation where the culture student bring to school is the same as the school's culture.

To make this issue valid, we cannot forget that school disaffection is not just a question of color or minority status; assimilationist schooling is rejected by the white working class in America (Finn, 1999). Before Ireland's independence, many Irish rejected the colonizing effects of the British (and Protestant influenced) government schools. Ireland students continue be discontented today (Walshe, 2010).

This paper will review past and current schooling approaches: America's Indian Industrial Schools, the Australia's government schools for Aboriginals, and the South African Apartheid education system. The review poses the question: do these same colonial/assimilationist and political agendas continue today with urban students in our urban schools?

The United States: The education of Native Americans

We cannot forget that many Native Americans were sent to special government boarding schools. For example, from 1879 until 1918, over 10,000 children from 140 tribes attended the Carlisle (Pennsylvania) Indian Industrial School (CIIS). Children were forced to abandon their home languages and customs. These characteristics were exchanged for those of the Anglo-Saxon European and Protestant cultures which then as now dominated the American way of life. Children's hair was cut. Tribal language was not only forbidden, but students were punished if caught using it. Uniforms and shoes replaced tribal dress. The goal was to return the children back their people ready for "success." In order to do this, the school believed it had to "...kill the Indian, save the man."

What was the purpose of CIIS? Was it education or assimilation? Was it indoctrination and even subjugation? Was it colonial?

Today, Native children who attend the government Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools have the highest dropout rate and lowest graduation rate of any racial/ethnic demographic group across all US schools. To counter this, many Native Americans work to control how their children are educated by incorporating tribal languages and ways of life into their school's culturally-based curriculum. These schools enable an authentic Indian identity and the sustainability of Native culture. See National Indian Education Association at www.niea.org/ and American Indian Higher Education Consortium at www.aihec.org/.

Australia: Aboriginals and Australian Public Education (Loflin, 2006)

A review of public education for Aboriginal children (Beresford, 2004) reveals a system of educational disadvantage and alienation reflecting a broader problem of social marginalization of Indigenous youth. To make his point, Beresford realized he had to go beyond the traditional factors explaining why Indigenous youth failed to graduate. School-based issues such as a) language and curriculum, teacher

attitudes and a culturally relevant curriculum, and b) environmental factors (poverty, racism, poor employment prospects) were too narrow. Beresford proposes two new factors:

1. *Trans-generational disadvantage*: Initial public schooling was limited due to widespread ideas about the inherent inferiority of Aboriginals. Teachers believed “Aboriginal education” was not possible beyond the elementary level within a Western system. If and when mainstream education happened, it was segregated and inferior. To be “successful” students were expected to adopt the dominant Australian culture and its values, attitudes and aspirations. This exposure to assimilation was seen as “alien” to students because it placed emphasis on Western learning styles and status quo/white Australian social attitudes. It also perpetuated and reinforced cultural attitudes and stereotypes of superiority/inferiority among staff, and students and their families. These negative stereotypes, in the form of anti-intellectualism and low aspirations, are passed down to Aboriginal children from one generation to the next.

2. *Trauma*: The “reality of psycho-social dominance by the colonizers (dominate culture) who engaged in cultural/spiritual genocide driven by the view that Aboriginals were non-persons, eventually caused them to believe this about themselves.” To survive, over the generations, Aboriginals had to suppress or deny their feelings of inferiority, distress, and despair. These were internalized within the family and across generations, and expressed in destructive behaviors and rejection of schooling by the young.

In many instances, Aboriginal youth adopted an oppositional identity—schools were/are seen as the domain of whites and a means of colonization. Also, they have *not* developed the resilience needed to do well in a European-type schooling system which emphasizes individualism and competition. Doing poorly at public school becomes a “shame job.” Here, students see themselves as losers who are processed, defined, and re-cycled within the mechanisms of the system. Their existence as persons becomes devalued; they become targets of false binary which reduces their life choices to conforming to or being excluded from Australian society (Beresford, p. 12).

What was the purpose of Australia’s schools for Aboriginals? Was it education or assimilation? Was it indoctrination and even subjugation? Was it colonial?

South Africa: Afrikaner Schools for Black South Africans: It’s all about language

Though the fall 1974 to the summer of 1976, students of all ages who lived in the Soweto Township (South Africa) began and carried out a resistance in revolt against being forced to use Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in their government schools. In spite of threats, imprisonment, beatings, even death, these students organized the June 16, 1976 Soweto Uprising (Hector Pieterse Museum, n.d.).

The riots and other en masse protests spread and received international attention. It was this defiance which attracted Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress (ANC) to resist Apartheid by force, and finally take power from the Afrikaner government. The nation’s first democratic elections were held on April 27, 1994. The ANC won 62.5% of the votes and has been in power ever since. Is the current post-Apartheid public education system working? In 2010, 47% of all student quit at grade 10. The numbers had doubled since 1995. Also, 49% of those starting in 2000 did not sit for the “Matric” (final exam) in 12th grade in 2004. These problems continue today. See <http://allafrica.com/stories/201501051206.html>

What was the purpose of Afrikaner schools for Black South Africans? Was it education or assimilation? Was it indoctrination and even subjugation? Was it colonial?

United States of America: Public schools and Black urban students (Loflin, 2006)

What has been the problem with Black Americans and their public schools? How is it that the suspension, expulsion and dropout rates continue to be so high and grad rates low? Is not education being touted as a way up the ladder to “success”? Something doesn’t add up! Right?

Historically, many African-Americans were denied chances to attend school past the elementary or middle level, let alone to learn to read and write. Yet, over time, despite the elimination of "separate but equal" facilities, school desegregation, and general progress, writer and social researcher, Hamovitch (See Loflin, 2000 p. 45-46) reminds us that race continues to be "...the most salient factor explaining different patterns of student achievement." Why though? Hamovitch asserts that "...race acts inside the school to give groups of students systematically different experiences" and so different outcomes.

Therapist: What is the purpose of school?

Student: To make us proper.

Therapist: To make who proper?

Student: To make Negroes proper.

~ From a conversation between an often suspended Special Ed 15 year-old African American male student from Indianapolis Arlington and his family therapist.

According to Hamovitch, schools perpetuate failure by helping convince Black students that they are "unfit for authority or status." By looking down on or ignoring African and African-American history, accomplishments, and contributions to society, schools erode the self-confidence and esteem of Black students. (Note: this same rationale for bias and subordination was used by the Australians who believed Aboriginals were intellectually incapable of being “educated.”)

Urban schools actually invert Black culture

Another issue is the actual cultural "divide" between the Black experience and our public schools--an urban school climate which directly inverts Black culture. Schools value individual competition as to opposed to cooperation, and ask students to "...endure a context that values breadth over depth and non-involvement over personal engagement." Hamovitch (See Loflin, 2000 p. 45-46) notes that although schools promise to be a source of success for Black students, in many instances they find schools to be "...a source of self-doubt rather than self-development."

"I failed your class 'cause I ain't with your reasoning. You tryin' to make me you..."

~ Boogie Down Productions, 1989

Urban schooling today: It’s not that Black students have to act white to be successful, they can’t act Black and be successful

In *Keepin' It Real*, Prudence Carter thinks a broader respect of the unique cultural styles and practices non-white students bring to school is needed to know why they resist/reject mainstream education. Carter revisits an old issue and suggests: What some urban students resist/reject is not “acting white,” but the assumption that to succeed in school one must assimilate into mainstream society to the exclusion of one's own culture. Doing well in school becomes a “subtractive process” where minority students lose their identity. Thus, it’s not that Black students have to act white to be successful; they can’t act Black and be successful! (Loflin, 2011).

“When I was coming up, some of my high school peers took pride in not giving in to school. Once urban educators accept and appreciate this critical stance, they will be able to do their job.”

~ John Harris Loflin

To clarify, Carter introduces the “non-compliant believer,” students who resist and reject mainstream schooling since a) it fails to link the basic values of education to the deeper understandings of their own everyday realities, and b) which along with their language and urban culture, is absent from the curriculum and unwelcomed in the classroom.

“What is unequivocally helpful from Prudence Carter’s inquiry is the assertion that these young people’s way of being and the concepts of achievement and mobility need not be mutually exclusive. That is, as a society perhaps we need to meet these students where they are culturally so they can participate in the opportunity structure without having to compromise their sense of self.”

~ *Harvard Education Review* (Summer, 2007)

Jeffery Duncan-Andrade (Loflin, 2012) agrees with the Carter’s insight as he asserts: urban students are asked to trade the culture of their home and community for the “higher culture” of the school in order to have access to college. This reduces the life choices of students into a false binary, that of choosing between staying behind as a failure, and “getting out” as a success. Faced with the prospect of leaving their communities behind to be successful, many urban youth opt out of school. They choose to retain an urban and cultural identity they perceive to be in conflict with the expectations of schools, even if the cost of that choice is school failure. To be effective, urban schools must begin to develop partnerships with communities that provide young people the opportunity to be successful while maintaining their identities as urban youth.

“I don’t speak to kids in ‘ghetto speak’ because that’s how they talk at home so they’ll understand me better and I’ll ‘jive’ with them better. My expectation in my English classroom is you’re going to speak proper English. You’re going to write the paper the right way. And I don’t care...talk the way you want outside of class and all that. We can’t lower expectations...”

~ Caitlin Hannon, former commissioner, Indianapolis Public Schools. Hear her statement made during WFYI campaign 2012 IPS candidate forum debate, October 24, 2012.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DY-rKQRTp9Y> See section 1:29:00-1:29:30.

In conclusion, a re-emphasis of the main idea of this proposal is necessary because American urban educators have to see that resistance to schooling by certain inner-city students, which include urban working-class whites (Finn, 1999), is not a quirk or isolated phenomenon, but a similar reaction by youth around the world to public education (Sewell, 1997) and a school authority (Willis, 1977) that seeks to educate them *not* in their own self-interests, but in the interests of the dominate culture.

Many students, and their families and communities conform and do not resist schooling. Some however, do resist. This paper concerns those who do.

A quality education for urban students is an education for liberation

Part II

“True democracy doesn’t use education to move the worker-citizen from unskilled to skilled. Instead, it relies on education to position every citizen to govern. This project of democratic education can be carried out only by educators with the critical commitment to act on behalf of freedom and social justice that serve as a model for their students to discover their own personal power, social transformative potential, and most of all their spirit of hope.” ~ from the ideas of

Antonia Darnier

The following additions are examples of education and teaching that is neither indoctrination nor subjugation, colonial nor neo-colonial, but liberating.

APPENDIX A Is colonization practiced in America today?

APPENDIX B Libratory pedagogy vs. Assimilationist schooling

APPENDIX C Domesticating education vs. Liberating education

APPENDIX D Transformative learning vs. Colonization

APPENDIX E Public education is a colonial model

APPENDIX F Standardization is a colonial model

APPENDIX G Qualities of teachers of liberation

APPENDIX H Advancing culturally relevant teaching as politically relevant teaching

APPENDIX I The 4Es: Teaching for social justice

APPENDIX J Learning how to read as a political act: Powerful Literacy vs. Functional Literacy

APPENDIX K Helping urban students name and resist colonial schooling

APPENDIX L A Strength-Based IEP for each student

APPENDIX A

Is colonization still practiced today in the United States of America?

Perhaps, we do not see ourselves as colonized. But, Mari Evans (2006) does. This trusted Indianapolis native and member of the so-called “minority community” has reason to see America as colonized and its institutions, media, public schools/educators as colonizers.

In “A Cursory Study of Sophisticated Systems of Private Sector and State Controls,” (subtitled: Systemic Racism as Experienced by African Americans in the U.S.), Evans clearly illustrates how colonialism is not dead. Her outline in 3 sections covers exactly how colonization takes place:

- I. Area of vulnerability and attack; The African American Mind
 - A. Define and identify the dominant or controlling groups, e.g. “Shakoes.” Define, identify, and isolate (color, caste, or religion as determinate) the target population, e.g. “Blakes,” (African Americans).
 - B. Change “Blakes” self-concept: Establish “Shakoes” as model.
 - C. Substitute Shakoes values: Institute new forms of thought via the verbal and visual language of media.

- II. Area of vulnerability and attack; The African American Body
 - A. Use superior force as integral part of the economic fabric: The implementation of power through mega-corporation ownership, and regulatory controls: low wages, job discrimination, availability of drugs and guns, police action, felons can't vote, imbalanced assignment ratios—medical experiments, hazardous jobs, and combat units.

- III. Area of vulnerability and attack; The African American Environment
 - A. Uses of superior force (numerical strength) through the “democratic” political system; or, superior force as manifest in special interest exclusivity; or, the use of “capitalistic principles” that require funds or contracts the colonized rarely have; control of land (“eminent domain”), schools (property taxes), housing (redlining, predatory lending or high rent), mobility (public transportation/gas prices), health services (hospitals that require insurance), food supply (inferior foods at neighborhood stores), the judiciary (“minorities” have little influence over Federal and high court appointees), or private enterprise (location, loan policies, insurance rates, competition with mega-corporations).

Viewed through the frame poet Evans prepared, it is easy to see how America is kept from progressing beyond the 20th century. Yet, the majority of Americans would differ with this insight. Why? Perhaps it is clear to the colonized, not the colonizers.

APPENDIX B

Libratory pedagogy vs. Assimilationist schooling

Culturally relevant teaching offers a solution to problems in the education of African Americans and offers an opportunity to make those problems central to the debate about education in general, especially teacher preparation. Through culturally relevant approaches and classroom climate, teachers transcend the material and instructional strategy. This teaching practice helps both teachers and students construct knowledge and move beyond the state- and district-required curricula so academic and cultural excellence are achieved.

A. Conception of self and others —Teachers with culturally and politically* relevant practices have high self-esteem and a high regard for others.	
Libratory	Colonial/Assimilationist
Teacher sees her/himself as an artist, teaching as an art.	Teacher sees her/himself as technician, teaching as a technical task.
Teacher sees her/himself as part of the community and teaching as giving something back to the community, encourages students to do the same.	Teacher sees her/himself as an individual who may or may not be a part of the community; she encourages achievement as a means to escape community.
Teacher believes all students can succeed.	Teacher believes failure is inevitable for some.
Teacher helps students make connections between their community, national, and global identities.	Teacher homogenizes students into one "American" identity.
Teacher sees teaching as "pulling knowledge out"-like “digging” or "mining."	Teacher sees teaching as "depositing knowledge into" the heads of students: like money in a bank.

B. Social Relations --How teachers' perceptions of themselves and others affects the way they structure their social relationships.	
Libratory	Colonial/Assimilationist
Teacher-student relationship is fluid, humanely equitable, extends to interactions beyond the classroom and into the community.	Teacher-student relationship is fixed, tends to be hierarchical and limited to formal classroom roles.
Teacher demonstrates a connectedness with all students.	Teacher demonstrates connections with individual students.
Teacher encourages a "community of learners."	Teacher encourages competitive achievement.
Teacher encourages students to learn collaboratively. Students are expected to teach each other and be responsible for each other.	Teacher encourages students to learn individually, in isolation.
C. Concepts of Knowledge --How culturally and politically* relevant teaching helps liberate students so they can understand, confront, and create knowledge	
Libratory	Colonial/Assimilationist
Knowledge is continuously recreated, recycle-ing and shared by teachers and students. It is not static or unchanging.	Knowledge is static and is passed in one direction, from teacher to student.
Knowledge is viewed critically.	Knowledge is viewed as infallible.
Teacher is passionate about knowledge.	Teacher is detached, neutral about knowledge.
Teacher helps students develop necessary skills.	Teacher expects students to demonstrate pre-requisite skills.
Teacher sees excellence as a complex standard that may involve some postulates but takes student diversity and individual differences into account.	Teacher sees excellence as a postulate that exists independently from student diversity of individual differences.

Guidelines for Culturally relevant schools and classrooms

- a. When students are treated as competent they are likely to demonstrate competence.
- b. When teachers provide instructional "scaffolding," students can move from what they know to what they need to know—extending students' thinking and abilities by building on something they have already mastered.
- c. The focus of the classroom must be instructional, not personal: the message that the classroom is a place where teachers engage students in serious work is communicated clearly to everyone.
- d. Effective teaching involves in-depth knowledge of both the students and the subject matter.
- e. Culturally relevant schools provide self-determination—mandatorily following the local, state and federal mandates many not always be in the best interests of parent and their children.
- f. These schools honor and respect the students' home culture—students' language they bring is not seen as deficient, i.e., a corruption of English; familial organizations are not considered unsophisticated; and, historical, cultural, and scientific contributions to the American culture are not rendered trivial.
- g. They help all students understand the world as it is and equip them to change it for the better—to struggle against social injustice and fulfill America's promise.

- h. Students whose educational, economic, social, political and cultural futures are more tenuous are helped to become intellectual leaders in the classroom.
- i. Students are apprenticed in a learning community rather than taught in a isolated and unrelated way.
- j. Students' real-life experiences are legitimized as they become a part of the "official" curriculum.
- k. Teachers and students participate in a broad conception of literacy that incorporates both literature and oratory, unspoken and multimedia.
- l. Teachers and students engage in a collective struggle against the status quo.
- m. Teachers are cognizant of themselves as political being—they recognize the political nature of their work.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African-American Children*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

APPENDIX C

Domesticating education vs. Liberating education

Chester Finn, *Literacy with an attitude: Educating the working class in their own self-interests* (1999), spells out the differences between a domesticating (colonizing) education and a liberating education.

Domesticating Education: What We Have and Don't Want	Liberating Education: What We Need and Don't Have
Knowledge is presented as facts isolated from wider bodies of knowledge.	<i>Knowledge is rarely presented as facts isolated from wider bodies of knowledge.</i>
Knowledge taught is not related to the lives and experiences of the students.	<i>Knowledge taught is always related to the lives and experiences of the students.</i>
Teachers do not make a practice of explaining how assignments are related to one another.	<i>make a practice of explaining how assignments are related to one another.</i>
Work is easy.	<i>Work is challenging.</i>
Knowledge from textbooks is valued more highly than knowledge gained from experience.	<i>Textbook knowledge is validated and/or challenged in terms of knowledge gained from experience.</i>
Knowing the answers and knowing where to find the answers are valued over creativity, expression, and analysis	<i>Creativity, expression, and analysis are essential beyond knowing the answers or knowing where to find the answers.</i>
Discussion of challenges to the status quo, past and present, rarely occurs.	<i>Discussion of challenges to the status quo, past and present, frequently occurs.</i>
History of labor unions, civil rights, women's suffrage, and other victories for justice and equity are taught as the accomplishments of "heroes" and "heroines" not as the result of grass roots struggles.	<i>History of labor unions, civil rights, women's suffrage, and other victories for justice and equity are taught as collective action taken by common people.</i>
Instruction is typically copying notes and writing answers to factual questions.	<i>Instruction is rarely copying notes and writing answers to factual questions.</i>

Work is evaluated in terms of following steps. A satisfactory answer does not suffice. "Do it my way or it's wrong."	<i>"Work" is sometimes presented as following steps in procedures, but students are given choices and rewarded for original solutions</i>
"Writing" consists of filling in blanks or lines on teacher-constructed handouts workbook pages.	<i>"Writing" is taught in a workshop format</i>
Both teachers and students focus on good grades and a diploma as the objective of schooling	<i>Neither teachers nor students focus on good grades and a diploma as the objective of schooling.</i>
Students' access to materials is tightly controlled.	<i>Students have access to materials.</i>
Movement of students is tightly controlled.	<i>Students have considerable freedom of movement.</i>
Students are rewarded for passivity and obedience, not for initiative and inquisitiveness.	<i>Students are rewarded for initiative and inquisitiveness, not passivity and obedience.</i>
Students are rarely given an opportunity to express their own ideas.	<i>Students are frequently given an opportunity to express their own ideas</i>
Teachers make derogatory remarks to and about students.	<i>Teachers never make derogatory remarks to or about students.</i>

Finn, P. (1999). *Literacy with an Attitude: Educating the Working Class in Their Own Self-interest*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

APPENDIX D

Transformative Learning vs. Colonization

The theory of transformative learning, developed in the late 90s by Jack Mezirow, has during the past two decades evolved "into a comprehensive and complex description of how learners construe, validate, and reformulate the meaning of their experience." Centrality of experience, critical reflection, and rational discourse are three common themes in Mezirow's theory. See <http://www.lifecircles-inc.com/Learningtheories/humanist/mezirow.html>

Transformative learning occurs when persons change their frame(s) of reference (their perspectives) by critically reflecting on their assumptions and beliefs and consciously making and implementing plans bringing about new ways of defining their worlds. This theory describes a learning process that is primarily "rational, analytical, and cognitive" with an "inherent logic."

Perspective transformation explains how the meaning structures that adults have acquired over a lifetime become transformed. These structures are specific beliefs, attitudes, and emotional reactions. These structures are frames of reference that are based on the totality of an individual's cultural and contextual experiences--ones that influence how they behave and interpret events. For learners to change their "meaning schemes" they must engage in critical reflection on their experiences, which in turn leads to a perspective transformation.

"Perspective transformation is the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrating perspective; and, finally, making choices or otherwise acting upon these new understandings."

**Transformative Education:
Transformative Learning integrator-indicators**

<i>Transformative education vs. Colonizing education Part I</i>	
Transformative	Colonizing
Equitable Differentiation, Local (& Selective Global) Access & Life-Affirming Diversity	Inequitable & Hierarchical Differentiation, Local & Global Access, & Controllable Homogeneity
Transformative, Differentiated (personal & group agendas), Experiential, Community--and Place-Based, Deep, Integrated (personal, social, environmental) Trans-disciplinary Education	Colonizing, Domesticating, Controlling, De-contextual, Disciplinary, & Shallow-Utilitarian Education
Spontaneity, Deep Subjectivity (engaging with wonder, mystery & the unknown as well as the known), Ecological & Cultural Sustainability, Big Picture, Emergent Improvements & Positive Co-evolutionary Change	Grandiose, Competitive Individualism, & Adversarial Processes
Small, Meaningful Expressions of Participation, Collaboration, & Mutualistic, Negentropic & Synergistic Relationships, Self-Regulation & Maintenance	Predictability, Naive Objectivity, Specialization, Simplicity (deceptive), Growth in Material Production, Consumption & Profit (ecologically & culturally unsustainable), and Rapid Response Competence
<i>Transformative education vs. Colonizing education Part II</i>	
Transformative	Colonizing
Spontaneous; contextual (in present); relational thinking & action (emergent)	Patterned
Empowered: take leadership, responsible, collaborative, flexible, don't procrastinate, truthful, act on love, ask for & offer help	Dis-empowered: act on fear, seek compensation & substitution, over-competitive
Open, attentive, listening, engaged, aware; compassionate, sense of wonder	Closed, defended, distanced; unmoved
Profound, often paradoxical, deep understanding; sense of social justice; actions linked to developed values	Naive, shallow; values undeveloped; actions may contradict professed values
Holistic, integrated, multi-dimensional (time, space, etc.), complex, profound perceptions	Fragmented, un-dimensional, deceptively simplistic perceptions
Realistically hopeful about human potential & future (actions/inactions support this view); creative, visionary	Apathetic & negative
Minimal anxiety before, & minimal fatigue & negative judgment after, experiences	Anxious, fatigued, self recriminations, regrets, internalized oppressions

Communicate with others' "essence"; interrupt or counsel distress material if appropriate; responsive	Focus on, and communicate with, "distress material" (easily "hooked"); often non-responsive
Learn from experience; thirst for learning; constantly improving, coevolving	Often don't, or only in partial ways; often uninterested & stuck
Design & redesign structures & processes to foster well-being and prevent problems pro-actively	Enemy, problem & magic bullet; over-reactive, curative solutions oriented; shoot the messenger; control freaks

Note: All expressions on the right are best viewed not as evil, bad or failing, but as "the best the individuals displaying them are able to do" given their past experiences, how they adapted to them, and the nature of the present environment (especially its level of safety and support). By processing them we can eventually let go of them and develop behaviors similar to those on the left.

This chart and more can be reviewed and critiqued in the report on The 14th International Democratic Education Conference, "The presentation of Stuart Hill: Democracy! What's Next? Transformative Learning" at <https://drive.google.com/a/kheprw.org/file/d/0B-MpMEv4NI7nYkdjY0IyTVBxRTQ/view> See pp 18-26.

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APPENDIX E

Social Class and School Knowledge: How American public schools are a colonial education system

Jean Anyon (1980) studied 5th grade classrooms in northern New Jersey (09.15.78-06.20.79) looking at differences in student work in schools in poor vs. wealthy communities. She concluded that public education has a "hidden curriculum" as schools provide different types of knowledge and different educational experiences to children based on the perceived competency of the students as well as their social class. These classrooms were in schools she labeled by what the parents of the students did for a living:

- Working-class school-- students from families who were at or below the federal poverty line and most of the parents had "blue-collar" jobs (semi-skilled and unskilled laborers).
- Middle-class school--it contained students with parents who were blue-collar "rich" – skilled and well paid laborers, parents with middle-class and "white collar" jobs (city employees, skilled tradesmen, office supervisors, accountants).
- Affluent professional school--its parents were at the upper income level of the upper middle class, and predominantly employed as "professionals" (doctors, lawyers, engineers).
- Executive elite school--the majority of the families belonged to the capitalist class, with most fathers being top executives.

Working Class	Middle Class	Affluent Professional	Executive Elite
Schools focus on following steps of a procedure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanations as to how work connected to other assignments or real life, or what the idea was that lay behind the procedure were rarely given. 	Schools focus on getting the right answer. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directions were to be followed in order to reach the right answer, but an element of choice and decision making was involved 	Schools focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual thought & expressiveness • Expansion & illustration of ideas • Choice of appropriate method & material. 	Schools focus on developing one's analytical intellectual powers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are continually asked to reason through a problem, • Produce work that was of top academic quality.
Language Arts focus on punctuation, capitalization, & 4 kinds of sentences. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grammatical rules were to be followed. No reasons as to how or why given. • Creative writing assignments required answering teacher created questions on a sheet 	Language Arts focus on "simple grammar" needed to speak properly, write a business letter. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignments involved choosing the right answer & understanding why you chose that answer. • Very little chance given for creative writing. 	Language Arts focus on creative writing. For example, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each student was to write a story for a first grader, whom they had interviewed to see what type of story the child liked best. • Very little focus was placed on grammar. 	Language Arts focus on practicing presentation of self & managing situations where child was expected to be in charge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children present lesson on grammar to class. • Evaluated on presentation, communication, interest level, & class control.
Students taught to follow a set procedure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not encouraged to discover own methods of solving the problems presented. • Work is not graded on if the correct solution is found, but on if correct procedure followed. 	Work graded on if solution is correct, not if specific technique used & fundamental understanding accomplished <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More emphasis on choice & making decisions. • Creativity not expected, & does not have a place in the classroom. 	The fundamental goal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure students can not only perform a task, but also that they understand it. • Work is creative activity carried out independently. • Students learn a concept, not a method. 	Students taught to think on their own. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students learn not only the process of solving a problem, • Also, the fundamental concepts behind it & • The practical real-world applications for their knowledge.
Teacher: "Simple punctuation is all they'll ever use."	Teacher: "I [the teacher] want to make sure you understand what you're doing so you get it right."	Teacher: "It doesn't matter whether it [what they find] is right or wrong. I bring them together and there's value in discussing their ideas."	Teacher: "Even if you don't know [the answers], if you think logically about it, you can figure it out."

Anyon's Conclusions: Generally, as the social class of the community increases, the following increases: variety/abundance of materials in classrooms, time reported by teachers spent on preparation, higher social class & more prestigious universities attended by school staff, more stringent board of education requirements about teaching methods, increased teachers support services--in-service workshops, increased parent expenditure for school equipment, & higher expectations & demands regarding student achievement.

More specifically, working class children are being prepared for mechanical & routine wage-labor. The middle-class children are being prepared for white-collar jobs where success comes from not rocking the boat, but in being able to problem solve and find the right answer. The professional children are being prepared to follow in the footsteps of their parents and become professionals--with highly developed linguistic, artistic & scientific expression skills. The executive children are developing skills necessary for the "ownership and control of the physical capital and the means of production in society."

The "hidden curriculum" of school work sets children up to remain within their social class and thus perpetuate the maintenance of the status quo and the ongoing gap between rich and poor.

Social Class and School Knowledge*

Anyon also talked with students at NJ elementary schools serving working class, middle class, or affluent communities. She asked 3 questions about knowledge to 5th graders at each school. Students from the working class school viewed knowledge as a set of procedures handed down to them by some authority. Students at the affluent professional school looked at knowledge as something that they could create through critical thinking.

Anyon points out that each school shaped students' beliefs about knowledge by providing certain types of learning materials and, more importantly, by teaching and introducing these materials in particular ways. Her study pushes us to ask: 1) How do we want young people to think about knowledge? 2) What knowledge is valuable? 3) How can we provide students access to valuable knowledge? 4) *Qui bono*: who benefits when working-class students come to deny their own experiences and believe that they cannot create knowledge from these experiences—knowledge fostering their own liberation and the self-determination of their neighborhood?

	Working-Class Schools	Middle Class Schools	Affluent Professional Schools
What Students Say About Knowledge?	"To know stuff?" "Doing pages in our books & things." "Worksheets." "You answer questions." "To remember things?"	"To remember." "You learn facts & history." "It's smartness." "Knowledge is something you learn."	"You think up ideas, then find things wrong with them." "It's when you know something really well." "A way of learning, of finding out things." "Figuring out stuff."
Where does knowledge come from?	"Teachers." "Books." "The Board of Ed." "Scientists."	"Teachers." "From old books." "From scientists." "Knowledge comes from everywhere." "You hear other people talk with the big words."	"People and computers." "Your head." "People—what they do," "Something you learn." "From going places."
Could you make knowledge, and if so, how?	No: 15 Yes: 1 Don't Know: 4 One girl said, "No, because the Board of Ed makes knowledge."	No: 9 Yes: 11 "I'd look it up." "You can make knowledge by listening & doing what you're told." "I'd go to the library." "By doing extra credit."	No: 4 Yes: 16 "You can make knowledge if you invent something." "I'd think of something to discover, then I'd make it." "Go explore for new things."

Anyon, J. (1980). Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work. *Journal of Education*. 162, 1.
<http://www.jeananyon.org/docs/anyon-1980.pdf>

* "Valuable Knowledge: Lessons from Jean Anyon" is from Teaching to Change LA at
<http://tcla.gseis.ucla.edu>
<https://tcla.gseis.ucla.edu/reportcard/tools/pdf/anyon.pdf>

APPENDIX F

How standardization and a model of schooling centered on achievement actually enables a colonial and neo-colonial education

Teaching for colonization: Achievement-centric models*: Ways of thinking about the outcomes of schooling and teacher quality that privilege student achievement and marginalize other possible education outcomes.

- Believes students' well-being is best realized when it positions them to thrive in a world characterized by private property rights, free markets, and free trade.
- Supports the develop in students of the knowledge to be self-sufficient, entrepreneurial, and not dependent upon government; thus
 - the primary purpose of schooling then becomes to
 - facilitate students' preparation for postsecondary career and education and developing a skilled workforce

Teaching for colonization: Effects of achievement-centric models on schooling and on educators*

- An achievement-centric model
 - requires standardization of pedagogy, curriculum, and testing so that families can be informed consumers of educational services
- An achievement-centric model stance
 - assumes that families value "college and career readiness" as signaled by student test scores more than other possible educational outcomes
 - uses achievement testing to determine school and educator quality
 - creates incentives to narrow curriculum only to items that will be on tests,
 - to use instructional time to practice test-taking skills, and
 - in extreme cases,
 - cheat

Teaching for colonization: Effects of achievement-centric models on students and equity*

- Reduces schooling to standardized activities requiring adopting a "one size fits all" approach
- Feeds into deficit thinking in which students who do not respond to the standardized approach are labeled at-risk or dis/abled in some way
- When applying a standardized approach, the students who respond best are those who share cultural similarities with those who developed and perpetuate the standardized system.
- A standardized system is, then,
 - inequitable since it creates unequal outcomes under the guise of creating a fair playing field

*In 2015, the Great Lakes Equity Center published a paper on what they argued were the draw-backs of achievement-centered schooling (Whiteman, et al., 2015). Based on the thesis of this paper, these qualities matched the orientation of education for colonization, an education that denigrates and disrespects America's ethos of equal educational opportunity for all.

Whiteman, R., Thorius, K., Skelton, S, & Kyser, T. (2015). Equity by Design Rethinking Quality: Foregrounding Equity in Definitions of "High Quality" Educators. Great Lakes Equity Center. <http://glec.education.iupui.edu/assets/files/Teacher%20Quality%20Brief.pdf>

APPENDIX G

Teaching for Liberation

All children deserve access to high quality educators. Many definitions of “high quality” teachers over-emphasize student achievement outcomes and do not sufficiently consider other important factors of schooling and educator practices that may lead to those outcomes. This brief offers an equity-oriented framework that defines a high quality educator as one who: (1) views students’ existing cultural resources as assets, (2) applies these assets within critical pedagogies toward empowering students in their lives and communities, and in doing so, (3) fosters students’ academic, social, and personal growth (Whiteman, et al., 2015). <http://glec.education.iupui.edu/assets/files/Teacher%20Quality%20Brief.pdf>

Personal Qualities of teachers who teach for liberation*

- Values students’ existing social, cultural, and historical knowledge
- Views students’ cultural and linguistic resources as assets for academic learning
- Holds deep hope for their students and communities
- Uses an equity-informed pedagogy and content knowledge
- Has awareness of students’ heritage practices
- Has knowledge of equity and social oppression in both content knowledge and practice
- Understand the relationship between language, culture and learning, of privilege, and of how schools contribute to inequity

Teaching Practices of teachers who teach for liberation*

- Uses their personal qualities to enact critical pedagogies, which center the assets, needs, and value of all students.
- Provide all learners with:
 - Multiple means of *representation*, to give learners various ways of acquiring information and knowledge;
 - Multiple means of *expression*, to offer learners alternatives for demonstrating what they know; and
 - Multiple means of *engagement*, to tap into learners’ interests, challenge them appropriately, and motivate them to learn
- Actively works to maintain students’ cultural, linguistic and historical heritage
- Provides students with tools to understand and critique inequity and the social power structures that create inequity
- Identifies vehicles for delivering critical pedagogies that resonate with students;
- Turns their classrooms into spaces for naming and critiquing local and global conditions for social, political, and economic exploitation
- Create opportunities to apply students’ learning in ways that directly impact and improve students’ lives
- Make students’ reflection on their own learning and growth a pedagogical priority
- Ensures all student are able to access learning content, and demonstrate their learning in varied ways
- Works not only to reduce ability barriers to knowledge and expression but also to reduce cultural and linguistic barriers.
- Demonstrates a deep love of their students and their students’ lived experiences by de-centering themselves and learning about their students’ heritage and community practices

- Enables students to access and question the standard curricular canon while preserving students' own heritage practices

Student Outcomes of teachers who teach for liberation*

- Realizes the importance of growth in student academic achievement, but also seeks to
 - impact students' personal and social growth, and,
 - through and alongside students,
 - a positive impact on the communities in which they teach.
- Does not choose between critical, social justice outcomes and academic achievement outcomes
 - this false binary is rooted in the belief that teaching in culturally sustaining ways cannot possibly lead to academic achievement due to the deficits in some students' cultures
- Facilitates students' learning about themselves, their heritage, and the various identities they live throughout the day
- Allows students the freedom and agency to identify and express those identities (through language, gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, religion, dis/ability, etc.) in ways that they choose
- Encourage students' personal growth by making sure they have the desire, means, and opportunity to be become who s/he wants to be and loving her/himself in the process
- Enables students to recognize how power and oppression shape their lives
 - equips students to name, resist, and counteract the injustice and inequity we all experience on a daily basis
- Encourages students to learn to love their own and others' cultures and imagine what it may be like to live as others live so they can be responsible and ethical citizens in a shared world
- Makes sure their classroom pedagogies result in students' ability to access and question the standard curricular canon while preserving students' own heritage practices
 - this outcome grants access to a wider audience in a diverse society, which is in itself
 - a path to power for historically underserved students
- Views students' existing cultural resources as assets
 - applies these assets within critical pedagogies toward empowering students in their lives and communities

*In 2015, the Great Lakes Equity Center (GLEC) published a paper on what they argued were characteristics of high quality educators (Whiteman, et al., 2015). Based on the thesis of "Education as the practice of freedom," these qualities matched the ethos of education for liberation. To be exact, these teacher qualities create a classroom which emancipates--freeing certain cultures/students from the narrowness of an "achievement-centered" education that inherently gives unfair advantage to one student or group over another. The GLEC paper show how the "standards movement" (and its associated "accountability movement") actually creates a bias which denigrates and disrespects America's ethos of equal educational opportunity for all. Is this the America we want the world to follow?

References

Whiteman, R., Thorius, K., Skelton, S, & Kyser, T. (2015). Equity by Design Rethinking Quality: Foregrounding Equity in Definitions of "High Quality" Educators. Great Lakes Equity Center. <http://glec.education.iupui.edu/assets/files/Teacher%20Quality%20Brief.pdf>

APPENDIX H

Cultural competency is not enough: Advancing culturally relevant teaching as politically relevant teaching

Summary: *The purpose of this addition is to examine culturally relevant teaching as a political pedagogy and a contemporary manifestation of what was considered "good" teaching in many African American communities served by segregated schools. An examination of accounts of these schools that were valued by students and families reveals that the "good" of these institutions hinged not simply on the cultural similarities between teachers and students, but more importantly on the "political clarity" of the teachers. That is, these educators recognized the existence of oppression in their students' lives and sought to use their personal, professional, and social power to encourage children to understand and undermine their subordination. Thus, it was not the fact they shared the students' culture, but that they shared their politics. Teachers used their knowledge of society's inequities and their influence to empower their marginalized students. By recognizing the political and historical dimensions of culturally relevant teaching its applications are broadened, expanding to issues of racism and social injustice that are relevant to all Americans (Loflin, 2012).*

Cultural competence or political clarity...or both?

Cultural competency is a system of behaviors, attitudes, and policies. The idea is that if teachers were knowledgeable and competent in the history and cultures of their students it would help them work effectively in diverse classrooms. Relationships, behavior, and test scores would improve.

Although cultural competency is important, according to Beauboeuf-LaFontant (1999) it is an insufficient precondition for teaching students from marginalized groups. The concept limits orientation to understanding and appreciating culture--ignoring political realities students face in their schools and neighborhoods

The concept of political clarity: Education as "oppositional consciousness"

Cultural and racial minorities of all colors have long lived a disturbing condition--the contradiction between their experiences of systemic oppression and exploitation in a country founded on the ideals of justice and liberty. Thus, long-standing discussions among Blacks cover the role formal education can play in either maintaining or transforming the existing social order and the crucial roles teachers play in abetting or subverting a social system of domination.

Recognizing schooling as a "socio-political institution"

We know public schools socialize children into particular ways of seeing themselves, others, and the society in which they will function as adults. These social institutions have been a key site for Black resistance to white domination. In manifesting such resistance from slavery throughout segregation, African Americans were making a profoundly political statement:

- they believed in being considered and treated as equal citizens in society
- they were painfully aware of their social, political, and economic subjugation and would work to resist it
- they understood that formal education played a key role in either encouraging true democracy or sanctioning a system of continued oppression

By recognizing the political nature of formal education, Beauboeuf-LaFontant notes that many African American teachers in segregated schools that existed before *Brown v. Board of Education of*

Topeka, (i.e. Crispus Attucks High School, Indianapolis, IN) promoted an "oppositional consciousness" in their classrooms. This was an ideology of resistance against the "hegemonic ideology" of the standard curriculum. Teachers sought to redirect the blame for suffering from divine and personal domains to the system of human domination itself. This helped develop ideas about the rightness of social justice and provided conceptions of a just society.

As "quiet revolutionaries," these educators, capitalizing on this classroom influence, were committing political acts because it contradicted the racist rhetoric of Black inferiority.

Advancing culturally relevant teaching to politically relevant teaching

<i>Characteristics of politically relevant pedagogy for Black children and youth</i>
Teachers encourage the cooperation of students to contest the racist premise of their intellectual and moral inferiority as people of African descent
Teachers make sure African American children matured with the psychological and academic strengths necessary to subvert white domination
Teachers are mindful not only of the cultural norms, values, and practices of their students, but more importantly of the political realities and aspirations of people of color
Teachers use a pedagogy "relevant" to the political experiences of inequity and disenfranchisement of their students
Teachers are sensitive to and supportive of the anti-racism and anti-oppression struggles of students of color
Teachers encourage students to be competent and comfortable in the culture they bring to school and the school's middle-class culture
Teachers view their classrooms as key sites of resistance, where students of color especially can come to see themselves and their neighborhoods in affirming ways while gaining access to mainstream "codes of power"
Teachers hold a philosophical belief that public education has a responsibility to prepare students to take an active role in making society truly democratic

References

- Loflin, J. (2012). Cultural competency is not enough: Advancing culturally relevant teaching as politically relevant teaching. <http://kinumedia.org/vorcreatex2/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Cultural-competency-is-not-enough-Advancing-to-politically-relevant-teaching.pdf>
- Beauboeuf-LaFontant, T. (1999). A Movement Against and Beyond Boundaries: Politically Relevant Teaching among African-American Teachers." *Teachers College Record*. 100(4): 702-723.

APPENDIX I

The 4Es: Education for liberation Teaching for social justice Teaching for liberation

Paulo Freire (*Pedagogy of the oppressed*) believed effective education for marginalized groups must employ a pedagogy of liberation—that is, one that aims to help students become critical change agents who feel capable of and responsible for addressing social injustices in their communities. One urban educator explains,

“Racial, cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic status has no effect on students' abilities to acquire knowledge. Schools should provide students with the fundamental skills and ideas necessary to develop within the system while also preparing them to transform the system.”

Another urban educator cites a series of problems with the institutional culture of urban schools:

“The first thing I wonder about urban schools is, ‘Where’s the love?’ Even a surface-level analysis of our school reveals that students dislike the school; they are unengaged and exhibit resistance. The environment is not community centered, let alone child/student-centered. This is reflected in the scripted or mandated programming: a set of de-contextualized academic exercises--learning disconnected from the day-to-day lives of students, and an overemphasis on basic skills. Students have become machines; they are not allowed to question the relevance of what they are learning. They are forced to perform for the sake of the task at hand. In short, our schools reflect a prison system mentality.”

The 4Es: Teaching for social justice/Teaching for liberation

Educators who teach for liberation must consider using the "4Es" of emancipatory pedagogy:

- *Engage*. Provide culturally responsive teaching that validates students' funds of knowledge.
- *Experience*. Expose students to various possible realities by presenting narratives that show the perspectives of those often unheard in society.
- *Empower*. Use a critical and transformative pedagogy to give students a sense of agency, both individual and collective, to act on the conditions in their lives.
- *Enact*. Create opportunities for students to act out their growing sense of agency, learning from and reflecting on their successes and struggles.

Next, view the full paper, “Teaching for social justice: Teaching for liberation” at:

<http://kinumedia.org/vorcreatex2/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Teaching-for-social-justice-Education-for-liberation.pdf>

APPENDIX J

Powerful literacy vs. functional literacy: Learning to read as a political act

Literacy, being able to read and write at important levels, is fundamental to career, college and citizenship. The wealthy and powerful make sure they and their children have it. That’s how they achieve and maintain their social status. Here, literacy has both economic and political purposes.

For the working class, not being able to read and write at high levels keeps them not only at the bottom of the economic ladder, but does not support the politics they need to get a better deal from their society. The political reason is not brought up by urban educators who normally just push the economic purpose of literacy. The ideas below suggest why.

1. Empowering and Liberating Education: Leads to **powerful literacy**, a type of literacy reserved for the children of the middle and upper classes (Finn, 1990):
 - Needed in/for occupations of leadership/authority and power
 - Promotes the ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize
 - Enables students know how to think for themselves
2. Domesticating and Colonizing Education: Leads to **functional literacy**, a level of literacy traditionally required of the working class (Finn, 1990):
 - Needed to make a person productive and dependable, but not troublesome
 - Designed to make students obedient citizens and useful workers in occupations of manual labor, retail, and service
 - Combines a performative literacy (decoding, sentence structure knowledge) and functional literacy (ability to read *USA Today* and complete a job application, read instructions)
 - Maintains a basic level of literacy that is sufficient so the masses are employable and content but not so much that they will seek power

When the children of the wealthy get powerful literacy nothing changes. But when the children of the poor get powerful literacy, students *get literacy with an attitude—making students (politically) dangerous*.

Powerful literacy when acquired by the working class uses reading and writing as a means to help them in their struggle to secure justice as they try to get a better deal from their society. Like it does for the children of the wealthy powerful literacy helps working-class students to understand:

- how the system works,
- how to critique and change it, and
- how to acquire power and authority in it

Now learning to read is political. It includes yet goes beyond traditional purpose society gives such as academics (schooling) and economics (career and employment).

Learning to read and write then becomes a political act: literacy for liberation, but also literacy as liberation.

Finn, P. (1999). *Literacy with an Attitude: Educating the Working Class in Their Own Self-interest*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

APPENDIX K

Urban schools and classrooms as a critical counter-culture community of practice

This counter-culture will deliberately study, critique, confront, and replace--with a culture of excellence and justice--any and all forms of:

- low expectations
- social exploitation
- political exploitation
- economic exploitation

These efforts should begin by:

- confronting the immediate material conditions of the community where the school is located;
 - this means developing a anti-poverty curriculum and pedagogy that
 - addresses the material concerns of students and their communities (housing, crime, jobs, etc.)
 - creating opportunities for students to use what they are learning in ways that directly impact their lives;
 - this means developing an anti-poverty curriculum and a pedagogy with students
 - permitting and encouraging them to use what they are learning to act upon those concerns;
 - preparing students to develop common goals and ready them to work collectively toward them.
- **Some characteristics of a critical counter-culture community of practice**

Resisting dominance

Urban students, with the support of their families and community, will reason with the school district to enable their neighborhood school to implement a pedagogy and anti-poverty curriculum framework aimed at eradicating the very social toxins which impede their academic success. That is, the purpose of the school is not to get students out of poverty, but to get rid of poverty.

An anti-poverty academic paradigm would:

- counter the negative stereotypes that the very nature of the intellect and culture of urban families/students (Black, Latino, working class white) are:
 - inferior & defective,
 - a source of social pathology,
 - non-intellectual, and
 - the cause of poor school performance/ the achievement gap.

In review, efforts must be made to create an (*counter-dominance*) educational counter-culture that makes the following qualities normal in the classroom:

- self-respect,
- self-realization,
- critical self-consciousness,
- academic excellence, and
- group achievement.

Critical pedagogy as a core principle of a counter-culture community of practice

Critical pedagogy is a teaching approach grounded in critical theory. Critical pedagogy attempts to help students question and challenge domination (educational, intellectual, social, political, economical, and cultural), and the beliefs and practices that dominate. In other words, it is a theory and practice of helping students achieve critical consciousness.

"Critical pedagogy centers on habits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath surface meaning, first impressions, dominant myths, official pronouncements, traditional clichés, received wisdom, and mere opinions, to understand the deep meaning, root causes, social context,

ideology, and personal consequences of any action, event, object, process, organization, experience, text, subject matter, policy, mass media, or discourse."

~ Dr. Ira Shor

"Critical pedagogy includes relationships between teaching and learning. It is a continuous process of unlearning, learning and relearning, reflection, evaluation and the impact that these actions have on the students, in particular students who have been historically and continue to be disenfranchised by traditional schooling."

~ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critical_pedagogy

The "Cycle of Critical Praxis" as critical pedagogy

- (1) students identify a problem that is authentic and relevant;
- (2) students research the problem;
- (3) students develop a collective plan of action to address the problem;
- (4) students implement the collective plan of action; and
- (5) students evaluate the action, assess its efficacy, and re-examine/re-assess the state of the problem, developing a renewed commitment to a remedy.

The Cycle of Critical Praxis:

- reveals powerful opportunities for critical pedagogy,
- fosters a dialogue between school staff and students in the classroom/school, not a one-way conversation the staff controls:
 - breaks down the inherent power relations in traditional pedagogy--the type of power relations urban schools avoid--and identifies students as collaborators with adults.
 - fundamentally repositions students as actors and as contributors to the struggle for social change.
 - identifies global youth culture (Hip Hop) as a legitimate site for engagement and developing sophisticated thinking, academic, social, and political skills by engaging their own social worlds.
- involves continued action for social justice--sees anti-poverty pedagogy and curricula as tools for eliminating oppressive relationships and conditions.
- requires urban educators to recognize the ways in which the current system of education is rigged to produce unequal outcomes.

Cycle of Critical Praxis and academic excellence

Critical pedagogies do not focus on critiquing and changing society to the exclusion of the development of sophisticated literacy and numeracy skills. Critical pedagogy asks:

- to what extent are students emerging as competent readers and writers working at sophisticated levels?
- to what extent does the outcome in the academic settings meet or even exceed state content area standards in the disciplines?
- to what extent do the students make more quantifiable academic transformations, including raised grade point averages, test scores, and university admission?

Identify the vehicle: Enabling critical praxis

To implement critical pedagogy in urban contexts, it is vital that urban students recognize, understand, and articulate to their teachers the vehicle for delivering critical pedagogy (critical praxis, critical research, critical media literacy, etc.).

This vehicle (aka “frame of reference”) must be vital and relevant enough to warrant staff investment. In short, urban students and their community must be able to

- explain to their neighborhood school and wider school district,
 - in a compelling way,
 - why they should invest in an anti-poverty approach to schooling and academics.

Students must justify their rationale for an anti-poverty education on these common questions:

- Why is this important to me
 - in this moment?
 - in my future life?
 - in the future life of my community?

Students must make sure their school understands that the “vehicles” for implementing critical pedagogy

- are drawn from culturally and politically relevant material, and
- make prominent/value the existing knowledge base they have gained from their everyday life experiences as
 - legitimate, and
 - intellectual.

Youth participatory action research (YPAR) as critical pedagogy

YPAR trains urban students in the research process:

- (1) problem identification,
- (2) data collection,
- (3) data analysis, and
- (4) action.

Benefits for urban students:

- Positive interpersonal skills
- Cognitive growth & maturity
- Positive future orientation (i.e. higher educational aspirations).
- Academic proficiency
- Job readiness
- Self-efficacy
- Civic knowledge & skills

<http://www.peerresources.org/curriculum/what-is-youth-led-research/>

Standardization as a barrier to anti-poverty education: reducing opportunities to resist

The increasing standardization of pedagogy through undue attention to scripted curriculum and standardized testing threatens to reduce dramatically chances to show that our public urban schools are

- places which actually reproduce inequality, and
- public urban schools are particularly situated to confront and eradicate urban poverty.

It is imperative that our urban schools develop a concrete counter-strategy to these increasingly popular state and national reform policies (NCLB/RTTT) by enabling pedagogical practices and anti-poverty curricula situated in critical analyses of the role of public education in social-economic inequality.

APPENDIX L

A Proposal to Re-invent Disability:

A Strength-Based Individualized Learning Plan for public school special education students

“The problem is not the person with disabilities; the problem is the way normalcy is constructed to create the ‘problem’ of the disabled person.” ~ Leonard Davis, *Constructing Normalcy*

Disproportionality is an issue in most urban public school districts, especially the case for students labeled with the category Special Education. Students with disabilities often do not thrive in standardized and zero tolerance educational systems. A need exists for a truly transformational school concept to foster success in school and life of these students.

History shows a pre-determined focus on the deficits, whether actual, perceived or implied, of student learning abilities. Research shows socio-political-cultural agendas which purposely leave out race, age, gender, class, and strength-based views of humanity when developing special education policies. These agendas enforce an educational paradigm which:

- reduces schooling to standardized activities requiring adopting a “one size fits all” approach, and
- feeds into deficit thinking in which students who do not respond to the standardized approach are labeled at-risk or dis/abled in some way.

When applying a standardized approach, the students who respond best are those who share cultural similarities with those who developed and perpetuate the standardized system. A standardized system is, then, inequitable since it creates unequal outcomes under the guise of creating a fair playing field (Whiteman, et al., 2015).

A Strength-Based Individualized Learning Plan (S-B ILP) is a 21st Century re-envisioning process to focus on the strengths of a student vs. focusing on their deficits in order to reach student potential.

A strength-based ILP will:

- Effectively and efficiently focus on appropriate:
 - Student Strengths vs. Deficits (actual, perceived and implied)
 - Learning choices
 - S.M.A.R.T. Goals
- Help students more easily reach educational and life goals by using their strengths
- Incorporate a “village” approach to addressing the whole student
 - Create a learning culture where uniqueness and difference are “taken for granted” attributes of every child
 - Empower teachers, students, families and communities towards student success in school and life
 - Design trainings for all village members towards belief in the capacity of the students and how to use strengths to address underdeveloped areas, including training in High Operational Practices that demonstrate how the villagers can teach best to elicit the best learning.
- Describe how the student learns best, how the student best demonstrates that learning and what teachers and service providers will do to help the student learn more effectively
- Tailor to the individual student's needs
- Help teachers and related service providers and the student’s “village” better understand the student's disability and how the disability affects the learning process
- Improve results of supplementary support services by adding enrichment and the focus on high intellectual performances
- Reduce disproportionality of mental health, suspensions, expulsions, drop-outs and graduation rates
- Positively affect societal issues such as unemployment, violence, and incarceration

- Guide Special Education policy
- Change our community's view towards inclusion of individuals with disabilities by eliciting and illustrating strengths

As no one student learns at exactly the same rate/speed or in the same way as another student, the S-B ILP investigates where the student is currently and where he/she needs development in a reasonable and realistic manner. Instead of focusing on deficits, the Village of a student and the student his/herself will spend more time working on interests, strengths and realistic developmental needs of the student.

Village members include the student him/herself, student's parents or guardian, child care providers, relatives, past and current teachers, mentors, religious leaders, social/mental health providers, or any other person who is involved with the student on a daily, weekly, monthly or repetitive/periodic basis.

The Villagers are the student's subject matter experts and know the student best. Villagers are invited to participate via INPUT Gathering Form which assists a student in acknowledging and defining their individual interests, strengths and needs that will be discussed at an S-B ILP meeting and used to develop individualized goals for the student that are more realistic and obtainable.

To understand the impacts on a student's learning, Villagers must also understand the student's background. Varied backgrounds can have great effect, positively and negatively, on a student's learning, sometimes creating unspoken biases, and need to be defined and considered in order to establish realistic and obtainable individualized learning choices for a student through establishing Agreed Upon Development/Belief Models through categories labeled: Academic, Psychological, Social/Emotional, Cultural, Religious, Political, Economic, Race, and Family. Villagers give input on the Agreed Upon Development/Belief Models.

Again, the purpose of the S-B ILP is to determine the next free and appropriate learning choices/goals for a student based on a student's interests, strengths, needs and wants towards a future happy, engaged, productive and well-balanced citizen. While it's important for the student to consider the Villager's input about what the Villager's see as the student's interests, strengths and development needs towards self-actualization, it is more important to note that the student has a right to agree, to disagree, maybe agree, maybe disagree and to not have an opinion about any input a Villager may have concerning him/herself. The Villagers have a responsibility in guiding the student towards self-actualization within their discussion during an S-B ILP meeting.

The outcome of the S-B ILP meeting is the development of S.M.A.R.T. goals and Goal Progress forms that are individualized to the student and must have student input in order to be realistic. Whenever possible and depending upon the maturity of the student, the student is responsible to track their progress on their goals by compiling documentation of proof of achievement of the goals throughout the year and for calling a reconvening of the S-B ILP meeting should they accomplish all of their goals prior to the next annual S-B ILP meeting or are finding one or more of their goals to be unrealistic or unobtainable. The Village also has these same responsibilities at all times.

The S-B ILP creates a 21st Century model that allows students to find self-actualization through guided learning and realistic goals while reducing the potential impact of negative societal issues on their lives and the community. Imagine a school system and society that expects individuals to be different, values those differences, and capitalizes on those differences.

© 2014 Patent Pending A Strength-Based ILP is a concept proposed by Merry Juerling of Parent Power 4cameron@indy.rr.com, Mike Sage of the Education-Community Action Team m-sage@comcast.net , and John Harris Loflin of the Black & Latin@ Policy Institute john@bl-pi.org.

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