IDEA 15 Alternative Education: Alternatives *of* the status quo vs. alternatives *to* the status quo

Alternative schools *of* a school district, where students are sent, do not support the students' critique of social institutions. Alternatives *to* the district's schools, which students attend voluntarily, permit students to express their critical stance toward school and other institutions (the media, the church, the police, the government, or the judicial system). Here, such alternatives provide the type of education in which students come to genuinely rethink their relationship to schools and institutions and make important decisions about what success means to them, how they plan to realize their goals, and how barriers can be overcome.

One thing is clear, urban compensatory programs (alternatives *of* the system) attempting to especially force African American youth to deny their own experiences and commonsense views of their life in schools and their neighborhoods are destined for failure.

Framed and pushed out, suspended, expelled…
High schools marginalize many of their students for class, culture, historical and psychological reasons. Students are conceived of as being deficient according to standards reflecting America's dominant culture. To protect themselves, schools silence and delegitimize any negative criticism of school and social institutions. School alienates its unsuccessful students by silencing their culture, norms, and practices--thus influencing youth to blame only themselves for school failure.

However, many students are failures not because they are unintelligent, but because they have negative perceptions of the school and because they are *not* adopting its "achievement ideology" as a response to their lower-class status.

Although the list of why students are expelled or suspended reflect genuine individual situations and/or problems, to what extent are students sent to programs like the alternatives of IPS, due to society and schools? Educator Dietre Kelly in *Last Chance High: How Girls and Boys Drop in and out of Alternative Schools* posits that **norms of traditional schools** (reflecting America's dominant culture) **actually create "misfits**."

> The majority of alternative schools have a negative image because of the 'types' of students who attend them. However, Kelly asks the question: Is who gets defined as deviant and for what reasons a matter of political and economic power? In the social matrix that attempts to define deviant, do some groups have the advantage due to age, gender, class, or race? Kelly argues that schools actually create non-conformity by making rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and then applying the rules, labeling those who break them as 'outsiders' (p. 69). She proves her idea by pointing out the fact that most of the students who are in alternatives have violated white, middle-class gender norms created according to the traditional system's standards of behavior and social/academic success. It is no coincidence that in major urban school districts, Black youth are expelled more often and for longer than their white counterparts (Solida, 2000) and/or sent to alternatives.

Johnston and Wetherwill (1998) conclude: *Many students recognize the importance of learning, but are unwilling to assume the submissive posture in educational institutions which routinely denies them a sense of autonomy and self-worth* (p. 182).

For more see John Harris Loflin's, "Alternative Education's Spoiled Image: why it happened, how it happened, when it happened and what to do about it" pp 13-17, 19-20, 43-46.

http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Alternative-Educations-Spoiled-Image-When-it-happened-how-it-happened-why-it-happened-and-what-to-do-about-it-.pdf