

The limitations of a “college going” culture

A middle-class ideology which ignores poverty and the other pertinent problems IPS students face daily in their neighborhoods

The liberal model of urban education reform makes the mistake of attempting to replicate the schooling ideology of the middle class, emphasizing a "college-going culture." In so doing, it all but

- **ignores the material conditions of urban communities.**
 - *These social toxins, such as poverty, are an “existential threat” and thus are more pertinent to the lives of urban students and are far removed from the rhetoric of college.*

Public schools, especially charters, have “ads” which “guarantee” their students will attend university. What they cannot equally guarantee is graduation, although this is implied in the spiel. Nationally, 41% of African Americans who start college graduate in 6 years. In Indiana the number is 36%. The number for white Hoosiers is 59%. Thus, very few public urban schools are able to prepare students to complete college. This must be addressed realistically with authentic school reform and not with sales pitches or innuendo. <http://measuringup2008.highereducation.org/>

An education with relevance: Increasing college eligibility through using urban schools as sites to contest inequalities

Let’s be clear, urban students should go to college at rates equal to their more affluent counterparts. The point here is a schooling environment that emphasizes the relationship between education and the most pressing conditions in the community, **an education with relevance**, *is most likely to produce notable increases in college eligibility.*

We advocate for an urban education model that

- **utilizes critical counter-cultural communities of practice in urban classrooms which**
 - **developing a critical and engaged citizenry with have a democratic sensibility that**
 - **critiques and acts against all forms of social toxins, especially poverty**

A counter-cultural community of practice recognizes *the existence of a dominant set of institutional norms and practices used to perpetuate inequalities. The community of practice intentionally sets itself up to counter those powerful norms and practices.*

Making college a realistic option

The unique lives and conditions of urban youth deserve an education system that accomplishes two goals in concert with one another:

1. preparation to confront the conditions of social and economic inequity in their daily lives, and
2. access to the academic literacies (reading, writing, math) that make college attendance a realistic option.

This approach to reform is a **double investment in urban communities:**

- it provides pedagogy and curricula that lend immediate relevance to school in the lives of urban youth.
- it also works to break the cycle of disinvestment of human capital in urban communities by
 - creating graduates who recognize their potential agency to improve urban centers and their neighborhoods,
 - rather than seeing them as places to escape.
- These prospects offer:
 - urban students a renewed sense of purpose with regard to school,
 - urban neighborhoods the necessary human and institutional capital to contribute to its social, economic, and political revitalization.

From *The Art of Critical Pedagogy* by Jeff Duncan-Andrade & Ernest Morrell

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