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Colleagues and Friends of the Academy:

Saddened…that is how we are feeling with the publication of Volume 7, Issue 2 of *CQIE*. We are only several days past yet another shooting at yet another public space with yet another too-easily-obtained assault rifle. Our hearts are with the families of those gunned down in Orlando Florida. It seems a critical question in education and society-wide that simply must be addressed. For a nice statement on the matter from educators in the US, see the AERA statement released yesterday.

Before moving onto this issue's articles, your regular Academy update: plans are moving quickly for our two annual meetings. The first of those, a symposium on school/student/teacher perfection is set for beautiful Salt Lake City Utah on October 3rd & 4th and our second meeting (with planning ongoing) will be in New Orleans sometime in February or March. More on that to come in the next several weeks—visit our web site soon for details.

Publishing articles that are often eclectic in subject matter, it's always a bit of a mystery as to how they will ultimately fit together, or not—particularly so in larger issues such as this. However, once again, we have found the connections between articles in this issue…intriguing. The first article by Michael H. Romanowski and Tasneem Amutullah takes us to education reform in Qatar suggesting that critical pedagogy might be the key to that country's successful reform movement. David C. Martin follows this analysis with some social capital thoughts as to why more ethnic minorities and women do not attend the STEM "party" and suggests ways more might be encouraged to do so. Continuing the discussion of issues of social/cultural capital, Gilbert Brown, Beth Hurst, and Cindy Hail make the argument that a crucial aspect of developing the capital required to access our economy can be found in early reading experiences. Mac T. Hines III continues this theme in his examination of white fragility among pre-service administrators. Our regular manuscripts end with Christine D. Kunkel's analysis of indicators of success for graduates of a progressive, urban high school. Dr. Kunkel's discussion centers as well on issues that fall into the question of whose social/cultural capital is most often valued. Finally, Kimberly White reviews a new book edited by James Ryan and Denise Armstrong: *Working (With/Out) the System: Educational Leadership, Micropolitics, and Social Justice*.

And so, we leave you to your reading…and maybe with more meaning than it has had with past issues, we wish our readers and the world generally a good dose of peace…we could certainly use it right about now.

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Applying Concepts of Critical Pedagogy to Qatar's Educational Reform

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Abstract

Qatar is in the midst of a systemic education reform, Education For a New Era, steered by RAND's (a nonprofit research organization) analysis and report of Qatar's Educational system. Driven by a neoliberal agenda, the reform includes international curricula, curriculum standards, teacher licensure, and professional standards for school leaders and teachers produced by international educational consulting firms. These organizations offer policies and practices often limited to an instrumental discourse where technical rules control knowledge with the purpose of controlling the environment. Furthermore, the assessments on reform are limited to post hoc explanations of failure and success centering on test scores and other accountability measures eluding some of the more critical questions and issues important for reformers to consider. In this discussion, we draw upon several concepts from critical pedagogy to raise questions regarding Qatar's neoliberal educational reform and when appropriate, call upon our own experiences teaching and researching in Qatar. This dialogue is neither intended to provide solutions to problems of the Qatari Educational reform nor to point out successes or failures. Rather, it deliberately uses critical pedagogy concepts to raise questions that may have not been considered in order to provide reformers with insight and new knowledge that could prove useful for effective educational reform.

Keywords: *Critical Pedagogy, Qatar, educational reform, neoliberalism*

Introduction

For over three decades, education has been a target of neoliberal reform and countries worldwide have embraced neoliberalism (Zheng, 2010). Often disguised as globalization, "neoliberalism is a complex of values, ideologies, and practices that affect the economic, political, and cultural aspects of society" (Ross & Gibson, 2006, p. 1). In education, neoliberalism emerges as a market ideology where education is viewed as tradable products to be bought and sold in an effort to develop a knowledge economy (Devos, 2003). Thus countries have opened their borders to large-scale transformations of public education creating lucrative businesses with the global education market now valued at $4.4 trillion (up from $2.5 trillion in 2005), with projections for rapid growth the next five years (Strauss, 2013).

Driven by a neoliberal agenda, the State of Qatar has engaged in a systemic education reform, *Education For a New Era* (*EFNE*). Qatar's reform has provided prospects seized by numerous international educational consulting firms. Although knowledgeable about diverse educational theories and practices, consulting firms are limited because of their own context-specific epistemologies that are removed from local epistemologies and cultural sensitivities (Bloch, 2009). A decade has past, millions of US dollars invested and EFNE has shaped and changed education in Qatar. However, the reform's basic foundation and the majority of the modifications and revisions of the reform have centered on the structural or technical aspects of education and schooling eluding some of the more critical questions and issues. We argue the reason is the discourse guiding the reform has stark omissions of critical pedagogy and the questions asked by reformers are limited to the pragmatic aspects of teaching and learning. Denying reformers this source of knowledge is detrimental for effective educational reform because philosophies, theories and interests that underlie education are never addressed and these might prove useful in actually transforming education.

Thus in this paper, we draw upon and inject critical pedagogy into the educational reform in Qatar. The purpose is to demonstrate the importance of considering critical pedagogy as an educational discourse and to raise and challenge basic assumptions reframing this neoliberal educational reform. We argue that educational reformers have a responsibility to explore divergent and critical ideas and not limit reform to the technical or changes that be quantified and measured. In what follows, we apply five selected concepts from critical pedagogy to Qatar's educational reform. These are discourse, voice, culture, pedagogy, and social transformation. The work is not intended to provide "solutions" to the problems and concerns of reform or to point out the "successes or failures," but rather to raise questions that may have not been considered to serve as the basis for the development of an ongoing discussion regarding how critical pedagogy can be utilized to inform and guide education in Qatar.

Neoliberalism and Qatar's Educational Reform

It is important to link educational reform to a wider global context by addressing neoliberalism and the role of exporting and importing educational products and services. Neoliberalism is a global market-liberalism that is based on a market-driven ideology affecting the economic, political, and cultural aspects of society. In the context of education, neoliberalism reflects a market ideology that desires to create an open market for educational services so for-profit educational management organizations can export their educational products (Ross & Gibson, 2006). As governments analyze their educational systems, results often lead to the commodification of the educational sector where importing educational policies and practices from another country is viewed as the means to significantly and quickly improve the educational system and economy. In this view, education policy and practices are considered tradable commodities that can be bought and sold by developing knowledge economies (Devos, 2003).

It is quite clear that Qatar "borrows" educational policies and practices evidenced by the fact that Qatar is currently one of the most active importers of foreign education providers in the world (Becker, 2009). For example, Qatar contracted *The Education Queensland International of Australia* who developed the *Qatar National Standards for Teachers and School Leaders* (*QNPSTSL*) applied in the 2007–2008 academic year. In addition, Cognition Education from New Zealand was highly paid to utilize the *QNPSTSL* to develop Qatar's first system for the registration and licensing of teachers and school leaders (Cherif, Romanowski & Nasser, 2011). It is important

to note that the *QNPSTSL* have been rewritten and the original licensure system no longer exists supporting the idea that one of the outcomes of the neoliberal ideology is increased control of educational systems by introducing numerous reforms and national teacher standards, curriculum and student exams (Apple, 1996).

There are consequences of neoliberalism and the exporting of educational products. First, the motivations of the market and education are opposite. The market's motivation is to satisfy the consumer who has the means to purchase products. However, the motivation of education is the development of sound understandings of knowledge (McMurtry, 1991). Hill (as cited in Cherif, et. al., 2012, p. 473) states,

> The method of the market is to buy or sell the goods it has to offer to anyone for whatever price one can get . . . The method of education is never to buy or sell the item it has to offer, but to require of all who would have it that they fulfill its requirements autonomously . . . Everything that is to be had on the market is acquired by the money paid for it. Nothing that is learned in education is acquired by the money paid for it. (p. 47)

Second, another criticism of educational borrowing is that the influence of culture is omitted or understated. Steiner-Khamsi and Quist (2004) point out, "implicitly, the semantics of globalization promote de-territorialization and decontextualization of reform, and challenges the past conception of education as a culturally bounded system" (p. 5). An important element of borrowed educational products is that "outsiders" develop these educational policies and products. These organizations might have some knowledge about the particular culture but cannot provide the needed in-depth understandings of subtle and important cultural aspects of the leading to mistaken conclusions and generalizations (Dimmock & Walker, 2000). More importantly, these borrowed educational policies provide "cultural exchanges and conflicts that challenge the cultural values and norms of both sending and receiving countries" (Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004, p. 12). The outcome is the receiving culture often passively incorporates the imported policies and products to improve the educational system without necessary reflecting about ways to genuinely strengthen their schools and possibly the agendas of the program importation (Halpin & Troyna, 1995; Steiner-Khamsi & Quist, 2000).

Finally, Hill (2004) and McMurtry (1991) argue that neo-liberalism suppresses critical thinking because of the control of the curriculum, teachers and schools through the use of common practices. Although the ideology of the market encourages learning, this learning is limited to the required and essential skills needed for the particular educational product that has been implemented. This, in turn represses critical thinking allowing little space for raising economic, political, educational and ethical questions that might cast doubt on the product or the process.

Qatar's Educational Reform

In 2001 because of the poor outcomes of the country's educational system based on Secondary students' lower scores in the *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study and the Programme for International Assessment*, the Qatari government grew concerned about the quality of their educational system. The government was alarmed that the country's educational system was "not producing high-quality outcomes and was rigid, outdated, and resistant to reform" (Brewer, et. al., 2007, p. iii). In an effort to shift this trend, the Qatari government contracted *RAND* to conduct a comprehensive examination of Qatar's K-12 education system.

RAND's analysis of the *Qatar Educational System* pointed out "the education provided was of low quality as attested by the proliferation of private tutoring and the high rate of grade retention" (Brewer, et. al., 2007, p. 37). Furthermore, the curriculum was outdated and graduating students did not perform well in either postsecondary education or the workplace and often needed remediation. In addition, the current Qatari educational system "emphasized rote memorization" and the curriculum is "unchallenging" (Brewer, et. al., 2007, p. xviii). Specifically, *RAND's* analysis centered on 14 Confirmation of System Weaknesses identified as the cause for the poor system performance. Very few graduates gained entry into prestigious postsecondary institutions abroad or into the most selective programs at Qatar University and other concerns were employers' complaints of graduates lacking computer, mathematic and leadership skills in addition to the skills to converse and write in English (Brewer, et. al., 2007).

The Qatari government chose a charter school model designed to decentralize education and develop independent schools. Four principles serve as the basis of this model: 1) autonomy for schools, 2) accountability through a comprehensive assessment system, 3) variety in schooling alternatives, and 4) choice for parents, teachers, and school operators. Qatari officials developed a two-pronged approach that included the establishment of government-funded independent schools over a period of several years and the implementation of annual assessments to measure student learning and school performance (Supreme Education Council, 2011). This led to the State of Qatar launching their educational initiative titled *Education for a New Era* (*EFNE*) that was designed to reform public education in 2003 (Qatar National Development Strategy 2011-2016, 2011).

Brewer, et. al. (2007) point out that one essential standard of Qatar's reform is "that no matter what else was to occur, the basic educational elements of a standards based system had to be put in place" (p. xviii). This required element of the reform led to the development of the *National Curriculum Standards for English, Science, Math and Arabic* and the *Qatar National Professional Standards for School Teachers and Leaders* (*QNPSTSL*), a set of professional standards for teachers and administrators (SEC, 2007).

Consequently by utilizing standards produced by western educational organizations, it is evident Qatar has embraced the global phenomenon of standards-based education reforms that includes importing educational commodities and incorporating internationally driven definitions of education, curriculum, instruction and assessment. Over the past decade, *EFNE* has made various changes "incorporating curriculum standards that meet international benchmarks, establishing autonomous schools that foster creativity and critical thinking, and developing evaluation tools that provide the ability to report and track school progress" (Qatar National Development Strategy 2011-2016, 2011, para.2). Qatar has implemented a wide spectrum of reforms. However, our concern is that many of the fundamental educational questions that should be asked about educational reform have been eluded.

Critical Pedagogy and Educational Reform

Despite the perceived problems and failures of education systems, engaging in educational reform demonstrates a persistent faith in the potential of education to improve society, economics and solve some of the pressing social problems. Neoliberal educational reforms are limited and often accepted as a quick solution to complex educational and cultural issues and often any analysis or critique of the imported educational policies and products is limited to the technical aspects of schooling—raising questions that center on the "how to" of education or "what works." Bullough and Goldstein (as cited in Romanowski, 2013, p. 8) argue that "when emphasis is placed on the

technical effectiveness of knowledge, the end result is the reduction of 'moral, aesthetic, educational and political issues to technical problems: why and what are reduced to how" (1984, p. 144). Neoliberal standards-based educational reforms reduce the educational process to "facts" and "laws" that allow for prediction and control. Using these laws, the goal for educational reform is understanding how we should precede eradicating discussion of other more important issues.

We found that in Qatar "teachers are serving the standards, often times in superficial ways. More importantly, there is a concern that the educational system itself has become obsessed with professional standards losing focus of other essential aspects of teaching" (Romanowski & Amatullah, 2014, p. 112). From our experiences, teachers in Qatar seldom address educational discourses that move beyond the technical aspects of teaching and learning omitting or pushing outside the margins important aspects of schooling such as cultural or economic issues. Although acknowledging the importance of educational reformers to consider the effectiveness and "practicality" of education and certainly concerns about the "how to," we argue it is imperative that there is a well-established critique of all aspects of any education. Especially, when educational reform is generated from a neoliberalism agenda.

Critical pedagogy finds its roots in critical theory. Quantz (2015) refers to critical pedagogy as an educational philosophy that calls for transformation of "curriculum and teaching" instead of reproducing the "status quo" (p. 100). Kincheloe (2004) echoes that critical pedagogues challenge the status quo through numerous ways in order for understanding the dissemination of power and politics involved in the system. Furthermore, Burbules and Berk (1999) remark that critical pedagogues foster a "critical capacity in citizens" to identify and "resist such power effects" (p. 1). Giroux (2010) argues that critical pedagogy presents the best opportunity for students to "develop and assert a sense of rights and responsibilities" to reflect on the practicalities of education (p. 1). Critical pedagogy creates awareness of power dynamics and education is a key that can help transform the society and this education ought to be free of inequities.

Freire (1970) coined the term *conscientizacao* that is concerned with the development of "critical consciousness" and may also be called as an *inner voice* that urges the oppressed to work towards liberation. Freire not only called for education to be critical, but also emancipatory (Freire, 1970). For Freire, the "banking method" of education where education is fed to students passively by "receive, memorize, and repeat" is a means of oppression because students are informed on what knowledge to acquire rather than constructing their own knowledge (Freire, 1970, p. 72). Vassallo (2013) also draws from Freire (2000) and distinguishes *adaptation* versus *integration* by arguing that teachers in the current scenario follow adaptation as they tend to transmit knowledge as banking method that is "disconnected from the realities of communities and their struggles" (Vassallo, 2013, pp. 565-566). This is often the case in neoliberal educational reforms where there is an intense focus on passing standardized tests based on curriculum standards in order to provide accountability. Administrators, teachers, parents and students become so concerned with students acquiring predetermined knowledge that there is little time spent on developing students' skills in constructing their own knowledge. More importantly, the knowledge in neoliberal reforms too often lacks the cultural context and epistemologies of the local community—this is often the case in Qatar. On the other hand, integration is what Freire is advocating. For Freire (1987), "Integration results from the capacity to adapt oneself to reality plus the critical capacity to make choices and to transform that reality" (p. 4). Vassallo (2013) further argues that if an individual is not capable of influencing his or her own realities and are forced to adapt to "existing configurations" then, as per Freire, their humanity is in crisis (p. 566).

Quantz (2015) posits that the critical pedagogues claim that the "institutions of society work to create narratives that work in the interest of the privileged and against the interests of the less privileged" (p. 103). This creates hegemonic influence in the society as reforms reinforce the status quo. With regards to schooling, Quantz (2015) clarifies that,

> This hidden curriculum assumes that the purpose of schools is to train workers for the economy, that learning is a technical enterprise requiring clear objectives that can be measured on standardized tests, that students need to be led step-by-step through a series of tasks to master the material, that education is about knowledge and skills, that what works is more important than what is ethical, and that education is a private consumer good accruing to the individual and not a public good benefiting the society as a whole. (p. 106)

Critical pedagogues argue that although schools are responsible for "technical education," they can also function as sites of transformation. Freire (as cited in Vassallo, 2012, p. 565) states that:

> Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity [a pedagogy of dehumanization] 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. (2000, p. 34)

With that in mind, five foundational concepts of critical pedagogy are developed and applied to the current Qatar Education by raising a series of questions that serve the purpose of beginning the process of applying critical pedagogy to educational reform. Our hope is that these questions will begin a dialogue guided by critical pedagogy that raises important issues to be considered in an effort to improve teaching and learning.

Education as a Discursive Practice

In order to comprehend educational reform, it is important to understand the concept and the workings of discourse. Discourse refers to communications reflecting how knowledge, values, ideas and experiences are organized based on language and context but also as ways of thinking and making sense of ideas and thoughts. Foucault (as cited in Thomson, Hall & Jones, 2013, p. 3) describes discourse "as texts and utterances but also as ways of thinking and sense-making and as behaviours, relationships, interactions, and arrangements of signs and material objects. Discourses therefore are not just what is said, but they are also practices." McGregor (2004) explains that discourse is used to build power and knowledge and to regulate and normalize. More importantly, "the circulation of knowledge is part of the social distribution of power. The discursive power to construct a common sense reality that can be inserted into cultural and political life is central in the social relationship of power" (Fiske, 2010, p. 120). The power embedded in discourse allows for the claims and words of those in power to be taken as truth and the words of those not in power, are dismissed as irrelevant, inappropriate, or without substance (Van Dijk, 1993).

Considering education, discourse includes and excludes particular pedagogical practices and knowledge, renders some aspects of education more important than others, and defines what practices and knowledge are legitimate, worthwhile and correct. For example, educational reform

in a neoliberal era utilizes a "traditional" language about schooling that is affixed to a limited worldview. Giroux (1988) argues that the traditional language is embedded in a worldview that centers on "the discourse of behaviorist learning psychology, which focuses on the best way to learn a given body of knowledge, and from the logic of scientific management, as reflected in the back-to-basics movement, competency testing, and systems management schemes" (p. 2). The key point regarding educational discourse is that each discourse defines goals and priorities and includes key elements while neglecting others. This discourse puts forth values in the selected goals and assumes that the particular approach to education is superior to others providing benefits that are not provided by other approaches.

From our experiences in Qatar, we realize the importance of understanding not only the educational but also the social, cultural and economic discourses that impact education. Too often, educational discourse is void of the social, cultural and economic aspects placing many of these beyond critique and outside of the discourse. Furthermore, when it comes to educational reform, the language is vital since the terms selected and used define the many aspects of education and reform. Williams (1985) notes that there are keywords that have multiple meanings and uses. Terms and concepts that find their way into purchased educational products such as capacity, school culture, authentic assessment, educational rigor, equity, high expectations, multicultural education, parent voice, social justice, shared mission and vision, professional development and 21st century skills (just to name a few) have multiple meanings and are open to numerous interpretations that are articulated differently within different contexts. For example, critical thinking is an important concept in the Qatari educational reform with a concern for developing students' "questioning and critical thinking skills" (Rand, 2007, p. 103). Romanowski and Nasser (2011), using Elder and Paul's (1994) work, suggest the way critical thinking is understood in *Education for a New Era* centers on a weak sense of critical thought keeping cultural positions intact while avoiding or dismissing controversies. This prevents students from "developing what Freire (2000) termed a critical consciousness, that is the ability to analyze and critically examine social, political, and economic oppression and to take action against the oppressive elements of society" (Romanowski & Nasser, 2011, p. 121). This illustrates how discourses and the language embedded in those discourses can take a different form as they are applied in various contexts.

In conclusion, not understanding education as a discursive practice limits educators' ability to seriously examine the ideologies, assumptions and the language of educational reform. Instead, they become victims who passively accept the dominant education discourse and the resulting practices. This ability is needed in order to analyze neoliberal and traditional view of schoolings but also should be able to offer new and culturally relevant possibilities for schooling.

Considerations for Qatar's Reform

Educational reformers in Qatar need to be able to engage in discourse analysis that is skeptical of imported educational products while at the same time remaining aware of and skeptical of their own discourses. Reformers must be able to raise questions that allow for the interrogation of taken-for-granted and dominant discourses and at the same time be able to offer countering discourses. Questioning of discourses allows for other discourses to emerge that create new possibilities and choices, and in turn, different actions and a different language. The following questions might be considered when interrogating educational discourses, specifically in Qatar:

1. What are the Qatari economic, social, cultural, and political contexts in which the educational reform is taking place? What role do these play in shaping education?
2. What type of discourse(s) is favored by the *Supreme Education Council* and others involved in the reform?
3. How do particular discourse(s) define key educational concepts and theories?
4. How do these educational theories play out in the actual implementation of the reform? Are these appropriate and relevant to the Qatari context?
5. What assumptions are embedded in the particular educational practice, theory or policy?
6. How are specific practices understood and are they aligned with Qatari culture, values and goals?
7. If concepts and theories are aligned and changed, what has this modification done to the actual concept or theory?
8. How can this educational policy or product be adapted to better suit the educational context and purpose of Qatar without losing its fundamental elements?
9. What are possible alternatives to this particular educational product and practice?

Voice

Simply stated, the concept of voice means the values, opinions, experiences, perspectives and the socioeconomic and cultural background of the school and community. McLaren (2007) writes,

> *voice* refers to the multifaceted and interlocking set of meanings through which students and teachers actively engage in dialogue with one another. *Voice* is an important pedagogical concept because it alerts teachers to the fact that all discourse is situated historically and mediated culturally and derives part of its meaning from interaction with others. . . The term *voice* refers to the cultural grammar and background knowledge that individuals use to interpret and articulate experience. (p. 244)

Voice can be a formalized part of organizational structure and/or informal, taking the opinions of students, teachers, and parents with no formal obligation. However, the concept of voice is based on the belief that by empowering teachers and students schools can improve

> e.g., that teachers will be more effective and professionally fulfilled, that students will learn and achieve more, and that parents will feel more confidence in the school and more involved in their child's education—if school leaders both consider and act upon the values, opinions, beliefs, and perspectives of the people in a school and community. (Hidden Curriculum, 2014)

The concept of voice has grown in popularity in recent decades and is viewed as a movement away from the hierarchical forms of school leadership, or the top-down decision-making that often plagues schools. These hierarchical leadership styles offer trivial, little, or no input from teachers, parents and students—voice provides an alternative. It is vital that schools understand and realize the value of different lifestyles, ethnic backgrounds, belief systems, life experiences and ways of understanding the world. These differences are at the core of critical pedagogy. Although we refer to the term voice in this discussion, it is worth noting that we are not arguing or

promoting the idea of a singular concept of voice that applies to one particular group, i.e. teachers, because rarely is there a unified set of values, beliefs, perspectives, or cultural background representative of any one group. Rather, we advocate that underrepresented voices be heard—student voices, teacher voices, and parent voices.

Considerations for Qatar's Reform

Most of the time educational reforms are a top-down process and top-down reforms not only silence stakeholders but also hamper desirable reform (Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996). This is the case in Qatar where the educational sector is experiencing a rapid developing top-down reform (Ibnouf, Dou & Knight, 2013). In addition, a lack of communication and shared vision among educational stakeholders in *Education for a New Era* has resulted in a top-down decision-making policy (Brewer, et. al. 2007). Not to over generalize, but this top-down approach is common in Middle Eastern organizations. Danielewicz-Betz (2013), notes "Middle eastern organizations are characterized by a one-way top-down flow of information and influence from authoritarian leader to subordinates" (p. 142). This is not different in schools where leadership is neither totally authoritative nor modern; however there *is* an issue of protecting power. The work culture in the Middle East focuses on following set policies and procedures because "questioning orders and policies is considered a mistake. Consequently is the difficult to get things done until the boss explicitly says to do so" **(**Danielewicz-Betz, 2013, p. 141). Hence, there is little room for the concept of voice to develop in many of these institutions, including schools.

Teacher Voices

We would argue that one of most significant factors in critical pedagogy is the teacher's voice because teachers are the gatekeepers between knowledge, culture, the school and the student. Teachers need to learn the language of critical pedagogy and begin to ask important questions to inject critical pedagogy into the educational discourse. However as previously mentioned, the top-down approach to educational reform in Qatar has silenced teachers' voices rendering them insignificant. More importantly in Qatar, teachers have expressed their feelings of alienation regarding their lack of involvement in decision-making (Nasser & Romanowski, 2011). Several questions should be considered:

1. What role do/should teachers play in the leadership of Qatar Independent Schools?
2. What role do/should teachers have regarding the design and use of school curricula and assessments, selection of academic texts, and learning technologies?
3. Do teachers have a say in teacher-performance evaluations, including the criteria used to define effective teaching?
4. Are teachers directly involved in selecting the types of professional development offered? Why or why not?
5. What roles do teachers play in school-leadership decisions?

Fullan and Miles (1992) point out all large-scale change is implemented locally and the only way that change happens is through the effective daily implementation by principals, teachers, parents and students. In order for teachers' voices to emerge and play a significant role in Qatari

schools, there is a need to rethink the role of teachers toward one that views teachers as an important part of the education making process in schools.

Parent Voices

Parent involvement in school activities and support of their children is important for all students and particularly important for students who struggle in school, such as students from lower-income or students with physical or learning disabilities. Traditionally, parental voices are limited consisting of parent-teacher organizations to serving on school committees and volunteerism in elementary schools. Our concern is that parental voice is authentic and not simply trivialized. There are several questions that should be considered:

1. What role do/should parents in Qatar play in school leadership and instructional decision-making?
2. What role do/should parents in Qatar have regarding the selection, design and use of school curricula and assessments, as well as the selection of academic texts and learning technologies?
3. How do principals, teachers and parents understand parental involvement and its role in education?
4. Do parents and teachers agree or disagree about parental engagement in school and learning?
5. What are the attitudes, perceptions and cultural factors that might interfere with parent access to schools?
6. What is required to find meaningful ways of involving parents in their child's education?

One of the major concerns for principals and teachers in the Qatari independent schools is the lack of parental support and involvement (Romanowski, Cherif, Al Ammari & Al Attiyah, 2013). There is a need for a cultural change in the role of parents in education. This requires that parents in Qatar do not see education as isolated to the school building but rather that they play a significant role in their child's education.

Student Voices

Student voice in schools is usually limited to student-led government where most activities deny students any authentic contributions to the school. Regarding educational reforms in *Gulf Corporation Countries* (*GCC*), "students have not played a role as their voices have not been heard" (Booz & Company, 2013, p. 44). We argue that the voices and needs of students are often absent from the educational discourse that surrounds them. In order to begin the discussion of the potential role of students' voices in the school, the following questions should be considered:

1. Are students' experiences considered in curriculum?
2. Does student voice play a role in instructional decisions?
3. Do students make authentic contributions to the school?
4. Do students have opportunity to contribute to leadership decisions?
5. Are students' perspectives included in the larger policy and practice influencing decisions from which students are generally excluded but which determine their lives in school?
6. Are there ways that students can be involved in selecting educational resources and materials?

7. Can students be given more choices over learning content, products, and processes in the classroom?

Culture

One of the key criticisms of educational borrowing is that the process denies or understates the influence of culture. Culture is "a form of production, specifically, as the ways in which human beings make sense of their lives, feelings, beliefs, thoughts, and wider society" (Giroux, 1997, p. 125). Culture plays a significant role in shaping student identities, values and how they live out and make sense of the world. Included in culture are practices, ideology and issues of power, therefore they must be considered vital elements of schooling and education. McLaren (2007) argues

> schooling always represents an introduction to, preparation for, and a legitimation of particular forms of social life. It is always implicated in relations of power, social practices and the favoring of forms of knowledge that support a specific vision of the past, present and future. (p. 188)

Thus, particular forms of culture and knowledge are legitimized within schools. Darder (1991) states,

> Unlike traditional perspectives of education that claim to be neutral and apolitical, critical pedagogy views all education theory as intimately linked to ideologies shaped by power, politics, history and culture. Given this view, schooling functions as a terrain of ongoing struggle over what will be accepted as legitimate knowledge and culture. In accordance with this notion, a critical pedagogy must seriously address the concept of cultural politics by both legitimizing and challenging cultural experiences that comprise the histories and social realities that in turn comprise the forms and boundaries that give meaning to student lives. (p. 77)

Since Qatar considers its culture with immense pride and importance (Seddiqi, 2012), the concept of culture should be at the center of educational policies and practices. "According to the Qatari Ministry of Culture, Youth and Community Development, prioritizing and maintaining the cultural and national identity of the Qatari people is essential when coping with the changing dynamics resulting from globalization" (Seddiqi, 2012, p. 5). There is a concern in Qatar that the country "is facing a loss of such an identity due to having to adhere to global educational standards and policies that neglect their own culture" (Seddiqi, 2012, p. 3).

Regarding schooling and culture, a fundamental aspect of culture and schooling is that if educators fail to acknowledge students' culture as a legitimate form of knowledge they "often devalue students by refusing to work with the knowledge that students actually have and so eliminate the possibility of developing a pedagogy that links school knowledge to the differing subject relations that help to constitute their everyday lives" (Giroux & Simon, 1989, p. 3). Furthermore, there is a need to move culture beyond the individual student and develop a cultural analysis in order to gain complex understandings on how culture and traditions impacts education and learning.

Considerations for Qatar's Reform

1. What are the academic, social, and behavioral expectations established by independent schools and educators?
2. What relationship is there between classroom work and the diverse lives of students outside the school?
3. Are students from different cultural backgrounds held to the same expectations?
4. What are the values promoted by independent schools, educators, and peer groups?
5. Do independent schools recognize, integrate, and honor diversity and multicultural perspectives in the school and curriculum?
6. What are the ideological, cultural, or ethical messages conveyed to students by teachers and the curriculum?
7. How do the political, social and cultural pressures impact education?
8. Are there cultural limitations that impact education in Qatar?
9. How can we incorporate students' culture without trivializing it?

Pedagogy: Teachers as Transformative Intellectuals

There is little doubt that educational reform ultimately relies on teachers. Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) argue that most of the time educational reforms are a top-down process and these top-down reforms not only silences teachers' voices but also hamper reform. More importantly, "the major concern with standards-based educational reforms is that educators' work is in jeopardy of being reduced to technical activities or skills designed to produce outcomes based on professional standards eliminating discussion on important political, social, ethical and educational issues" (Romanowski, 2013, p. 6).

We know the work of teachers is not neutral and teaching is not just technical. Educational reform has the tendency to emphasize the technical or practical aspects of teaching that reduces teachers to simple technicians: "uncritical, "objective," and "efficient" distributors of information who neglect the more critical aspects of culture and schooling (Giroux & McLaren, 1996, p. 304). This is the case with most educational reforms where "successful teaching is defined as treating knowledge as objective; avoiding moral and political controversy by remaining neutral; mastering a predetermined sets of teaching methodologies; and accepting and maintaining the political and economic status quo" (Romanowski & Oldenski, 1998, p. 112). The problem is that too often educational reformers lack confidence in the ability of teachers.

Educational reforms assume and present pedagogy in an unproblematic way centering on the improvement of teacher "training" and methodologies omitting the idea that teaching demands the integration of thinking and practice. The role of teachers is often that of a passive recipient of professional knowledge similar to Freire's (1970/2000) notion of banking where professional development programs serve as depositors of information. More importantly, too many reformers and teachers think that schools can be reformed through a process of merely developing curriculum, implementing new modes of instruction, and improving classroom management.

However, critical pedagogy points out that teaching is more than simply carrying out predetermined lessons. Rather, teachers develop into what is termed "transformative intellectuals who combine scholarly reflection and practice in the service of educating students to be thoughtful, active citizens" (Giroux, 1988, p. 122). When considering teachers as intellectuals, it is important to illuminate the idea that all aspects of teaching involve thinking regardless of how routinized

teaching may become or how technical teacher education is. Teachers must be reflective practitioners and not performers professionally equipped to realize effectively any goals that may be set for them. In this sense, teachers must critically engage and challenge the discourses and practices that shape them moving beyond the simple mastery of techniques and methodologies.

We would argue that teachers in independent schools are more concerned with mastering particular pedagogical techniques rather than analyzing the historical, economic, social, cultural and philosophical underpinnings of the schooling process. Too often they are passive recipients of professional knowledge (Zeichner, 1983). Bombarded with needed professional development programs and heavy demands in the school and classroom, teachers are more concerned with developing these technical teaching skills rather than developing into reflective practitioners who engage in reflection that moves beyond the technical aspects of teaching. However in Qatar, there are two other elements that hamper developing teachers into transformative intellectuals. First, there is a lack of space where teachers can engage in critical inquiry applied to more than pedagogical concerns. Second, Many teachers in the independent schools are unqualified. According to the *Supreme Education Council* (2011), more than 30% of teachers in Qatar are not qualified to teach and 31% of teachers in Qatar have no formal qualifications to teach (Supreme Education Council, 2011). Not only do these teachers lack the pedagogical skills but they also often have limited experience engaging in meaningful reflection.

Considerations for Qatar's Reform

1. Do teachers reflect on the purpose of education?
2. Are teachers able to critically analyze the ideologies, values, and interests that inform their roles as teachers?
3. Are teachers able to question and challenge domination, and the beliefs and practices that dominate them?
4. Have they developed a critical stance and interrogate existing norms (e.g., curriculum and academic achievement)?
5. Do teachers understand the power of knowledge?
6. Consider the following:
    A. What counts as curriculum knowledge?
    B. How is such knowledge produced?
    C. How is such knowledge transmitted in the classroom?
    D. Who has access to legitimate forms of knowledge?
    E. Whose interest does this knowledge serve?
    F. How do prevailing methods of evaluation serve to legitimize existing forms of knowledge (Giroux, 1988, p. 17-18)?

These questions begin to develop an alternative discourse that teachers can utilize to understand why things are the why they are. Teachers gain insights into the reasons for some of the pedagogical problems they face and although teachers may not be able to "solve" problems that occur in schools, understanding why these issues emerge and localizing the issues provides them with an understanding of the impact of the larger society of schooling and them as teachers.

Social Transformation

For many philosophers such as Dewey, Freire, Greene, Horton and Banks, the relationship between education and society is that knowledge and society keep changing and people learn from their experiences in society (Singer & Pezone, 2003). Further, it was Durkheim (1897/1951) who argued that "education can be reformed only if society itself is reformed . . . [education] is only the image and reflection of society. It imitates and reproduces the latter…it does not create it" (pp. 372-373). Hoenisch (2005) draws from Durkheim and states that society influences the educational system that constructs "what a human should be" especially the way a human being ought to function in a society. Furthermore, as an educational system, its practices and policies are a collective act and not individual. Durkheim believes that education is shaped by the society and when the society transforms, education can also be reformed. Barber (1987) argues from a Durkheimian perspective that society influences education considerably. Further, he states "Institutions passively reflect and reproduce the culture of the society. Institutions such as schools, do not transform or change society but they are changed by it" (Barber, 1987, p. 216).

In contrast, for Freire, dialogue is a prerequisite that ought to be a crucial part of the education process that helps people to acquire knowledge that in turn transforms the society (Shor, 1987). Freire (as quoted in Singer & Pezone, 2003) shared Dewey's desire to stimulate students to become "agents of curiosity" in a "quest for...the 'why' of things," and his belief that education provides possibility and hope for the future of society" (p. 9). Singer and Pezone (2003) add that the dialogic communication between the student and the teacher creates opportunity for student-centered educational practices that helps actively generate knowledge and students begin to realize their responsibility as active citizens in the society.

The correlation between education and transformation is well articulated by Manzoor Ahmed who emphasizes the need for understanding the interaction between society and education. Through a pragmatic lens, he argues that education and learning are "both the means and the purpose of building sustainable societies, where human potential is unlocked and human dignity and rights are cherished" (Ahmed, 2010, p. 511).

Unlike Durkheim, Barber (1987) argues that society is not the only factor that influences the education system, rather the relationship between the two is more complex and is "not a simple one of the cause and effect" (p. 225). Barber (1987) further believes that "the social conditions of an age certainly influence education but society speaks to education in many conflicting voices, and schools themselves define and pursue their own goals" (p. 225). Barber (1987) argues that education serves as an influential force in transforming the society. From our experiences in educational settings, we believe that there is a lack of awareness of societal impact on education from many stakeholders. Based on our previous critical pedagogy concepts discussion, we see that there is a lack of teacher voices, parental involvement, and the need to embed culture that are the prerequisites to social transformation. Therefore, we argue that schools should be seen as more than information factories. Rather schools should be viewed as a resource for society where social problems can be addressed. Especially since education and society are intricately interwoven in a way that there is a mutual influence on both, education influences society and society influences education.

Considerations for Qatar's Reform

Educational reform is always considered as a crucial component for social transformation. However, it is essential to understand that there are several other factors that influence an educational reform prevalent in any society (Michingambi, 2014). From the *Qatar National Vision 2030*, it is evident that Qatar is making progress transforming on a wider platform including economic, social, human, and environmental development (General Secretariat for Development Planning, 2008). However, it is necessary to understand that schools alone cannot transform education. Questions to consider:

1. What is the role of Qatari society, culture and traditions in educational reform?
2. What is the purpose of education and what does it mean as a process of social self-formation?
3. Are all stakeholders represented in the educational system?
4. Are leaders, teachers, parents and stakeholders aware of the influence of society on educational practices?
5. Is there an emphasis in schools on the development of responsible active citizens? How does the Qatari educational system define and develop responsible active citizens?
6. Do schools develop students who embrace human rights?

Conclusion

The purpose of this work is to serve as a beginning for considering and constructing an analysis of Qatar's educational reform guided by critical pedagogy. Those involved in educational reform in *GCC's* might have little experience or knowledge about critical pedagogy and this effort might be the first step in injecting critical pedagogy into educational reform. Toward that end, we provide some guiding question throughout to serve as a catalyst for the interrogation of discourse and borrowed educational policies and practices. In this context, Giroux (1994) raises an important point: "educational reform warrants more than appeals to glitzy technology and the commercialization of curricula; it needs a public discourse that makes an ethical, financial, and political investment in creating schools that educate all students" (p. 57). Failing to question Qatar's fundamental cultural, economic, and social issues is detrimental for effective educational reform because gained insights could prove useful in developing effective reforms. Educational reform cannot be a top-down activity but that it must circulate throughout the school, communities, and society. Reformers and all stakeholders must scrutinize taken-for-granted ideas and practices. There is a need to engage in cultural reflection, develop a language of possibility, and develop schools that they believe are effective and appropriate for their particular context and not defer to outsiders who sell their educational products.

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It's not my Party: A Critical Analysis of Women and Minority Opposition towards STEM

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Abstract

The civil rights era promised an invitation for equity and equality in education was on its way. The invitation was lost in the mail or it is a party that the "marginalized" do not want to attend. In 2004, the National Science Board (NSB) identified a critical shortage of workers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields that will be needed by the year 2020. It was stated that the percentage of women choosing math and science courses dropped by four percent from 1993 to 1999.[1] Absent is the mention of the development of social and cultural capital of gendered, minority, or traditionally marginalized students. Further, there has not been an appreciable increase of women and minority participation in STEM.[2] Why has the invitation's acceptance rate been so low? The purpose of this paper is to offer a critical analysis of how the general disregard for students' lived experiences contributes to the silencing of expression of women and under-represented groups. In this paper, I examine progressive and scientific discourses from the vantage point of critical social theory, theories of ideology/worldviews, and an extended Input-Environment-Output model.[3] I then present a case for why a focus on social and cultural capital would enhance participation in STEM. The hope and possibilities for the future is a return to civil rights era concerns that enhances student educational expression and engagement in a meaningful way.

Keywords**:** *civil rights, STEM, education, multiculturalism, Critical Theory*

Introduction

I was 10 in 1964 when the Civil Rights Act was signed into law. In 1969, the peace movement of the sixties was at its height. I was 15. With images of students protesting against an unpopular war in Southeast Asia, I was 15 when I became aware that others were not as privileged as I. Prejudice was an issue discussed in schools and at home. Between school desegregation in the U.S. South and the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy, his brother Senator Robert Kennedy, and the preeminent leader of the civil rights movement Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis—the world

1. National Science Board, *An Emerging and Critical Problem of the Science and Engineering Labor Force*, 2004.

2. National Science Board, 2020 *Vision for the National Science Foundation*, 2005.

3. Alexander W. Astin & Antonio, Anthony Lising, *Assessment for Excellence: The philosophy and Practice of Assessment and Evaluation for Higher Education, 2nd Edition* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2012).

seemed on the verge of chaos. Further, we were made aware of the critical importance of farm labor as Cesar Chavez was instrumental in establishing the United Farm Workers Union between 1966 and 1972. These were the years of my high school experience and I graduated when I was eighteen. I am now 60. All of these events marked the Civil Rights era.

Today there exists a growing wealth gap, continued poverty, and predatory English-only language policies which tend toward the restriction of women and minority participation in higher education.[4] Gender and ethnic biases continue to relegate many women and minorities to marginal economic participation. Women and minorities tend to be paid less for the same type of work performed by men.[5] These experiences, combined with the attacks on public education, make me acutely aware that we are facing serious challenges to the American freedoms and hopes that were fought for during the civil rights era.

For me, the most troubling realization is that many of the groups, and individuals, involved in the turmoil of the sixties and seventies continue to move through our lives unseen and unheard. African American, Hispanic, and White voices that should ring in solidarity against oppression are silenced by a social, political, and capitalist system that affords a class system and hinders human thriving. From a Christian perspective, forgotten is the interchange in Matthew 22: 34-40 between Jesus of Nazerath and the Jewish scholars of the time,

> When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them [a scholar of the law] tested him by asking, "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: *You shall love your neighbor as yourself*. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments." [6]

Schools form a platform where students express their worldviews, or tacit ideologies, formulated through family, culture, formal and informal education. Several questions remain, and are followed by new ones: (a) what civil rights era challenges continue to impact under-represented minorities and women? (b) What are the results of aligned, or misaligned, university students' worldviews and institutionalized ideologies and worldviews? (c) Despite explicit recruitment campaigns, why aren't there more women and minorities in STEM?

This article addresses social and cultural capital development,[7] gender differences, race, and ethnicity expression that began to be exposed in the sixties and remain today. Further, a link

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4. Antonia Darder, *Culture and Power in the Classroom: Educational Foundation for the Schooling of Bicultural Students 20th Aniversary* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2012); Donaldo Macedo et al, *The Hegemony of English* (Boulder,CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2003); Peter McLaren, *Life in Schools*: *An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education, 6th Edition* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2014).

5. Michael Apple, *Official Knowledge*: *Democratic Education in a Conservative Age, 3rd Edition* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2014); Henry Giroux, *On Critical Pedagogy* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011).

6. American Bible Society, *The New American Bible* (Philadelphia, PA: American Bible Society, 2002), emphasis added.

7. Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," *Handbook of Theory of Research for Sociology of Education*, edited by John G. Richardson, translated by Richard Nice, 46-58 (New York: Greenword Press, 1986); Lindsay Perez Huber, , "Challenging Racist Nativists Framing: Acknowledging the Community Cultural Wealth of Undocumented Chicana College Students to Reframe the Immigration Debate," *Harvard Educational Review* 79 (4), 2009: 704-729; Tara J. Yosso, , "Whose Culture has Capital? A Critical Race Theory Discussion of Community Cultural Wealth," *Race Ethnicity and Education* 8 (1), 2005: 69-91.

is made between these unresolved social issues and resistence to STEM participataion by women and underserved minorities.

Worldviews and Ideology

Individuals acquire ideological frameworks which form the basis of belief. These frameworks of understanding are formed, or constructed, in their social experience of informal and formal education. Ideologies become contained in the individual's broader worldviews[8].

Worldviews are representative of the individual's familial, cultural, and ethical thinking. Lucien Goldman defines worldviews as "coherent and unitary perspectives concerning man's relationships with his fellow man and with the universe."[9] Primary worldviews, such as Secular Materialism and Humanism, along with Theological Pantheism and Monotheism, are rooted in meta-narratives that may express possible truths.[10] The incoherence of individual belief systems are so grounded in tacit theories and tacit generalizations that we can rarely extrapolate truth from worldviews to the positions taken by individuals.[11]

Embedded in US cultures are the many ideologies which can be framed within four global worldviews and ideologies. Frames, idealism, or secular beliefs articulate a possible utopia which human beings are capable of bringing into existence. The U. S. academy was founded historically in the Protestant Christian worldview.[12] Over time, the Protestant ethos has been challenged, or given way, to more global or pluralistic ones. Worldviews play out in the academy. Student responses to socially constructed and embedded worldviews can be understood within the Extended Input-Environment-Output model (Figure 1). This model provides insight into students' situated experience of satisfaction, alienation, tension, or neutrality brought about by alignment, or misalignment, of university environment.

Extended Input-Environment-Output Model (EIEO)

The nature of a student, what they bring to college, their expectations, family background (inputs), contributes to the levels of involvement given and taken. Moreover, the school faculty, administration, and counseling available to the student (the environment) impact involvement and satisfaction.[13]

The contention is that the effort toward content development, teaching technique, and facilities play partial roles in student involvement (outcomes). What the student brings to the university (their inputs) are considered as they relate motivationally and behaviorally to potentially encourage positive outcomes and favorable experiences for all. The ultimate result is a focus on the possible measurable outcomes from learners' higher educational experiences. Table 1 (below) represents a sample of some of the inputs, environmental, and output variables that could be measured.

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8. Pierre Bourdieu & Passeron, Jean-Claude, *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture*, translated by Richard Rice (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Inc., 1977/1990); Ninian Smart, *Worldviews: Crosscultural Explorations of Human Beliefs, 3rd Edition* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson, 1999).
9. Lucien Goldmann, *Essays on Method in the Sociology of Literature* (St. Louis: Telos Press, Ltd. 1980), 111.
10. Mary Poplin, *Is Reality Secular?* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2014).
11. James Paul Gee, *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourse* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 16.
12. George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).
13. Astin & Antonio, *Assessment for Excellence.*

To understand inputs, one reflects on the personal qualities of the learner. For example, the abilities, challenges, and worldviews that a student brings to their university experience. Environment represents the external factors in terms of the learner's studies and may be thought of as treatment. The environment, such as program and policy considerations, varies. Environment leads in combination with inputs to outcomes. Outcomes become the results, or dependent variables, that are affected by the inputs and environmental conditions surrounding the student.

The extend I-E-O model (Figure 1below) engages our attention in the student context of inputs and the relationship of those inputs to the university environment. The student brings certain worldviews, defined above as combined tacit and reasoned beliefs. These beliefs provide experiences influenced in culture and language. The school and classroom environment influences the student educational experience. Teachers, curriculum, and peers interact as stimulus in the experience of the learner.

The hypotheses are that if the learner positively identifies with the environment their overall satisfaction level should be positive. On the other hand, assimilation, or subordination, would afford a negative assessment and would lead to increased alienation and tension. Assimilation, or subordination, means that worldviews (Ideologies, religion, cultures, language) of the classroom are supplanted, or privileged, over those of the learner's home or living community. An example of this would be when a student is encouraged to adopt U.S. cultural norms and English while rejecting a competing religion, language, or culture of their home environment.

Accommodation, or compartmentalization, is less intrusive. The student may feel neutral about adoption of the school/classroom worldview milieu while maintaining his or her home worldview. The experience is modified by his or her ability to live in two worlds. However, if the learner feels pressured to assume the worldview of the teacher/class, the student could reflect a tension and alienation similar to the assimilation scenario. For instance, if the student is able to reflect and reproduce responses that yield a positive grade, then he or she is not asked to denounce his or her home worldview. They would indicate positive or neutral satisfaction. However, living in two different worlds could lead to a negative identity and not fitting in anywhere.

The last scenario would occur when the pupil is presented with a neutral learning environment. Teaching and learning is highly political.[14] On the part of either the teacher, or the student, bias is virtually impossible to resist. This scenario is assumed dubious and highly unlikely.

In the next section I link the extended I-E-O with the concepts of capital that are embedded in Critical Theory. This linkage enlightens any disconnect between student worldviews and those embedded in academic institutions.

Table 1: *Input – Environment – Output Model*

Input	Environment	Outputs
Sex (Gender)	Faculty	Satisfaction
Major in School	Facilities/Labs	GPA
Ability	Courses	Retention (Completion and Drop out)

14. Apple, *Official Knowledge*; Henry A. Giroux, , "Schooling and the Myth of Objectivity: Stalking the Politics of the Hidden Curriculum," *McGill Journal of Education* 17 (1981): 282-304; Darder, *Culture and Power*.

Ethnicity	Programs	PhD productivity
Family Background	Peer group interaction	
College Entrance Exam Scores	Language in context	
Home Language		

Note: Partial listing and sampling for the I-E-O model[15]

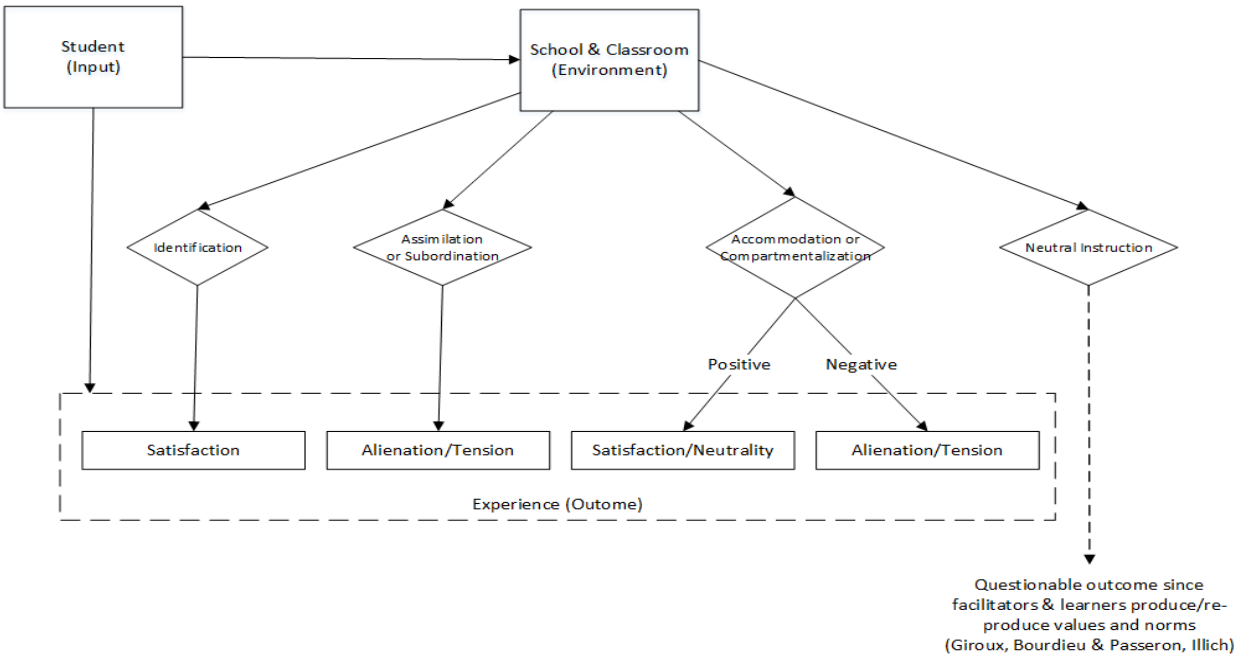

Figure 1. Possible Teaching and Learning Outputs

Critical Theory: Power, Language, and Capital

The examination of power, language, and capital situates student experiences (both inputs and environments) within the work of Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron.[16] In their seminal work, Bourdieu and Passeron have shown empirically that educational systems cannot be seen as separate social arrangements, but should be seen in the context of the larger social class context. Horkheimer and Adorno explain that this larger context consists of is the capitalist system, or environment in the model, producing divisions of labor, engendering the class system, and relegating many to lower classes in socio-economic, race, ethnicity, and gender oppression.[17] This is the environment experienced by women, minorities, and the underserved.

15. Astin & Lising, *Assessment for Excellence*.
16. Bourdieu & Passeron, *Reproduction.*
17. Max Horkheimer & Adorno,Theodor W., *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philisophical Fragments*, edited by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, translated by Edmond Jephcott (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2007).

As a white male and native English speaker, I have limited access to Feminist and Critical Ethnic and Race Theories. However, I find and maintain solidarity in the concepts of traditional Critical Theory (Frankfurt School) and Critical Pedagogy of Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren. To clarify, I understand a common universal dignity of all human beings as articulated in Roman Catholic Humanism.[18] The root of the discussion is that civil rights contain, amongst other things, education.

Critical Theory provides me a lens with which I can view the issues facing the poor and working class. Horkheimer and Adorno outline Enlightenment Philosophy and metaphors that describe how oppression in power and class is engendered in social and gender inequalities. Oppression is inherent, or essential, in the nature of capitalist systems. The issues of power, class, and status play roles in the oppression of the working and disenfranchised classes. The myth of scarce resources in a capitalist system propitiates the injustice of a system rooted in division of labor which promotes class structures where there are haves and have-nots.

Capital

Bourdieu and Passeron provide the conception of various forms of capital and its production, and reproduction, in society and particularly education. The capitalist system embodies economic, cultural and social capital in a mythical free market. Within the systems, forms of capital are amassed through one's thoughts (intellectual property), work, or effort. Once acquired, capital may then be expended, or exchanged for goods, services, or information with, or from, others. Goods are acquired with economic capital—purchased with wages and inherited capital. Information allows certain individuals to navigate their world in markets. The possibility of obtaining current and future goods, services, or information holds the promise that capital, as a thing, may be continually fabricated and acquired to be used as needed.[19]

Work and effort may be exchanged as a currency, or a medium of exchange, which allows one to increase capital. In the case of money, one may work, or inherit, discretionary funds in order to acquire those things which we need or desire. Money represents the product of economic capital. The means of production is owned and operated by the bourgeois for themselves and their heirs.

Economic capital is converted to social capital which allows individuals to associate and exchange the knowledge and objective knowledge of how to produce and reproduce. Qualifications for cultural capital may be certified through educational institutions. Social capital may be used to inherit, or earn, status, title, and contacts. Social and cultural capital may be used in repeated attainment of economic capital.[20]

Cultural Capital

Cultural capital exists in three forms/states: embodied, objectified, and institutionalized. Embodied state represents long-lasting dispositions as conditions of mind and body. Objectified state exists in forms of pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, technology, etc. Cultural capital exists in the Institutions of a society, i.e. the banks, schools, and means of production, such as

18 . Joseph Ratzinger & Habermas, Jürgen, *The Dialectics of Secularization: On Reason and Religion*, edited by Florian Schullar, translated by Brian McNeil (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006).

19. Jean Anyon, "Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work," *Journal of Education* 162 (1), 1980: 65-92; Michael Apple, "The Hidden Curriculum and the Nature of Conflict," *Interchange* 2 (4), 1970: 27-40.

20. Bourdieu, "Forms of Capital."

factories and businesses. Cultural capital in various forms are combined and earned, or distributed, in schools, churches, community centers, and country clubs.

There is an unequal distribution of cultural capital as evidenced in the varying quality of educational institutions and businesses. The inequality is a result of managed, monopolistic, and oligopolistic markets. Unequal cultural capital is inculcated in the capitalist class system. The education system reproduces capital.

Embodied State

The habit of mind, for example management capability, worker ethic, spiritual questing, etc., is created in the time spent in formal and informal learning. As one acquires these habits of mind, or inclinations toward a cultural state, he or she begins to bank cultural capital. The amount of cultural capital that can be developed by any individual depends on the aptitude of that individual to produce more capital. The capacity is related to the context, the purpose, and for what society it is intended. For example, an urban dweller may acquire and have the capacity to use the subway or public transportation with ease. They may not acquire, or have, the capacity to cure meat, grow chickens, etc. that might be available to a rural farmer.

The habit of mind and the ability to accumulate capital is embedded within the family or through kinship relationships. The acquisition and storage of family related capital in its embodied form is enhanced by the age at which it is transmitted to the young. Learning begins in an informal basis and later through a formal basis which is supported by the family. The type of capital, or currency, within their class structures are based on the amount of capital and status of the family. Again, the embodied state of cultural capital allows the family to efficiently manufacture more capital.

Objectified State

The objectified state of capital is realized in the machines, paintings, books, and texts that are acquired. Unlike embodied cultural objects and knowhow, these may be exchanged or transferred as property. The efficiency of the transfer may be dependent on the embodied state (the habit of mind). One may acquire capital through their services or by selling objects. Property may be used with its value established by the society and markets. Prisoners may value soap, cigarettes, and film time in a different way than an elite country club member values these same objects.

The Institutionalized State

The political processes install a state education system that reproduces itself. Within the education system, cultural capital develops a qualification and award system. One may produce, or utilize, technology or practices—the education system certifies them. Cultures are embedded in the social construction of school. Other institutions may certify membership and attest to cultural capital, church membership is given as children progress and grow within the institution. For example, baptismal, confirmation, and marriage certificates are issued as evidence of privileges gained in completion of training in the church. Cultural capital of this nature enhances the objectified state. Based on the hierarchical nature of academic disciplines, cultural capital may be ex-

changed at varying rates of return. Certification in empirical or positivist disciplines (physical sciences) returns more money than social sciences or humanities. Cultural capital may be engaged in imparting status that may be converted into social capital.

Social Capital

Gee describes social positioning available to be filled by the Discourser. Social constructions impact all of us as participants in the social. Gee extends that to students in school, he states, "A good deal of what we do with language, throughout history, is to create and act out different kinds of people for all sorts of occasions and places."[21]

Associations and memberships equip individuals with status. For example, club or gang membership provides privileges within a particular social context. Memberships may entitle members with the ability to gain credit to be used to earn credentials. Status may be granted to enable future capital—recommendations to membership and membership of others. Recommendations for a particular school or university, for example: an individual might give kin a similar recommendation for schooling, employment, or investment opportunity keeping the capital within the family.

The breadth of a social network implies a greater degree of capital. For instance, attendees at an elite school like Yale, Harvard, or Stanford have a tendency toward a larger degree of cultural and social capital. Familial membership may be extended to others through adoption, marriage, or invitation to join through extended family. The power inherent in social capital is available to those who may declare and be verified as members. The oldest may certify that others may declare membership in the family. The president of the club certifies membership that could be used in a business arrangement, a registrar processes university transcripts that could be used for employment, and banks certify credit worthiness that could be used to purchase other capital items.

Linguistic Capital

The ability to speak in a certain context defines other capital that a person may obtain or maintain. For instance, students of color come to school immersed in cultures such as family, community and languages. Learners are often called upon to provide translation and navigational services within the cultures in which they live.

Community Wealth and Capital

Communities develop wealth and capital in various forms. What follows is a capital model that may be evident in poor and working class communities. In these communities there are economic and racial tensions which create difficulties for some minorities, such as factors for success in college. In a game of blame-the-victim, a deficit deterministic model is sometimes employed to explain the lack of performance of non-white and lower class students. These racial, ethnic, gender and language issues are more a function of acquiring and maintaining what researchers have addressed by expanding Bourdieu's articulation of cultural, social, and linguistic capital to include the community wealth categories of aspirational, familial, navigational, linguistic, and resistance capital.

21. James Paul Gee, *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourse* (New York: Routledge 2012), 12.

Familial Capital

Communities are formed within kinship relationships. Kinship is defined within birth associations but may extend to family friends and through associations. Church membership, school friends, fellow workers, or community group members may become aunties, uncles, brothers, and sisters. People's ability to form, maintain, and navigate kinship bonds further forms familial capital. These bonds can be utilized in times of need, to find employment, and in the celebration of life achievements among the other interpersonal relational aspects of life.

Navigational Capital

Language is an important aspect of negotiating social contexts. Being able to know how to "get things done" is evidence of navigational capital. Navigational capital expresses itself in acquiring and selling products and services in community and social environments. Sometimes employed in attaining hard to find, or scarce, resources for family or work.

Resistance Capital

Resistance capital is brought to bear in learning and social contexts that warrant that individuals take a stand for something. Resistance capital is employed when lower and working class individuals resist oppression and when acting as active agents in just claims for rights for themselves and the community.[22]

Conversion of Capital

Economic capital may be the source of all forms of capital. Cultural and social capital may be acquired via expenditure of economic capital. If one loses economic capital, they run the risk of losing social and cultural status. With enough social capital, an individual may borrow, or acquire, economic capital and thus restore, or increase, cultural and social capital.

Each type of capital may be differentiated by the way in which capital may be exchanged for economic capital. For example, cultural capital in the form of a painting may be exchanged for money more easily than social capital such as being the president of a club. However, the president of the club may have easy access to the banker who may give limited financial credit. Large corporations may borrow bailout funds from the government based on the number of employees that they employ or relationships with government officials.

Cultural and social capital may be exchanged for membership of a child into elite schools. One can exchange a habit of mind or facility for increased status. Status may require sustained projection from the sponsoring institution or person. The ability to exchange forms of capital has a direct result in educational outcomes.

These forms of capital represent those which may be brought to bear when tension and alienation of worldviews are experienced. Family is a source of strength and solidarity, navigation capital assists the student in negotiating unfamiliar, or uncomfortable social situations, and resistance capital provides the internal strength to confront and reject oppression. The extent that

22. Huber, *Challenging Racist Nativists Framing*; Yosso, *Whose culture has capital?*

familial, navigation, and resistance capital exists for the student has a direct impact on their educational outcome.

From Capital to Educational Outcomes

The connections between capital and educational outcomes may assist us in determining possible levels of student satisfaction and their motivation for college degree choice. For example, when a female with a worldview centered in a feminist ideology experiences oppression in a science course due to male dominated patriarchal curriculum, she may find greater satisfaction, and choose to engage, in feminist study rather than the other major.[23]

In the next section, I critically engage in the examination of printed works and relate them to acquisition and sustenance of social and cultural capital. In the excerpts provided, we find opportunities to understand the oppressive possibilities and engage in alternative reconstructions.

Educational Outcomes

School environments consist of programs, curriculum, discourse, practices, and staff. The learner's own psychology and interaction with the environment combine to determine educational outcomes. Educational outcomes represent the worldviews, or tacit ideologies, formulated through student's culture. In order to understand the challenges that remain from the civil rights era we examine the progressive social discourse. The comments below must be taken in context of social and cultural capital and education policy that exists around the classroom. The potential alignments, or misalignments, of worldviews and outcomes for women, minorities, and underserved begin to become clearer. The following critique calls attention to contradictions between possession and development of capital and worldviews. The alignments, or misalignments, provide links to the oppression and resistance of women and under-represented minorities in school.

Expectations for the Education of Latinos in the U.S.

Fernando Reimers is the Ford Foundation Professor of International Education and the Director of Global Education and International Education Policy at Harvard University. Reimers is considered an educational policy expert. In a public television interview with Maria Hinojosa,[24] he asserts what may be taken as the progressive views of many U. S. Latinos. In my view, Reimer's views exemplify progressive education policies which must be reviewed and challenged.

The interview begins:

> Hinojosa: "Every day, thousands of students drop out of high school. Condemned to a life of dead end jobs and low wages. *How do we stop what many consider a threat to the future of our country?* One man thinks he has the answers: *leading educational authority*, Fernando Reimers…"

23. Jennifer M. Gore, *The Struggle for Pedagogies: Critical and Feminist Discourses as Regimes of Truth* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

24. Maria Hinojosa, *One on One with Fernando Reimers, Chicago, Illinois, November 1, 2009*. Accessed April 23, 2014, http://www.wgbh.org/programs/programDetail.cfm?programid=12&.

The implication is that we will be hearing about the national issue of dropout rates as "a threat to the future of our country." Fernando Reimers is a "leading educational authority" who will articulate an educational policy "answer."

> Hinojosa: "Let me ask you this, a lot of people watching this show may think about their own schools and they say 'wow, within a matter of a couple years, we didn't have any Latinos a few years [ago], now we have dozens upon dozens.' Many teachers, educators, etc. just look at this and they say, 'It's a problem,' when you see that scenario what do you say?"
>
> Reimers*:* "*It's an opportunity…our children are going to be the future of this country [U.S.]—25% of the population*. So, it is in everybody's interest to make sure that we support their academic success. And, we know that they can succeed. I think that this involves two things—*making sure that the majority of those children are ready to go to college, and making sure that we increase the number of Latino kids who go for science, and technology, and engineering careers. This is doable, we know what it will take to do that, and we should get on with that task*."

There is intertextuality between progressive and critical discourse. I agree that equal participation for women and Latinos, as well as for other races and ethnicities, is critical for individual social and educational future prospects. However, lower and middle class students do not possess the forms of capital required to enter the privileged field of STEM as the elite class of learners do. The poor and lower-middle classes are disadvantage by their economic and social status in terms of education and jobs. In the stanza above, there is an overstated claim that providing academic success is as easy as doing, and further that we "should get on with that task." Missing from this discourse is recognition of the impact of hidden curriculum experienced by marginalized learners. Reimers speaks from a functionalist perspective. He is not considering, as Anyon has shown, that class structures provide a different 'hidden curriculum' and educational experiences and expectations. Anyon found that elite students are asked to think critically as befitting their executive class, while poor or lower middle class students have all of their activities directed by those in classes above them. These structures of educational experience reproduce the existing class hierarchy and are hidden from the view of the student. The marginalized student experiences a patriarchal class structure that inhibits success in school.[25]

> The interview turns to language issues:
>
> Hinojosa: "But, a lot of people think, 'well, you know, I mean, whenever you talk about schools,' people will say, 'we have, you know, a hundred different languages [sic], *and that's a problem because we have to teach all these kids English*, and that's hard.' And, again you say what when you faced with that reality?"
>
> Reimers*:* "Yeah, I think about that differently. I think that this is one of the few countries that thinks about linguistic diversity as problem. *Most countries around the world think about linguistic diversity as an asset, and I think that one of the opportunities for this nation is to develop the global skills of all students. Not just immigrant students. Global skills*

25. Anyon, *Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum*.

> *include a positive disposition toward cultural difference. The ability to speak foreign languages at advanced levels, and a serious and deep understanding of global topics, whether those are trade, global climate issues, and so on. So, the children that come from immigrant homes, and for whom navigating two different cultures as a daily experience are actually an asset. They could teach the rest of the kids and we should start thinking about as an opportunity.*"

The myth "that there are a hundred different languages" should be addressed. There are five predominate non-English languages represented in U.S. classrooms. These are Spanish (79%), Chinese (Cantonese) (15.5%), Vietnamese (2.0%), Hmong (1.6%), and Korean (1.0%). Furthermore, in 2005, 27.7 million (fewer than 50%) of urban students were white English only non-Hispanic students.[26]

In this regard, I also agree with the assessment that multiculturalism along with multilingualism is a benefit. The development of cultural, social, and linguistic capital is extremely advantageous to all students. Nonetheless, there is currently a deficit in the number of teachers capable of meeting the needs of multilingual/multicultural students. As Gandara and Hopkin's state,

> Given the large and increasing number of English Language Learners (ELs) in U.S. public schools, it behooves the educational community—and the nation as a whole—to improve the educational environments and opportunities for these students and their teachers. Failing to do so will put the entire education system at risk.[27]

Students who traditionally lack access to various forms of social and cultural capital are not qualified experts. Successful education of women, minorities, and the underserved requires teaching to be conducted by qualified teachers. This is particularly pertinent in STEM disciplines.

The needs of long term English Language Learners must be specifically addressed with instruction containing academic language in domain specific curricula. Successfully overcoming the oppressive gender bias and English language only (restrictive language) policies experienced by many women and minority students will require a great deal more support for capital development. The particular goal must be to provide a type of educational environment that increases the navigational and resistance capital needed to equalize the effects of the White and Asian patriarchal bias that exist in STEM. The invitation to STEM must be accompanied by development of the forms of cultural and social capital necessary to compete for jobs and social interests of women and minorities.

The interview participants begin an examination of student-teacher rapport, parent participation, and the socialization of students:

> Hinojosa: "How do you convince teachers that only see difficult mountains to climb… what tools do you give them? To actually say, 'I'm not going to worry about them *all* dropping out because I've got a solution.'"

26. Patricia Gandara & Hopkins, Megan, *The Changing Linguistic Landscape of the United States* in *Forbidden Language* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2010), 9.

27. Ibid., 17.

> Reimers: "Let me answer at two levels. *The students that I teach [at Harvard] are students that are preparing to be leaders*. To influence change at a systemic level. My program is one of the more culturally diverse programs in the School of Education. Students find that a resource…but, back to middle school or high school for example, if we are trying to develop a positive orientation toward cultural difference, if we're trying to make kids be excited, and to think about the opportunities that lie in difference? *What better way to do that than to give children an opportunity to socialize, to make friends with, kids who come from different parts of the world*."

In the interchange, Reimers affirms that the students that he teaches at Harvard are privileged as "leaders." These students possess the various types of capital that are necessary to succeed, as measured by policy leadership, and "being able to develop their own intercultural competencies." He then indicates the benefits and "opportunity to socialize and make friend in different cultures."

With changing demographics in urban centers, schools in this area are becoming more segregated. The class struggle of multilingual, multicultural, and poor students impacts the social and educational goals. The relationships of power are constructed, internalized, and institutionalized in the lived lives of our bicultural students.

Gendered, poor, and marginalized students should not be seen as fictional or hypothetical individuals, families, or groups. Our students are real people who are in many aspects of life unseen, unheard, and oppressed. The conjecture here is that socialization and contact achieves equity. Reimer's statement discounts the segregation effects on children of various classes' experience in school. In fact, most bilingual and bicultural students may experience their home language and culture devalued. They and their families are marginalized and exist separately from each other throughout school. Their cultural experience is a rewritten definition of freedom, liberty, and justice for all. Gandara and Hopkins state that, "Latino students who have not fully mastered English by high school have only about a 40% chance at best of completing high school and acquiring a diploma with their age mates."[28] The number of students who are falling into lives of poverty and voice-less-ness is staggering. Those few that make it to university carry the inputs of this socialization and oppression.

All forms of capital contain the possibilities for life and must be developed. It is our language that allows us to invent and reinvent university cultural and social capital. By sharing our lives, through language, we develop communities of solidarity and empathy. Human thriving and a positive human existence are established by each of us as individuals as we create lives together that we love.[29]

Reimers goes on to discuss civics and character education. Referring to research being done in Monterey, Mexico:

> Reimers*:* "I am at the moment conducting a large study in Mexico where we are comparing different ways to do citizenship education. And, I was in Monterey just a week ago…talking to middle school students, and one of our interventions is precisely telling the kids, with support from the teachers, find one problem that you want to work on. Get organized and solve it. So, here I have a group of kids…*these are twelve year olds who decided – we're going to make sure that we have a clean classroom and a clean school. We can't*

28. Ibid., 11.
29. Macedo, et al., *Hegemony*.

> *deal with an entire neighborhood, but we can make that difference. And, that became part of the curriculum. They organize their peers into making sure that they have a clean environment*."

The concern here is that teacher power may have been employed to enlist students in providing their own janitorial services. Students and teachers need to be responsible for their environment. Schools can be responsible for the day to day care of the resources entrusted to them. It is the students' and teachers' civic responsibility to safeguard and clean rooms to an extent.

However, if Reimers is referring to the general need for maintenance and janitorial services, then objection should be raised. A clean environment, along with good and plentiful food, is a required antecedent to learning. The opportunity to develop resistance capital, to organize students, and to advocate for equal services is lost. Alternatively, the curriculum should have contained elements that allow working and lower class individuals to organize and fight for fair and equal treatment. Students should have been galvanized, along with their parents, to advocate for resistance, equality, and equity rather than being used as a source of free labor.

The program shifts to a discussion about the teacher's relationship with parents:

> Reimers: "I think that Mexican parents, like any parents, love their kids. And they want the best for their kids. *They may have different ideas of what that means*, so that they may think for example, that if you are the older daughter in the family, *it is reasonable that you should be expected to help with the little ones and all kind of chores*. And, it is very hard to take AP classes when you are taking care of your younger siblings. *So, it is very necessary for teachers to have a conversation with parents and help them understand the difference between completing high school, or not, the difference between going to a four-year college versus a community college, the difference between an advanced curriculum and a curriculum that is not as rigorous and advanced*. And then, what it takes in the form of support and time for the kids. One of the most critical resources in education is time. You have to spend the time. *Parents can make that possible or difficult, if you don't understand the difference that it makes*."

The subject of this scenario reflects the class and capital differences. Reimers proposes that the teachers interject their own values into the family lives of the parents and the students. This promotes an educational system that ignores parental struggles and lacks an empathetic view of the plight of the working poor. The school must be a source of family of services, community development, and support common striving. If we were to take Reimers' recommendation, we would engage in reproduction of class reproduction of values. Depending on how Reimers' strategy is operationalized, the teacher-parent relationship degenerates into a subject-object association.[30] The teacher becomes an agent of oppression rather than one of freedom and solidarity.

As we draw this analysis to a close, we will recognize the potential to exacerbate university students' experience of oppression and restricted social justice. College programs that support engagement in the social and cultural issues of women, minorities, and the marginalized stand the chance to reduce tension and promote enrollment in school; more specifically the STEM programs that Reimers promotes. If STEM programs continue to favor White and Asian dominate discourse,

30. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York, Continuum Publishing, 1970/2012).

women, minorities, and the marginalized may forgo STEM in favor of finding an educational experience that supports their desire for justice through legal, social, and ethnic studies. Reimers acknowledges that for there to be a more equal society, we need more Latinos in STEM. However, I believe that for him it is an issue of educating/schooling students (providing them with the forms of capital they need) in order to access those fields. His is a progressive discourse. In this aspect there can be agreement, and intertextuality, with critical discourse. We can agree with his urging that the school system/policymakers move on with the task of educating individuals who represent the future of the country.

The educational policy environment does not provide a complete viewpoint. I continue to draw conclusions about educational program participation by examining a specific science classroom.

Science Classrooms

Students are faced with various discontinuities in policy and politics. The issues that follow are not specific to gender or ethnic experiences. The discussion is offered as an example of potential silenced discourse and a view of prospective tension in the classroom.

The argument could be made that the following example is one example of a single extreme, or intractable, view. However, the worldviews of popular authors such as Richard Dawkins and Peter Atkins represent this view in the general public and is expressed in the classroom.[31]

David Barash is a University of Washington, Professor of Psychology and an evolutionary biologist. In an op-ed describing a beginning of the year lesson, "The Talk,"[32] which covers Barash's position regarding evolution and religion, Barash states, "It's irresponsible to teach biology without evolution and yet many students work about reconciling their beliefs with evolutionary science." The implication is that Barash clearly finds it unethical to teach religion along with science. Barash briefly outlines the concept created by Steven Jay Gould of "non-overlapping magisteria" (NOMA). Barash further indicates, "He [Gould] was misrepresenting both science and religion."

The dispute is that Barash does not believe that God exists. He does not accept that there is any place for a discussion of biology in conjunction with God. Barash continues, "While I respect their beliefs, the entire point of 'The Talk' is to make clear that, at least for this biologist, it is no longer acceptable for science to be the one doing those routines, as Professor Gould and NOMA have insisted we do."

From here, the purpose of this analysis is not intended to provide a comprehensive counter argument to Barash's. What the reader should appreciate is that the italicized sections of the above interview indicate a "habit of mind," or a particular privileged form of capital. Barash maintains that his is the only discourse which will be accepted, or valued, in his classroom. Barash's argument, and general attitude, forecloses any other worldview. The assertiveness of his approach forces a student with a different point of view into either an assimilated or accommodated position. In the model in Figure 2 above, we notice that assimilation means tension and alienation. While accommodation could lead to a positive or neutral outcome, it could also lead to tension and alienation.

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31. Peter Atkins, *On Being: A Scientist's Exploration of the Great Questions of Existence* (Oxford: Oxford Press, 2011); Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (New York, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006).
32. David P. Barash, "God, Darwin and My College Biology Class," *The New York Times*, September 27, 2014.

Scientific innovation requires conflict. Conflict generated in the scientific community is initiated by the development of a new, or revolutionary, concept that may not be received well by the established "scholarly community." The commonly understood facts are learned in the academy, presented from the textbook, and as given facts.

A consensus theory of science is one that underemphasizes the serious disagreements over methodology, goals, and other elements that make up the paradigm of activity of scientists. If scientific consensus is continually required, then students would not be permitted to see that without disagreement and controversy, scientific progresses, or would be progress, continues at a much slower pace.[33]

In science, as much as with any discipline, tacit theories and tacit generalization are taught as fact. Visibility to the disagreements, hypothesis, and testing of hypothesis is ignored for the sake of social control. Further, "little or no thought has evidently been given to the fact that hypothesis-testing and application of existing scientific criteria are not sufficient to explain how and why choice is made between competing theories." Existing theories are accepted at face value without primary research into opposing views. This leads to a silencing of any opposing views. The natural ongoing controversies in science are "kept" from the student; in effect, alternated views are "hidden" from them.[34]

Scientific knowledge as it is taught in schools has, in effect, been divorced from the structure of the community from which it evolved and which acts to criticize it. Students are "forced," because of the very absence of a realistic picture of how communities of science apportion power and economic resources, to internalize a view that has little potency for questioning the legitimacy of the tacit assumptions about interpersonal conflict that govern their lives and their own educational, economic, and political situations.[35]

The science classroom under Barash's model is a reproduction of existing scientific thought. While this argument does not address women or minorities specifically, if one is already predisposed to experience school as a place of limited expression, then would one be resistant to enter the field?

Conclusion

The Civil Rights and Peace movements of the 1960's asked us to engage in the principles of equality and equity for all. Due to recent challenges to affirmative action in education, as well as political failures to engage in reduction of the wealth and opportunity gaps for women and minorities, class, gender, and ethnic struggles continue. Perhaps these issues provide motivation for women and minorities to refuse the invitation to the STEM party. Conceivably, the party is not seen as one worth attending.

Gendered, minority, and underserved students may seek, and find, meaning in school, and specifically in humanities and social sciences.[36] As feminist theorists have indicated, suffering is assuaged as our spirits join for the betterment of all.[37] Transformation and change is desired to elevate the society and our institutions. The vision is for the country, institutions, and classrooms

33. Apple, *Hidden Curriculum*, 30.

34. Ibid., 31.

35. Ibid., 32.

36. Alexander W. Astin, Astin, Helen S., and Lindholm, Jennifer A., *Cultivating the Spirit: How College Can Enhance Students' Inner Lives* (San Francisco, California: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2011).

37. Parker J. Palmer, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life* (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1998/2006).

to be better. The ultimate goal is for the achievement of promise and possibilities of the self-expression of all. Women and minorities may be finding that the energy required to resist and/or oppose oppression, and those factors which limit possibilities, takes courageous action.

What we can say now is that the college environment represents a particular dominant ideology. University and school environments require students to take on assimilation and accommodation strategies which lead to alienation and tension. Satisfaction may be found if students acquire the "codes of power," and if they are made explicit, without having to eradicate their values and lived experiences.[38] The issues are indeed the case that the privileging of dominant ideologies can turn the classroom into a regime of truth that has the potential to alienate "others" or those who do not share in the same values.

The prolonged institutionalized mismatch between students' worldviews and college environments are a possible source of women and minorities selecting not to engage STEM fields. Instead they favor educational pursuits in domains that meet their needs for personal, spiritual, religious, and social expressions.

There is a need to build familial, linguistic, social, cultural, and navigational capital within formal and informal educational frames. Universities that provide environments for the development of resistance and spiritual capital will experience an expansion of all programs. All oppressed classes must be included in discourse for protection now and reparations of the past under class objectification. These are the human rights which were addressed beginning with the civil rights era of the 1960's.Human rights overlap and enlighten other rights—to be informed truthfully; the right to freedom of expression, education, and culture; the right to communicate are taken together.[39]

Effective educators will comprehend serious questions of how gender, race, ethnicity, and language can negate, or impact, our rights. The cessation of human rights affects, among other things, the health and wellbeing of the learner, their kin/family, and society. Students have a right to speak in their own language. Learners should be encouraged to express unpopular opinions and to resist authority and oppression. In an effective democratic society and classroom, a balance is struck and conflict protocols exercised by subject-subject relations that govern the consequence of conflicting speech rights.[40] The classroom must create a living participatory laboratory for the exercise of democracy and a freedom to co-construct their being. This is a life affirming aim of education.

The Academy processes must denounce restrictive language policies that inhibit intentional classroom discourses that lead to silencing student voices. We must reject gendered, racial, and cultural norms that discount individualist and pluralistic views. Prejudice and bias lead to a breakdown in fellowship, communion, and understanding. Becoming a competent intercultural communicator will mitigate the consequences by addressing the dignity of each student and engaging in intentional, or "mindful," practices. Utilizing intentional listening, reframing statements, preserving student dignity, and establishing trust, remediates and facilitates intercultural communication.

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38. Lisa D. Delpit, "The Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedegogy in Educating other People's Children," *Harvard Educational Review* 58 (3), 1998: 280-298; Lisa D. Delpit, *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom* (New York: New Press, 1995/2006.

39. Huber, *Challenging Racist Nativists Framing*.

40. Darder, *Culture and Power in the Classroom*.

Effective teacher development will incorporate listening skills that enhance gender, racial, and class discourse acceptance in their programs.[41]

Our hope of the civil rights movement was that institutions and society develop an attitude of excellence and thriving for all. That the struggle for fair society would break down the preference for the rich and powerful in favor of equality for the poor and disenfranchised. That those who are doing well, will continue to do well, but that they would move toward an increased awareness that with privilege comes an obligation. We all have an obligation under social justice. We must speak out and act.

The aim of the civil rights movement, and our aim as a society, was to provide, and participate actively, in creating social systems to produce, and reproduce, self-sustaining harmony, solidarity, and communion. A return to this future is one into which it is worth living. One where we are our brothers' and sisters' keeper. In this future we love each other as we love ourselves.

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Early Reading Experiences: An Artifact of Cultural Capital

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Abstract

From the time of birth, children begin learning about themselves and the world around them. Parental aspirations for their children's P-16 educational attainment does not exist in a social vacuum within the United States. In aggregate terms, parents' P-16 aspirations reflect the families' social class standing in their respective communities. Referred to as cultural capital, the process of consciously socializing children to develop social assets including learning to read, seems to be a critical piece of more elite societies. This study sought to uncover first year, first generation students' perceptions and memories of early reading experiences to further the understanding of the challenges first generation students face in attending college. Findings revealed our students did not often have strong role models for reading, although the majority believed reading well was a necessity for college and future success. The impact of cultural capital theory revealed families still have great influence on first generation student success in college and should be of critical concern to higher education for how to best support this new generation of learners. Additionally, we may need to transmit to our students the tools to develop more cultural capital by being positive role models.

Keywords: *cultural capital, first generation college students, social reproduction theory, habitus*

From the time of birth, children begin learning about themselves and the world around them. Much of what children learn during those early years is a result of what their parents or caregivers *pass on* or they see modeled by others. In the broadest sense, generations share their culture and beliefs with their youth who are just beginning their learning journey. Referred to as *cultural capital*, the process of consciously socializing children to develop social assets such as talent, intellect, style of speech, and academic competencies, including learning to read, seems to be a critical piece of more elite societies (Bourdieu, 1986; Harris & Graves, 2010). A measure of elite in today's world is education, and families from lower socioeconomic levels typically do not value or pursue higher education.

Parental aspirations for their children's P-16 (preschool through four years of college) educational attainment does not exist in a social vacuum within the United States. In aggregate terms, parents' P-16 aspirations reflect the families' social class standing in their respective communities (Brantlinger, 2003; Lareau, 2008). American society is not a classless society. The American social class hierarchy consists of millionaires, upper middle class, middle class, lower middle class, working poor, and the poor. Social classes have different predispositions toward their children's educational aspirations and accomplishments in the P-16 educational system (Barratt, 2011;

Brantlinger, 2003; Giroux, 2001; Lareau, 2000). In general terms, a disparity in parental aspirations for their children's P-16 educational attainment exists between families from upper classes and families from lower social classes in American society (Brantlinger, 2003; Lareau, 2000; Levine & Nidiffer, 1995; MacLeod, 2009). Parents from higher socioeconomic backgrounds tend to value P-16 educational attainment, and they socialize their children to meet those expectations (Barratt, 2011; Brantlinger, 2003; Lareau, 2000; Levine & Nidiffer, 1995). Certainly, there are outlier families who do not embrace using educational attainment to enhance their social positions (Brantlinger, 2003). French sociologist Bourdieu (1985) stated children's academic performance is more strongly related to parents' educational history than to parents' occupational status. Dubow, Boxer, and Huesmann (2009) found parents' level of education when their child was age eight significantly predicted the child's level of education and occupational success 40 years later.

Additionally, there are intergroup gaps in P-16 attainment between White European majority compared to different racial and ethnic groups like African Americans and Latino Americans (Arnaud-Saint, 2009; Banks, 2014; Brown, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Noguera, 2008). Further, there are intragroup gaps in P-16 educational attainment within different racial and ethnic groups like African Americans and Latino Americans (Arnaud-Saint, 2009; Banks, 2014; Lacy & Harris, 2008; Pattillo, 2008). Furthermore, African Americans, First Nations, and Latino groups' educational attainment have been stunted due to the historical factors of de facto and de jure segregation in America (Anderson, 1988; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Jordan Irvine, 1996; Woodson, 1919). Further, the social class structure of the African American and Latino populations explains some of the variability for the within groups' P-16 educational attainment (Brown, 2011; Jordan Irvine, 1996; Pattillo, 2008). All in all, many Americans have used educational attainment, especially four-year degree attainment, to foster their families' social mobility.

Parents from lower middle class backgrounds educational aspirations for their children's P-12 education consists of wanting them to acquire basic education to become effective citizens and to acquire the minimal educational credentials to obtain a job not requiring a post-secondary education (Barratt, 2011; Brantlinger, 2003; Giroux, 2001; MacLeod, 2009). To be sure, there are parents from this socioeconomic background who swim against the tide of this social class and they have high P-16 educational attainment aspirations for their children. Some students from socioeconomic class backgrounds have had high P-16 educational and graduate attainment that laid the foundation for their upward mobility in American society (Levine & Nidiffer, 1995). These families are the exception to the social classes' expectations for members, and they are not the rule for members within their class.

Consequently, expanding the pool of potential first generation college students who earn a four-year degree should be a key component of a national strategy to create a larger number of Americans who have the frameworks and skills to participate in the globally connected economy (Darling-Hammond, 2010). First generation college students are individuals whose relatives from previous generations have not attended college (Davis, 2010). First generation college students are a heterogeneous group that includes sub-pools of students such as working-class students from different racial and ethnic groups and low-income students from different racial and ethnic groups (Harris & Graves, 2010; Lareau, 2000; Stuber, 2011). Research has shown that college graduates are more likely to be employed fulltime in career positions; participate in civic activities; vote regularly; enjoy better lifestyles, health, and fitness; and involved with their children's education (Balemian & Feng, 2013; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005); and they most likely have learned that reading is a fundamental life skill (Davis & Davis, 2015) that is vital for finding a good job, developing the mind, discovering new things, and increasing imagination. With our desire to find

better supports for our first generation students, we believed it was important to identify students' early reading memories and how those may have connected to their early cultural capital experiences. We reasoned that if we began with a pilot study in which we asked a class of first generation students at our university about their early reading experiences, we may learn more about their reading connection to their cultural capital background.

At our university in the Midwest, students are required to take a first-year experience course to provide support for new students in achieving a successful transition to college life. Generally, a first-year experience program is a major cornerstone of many universities' efforts to foster freshmen academic and social engagement that spiral into student success as measured in undergraduate degree attainment (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005). Our program helps students develop skills to engage in the academic community; initiate positive relationships with peers, faculty, and staff; and begin to explore our university's Public Affairs mission of ethical leadership, community engagement, and cultural competence. This course is the cornerstone of the first-year experiences and is a key anticipatory initiative designed to foster freshmen and sophomore retention and academic achievement. To further benefit students, select sections of this course are set aside explicitly for first generation students who initially are prospective PK-12 teachers.

According to Choy (2001), many first generation students "often begin college less academically prepared that other students" (p. xxxi). However, there is an outlier sub-group of first generation students who have acquired a rigorous pre-college education that has prepared them to attend selective four-year universities. Gladwell (2008) defined outliners as individuals whose internal qualities, work habits, and self-discipline allow them to accomplish personal goals in sometimes in different environments. Parents, guardians, and/or a significant person of academically prepared students play a pivotal role in fostering their academic aspirations before kindergarten and throughout their K-12 education (Jackson, 1996; Levine & Nidifeer, 1995). When these parents or guardians shed the cultural capital of their class and assimilate the cultural capital of the upper class, it plays a major role in their efforts to foster their children's academic aspirations. Parents', guardians', and/or a significant person's impact on socializing children for academic success reflects how social classes frequently foster the next generation in their families. This is a prime example of reproduction theory in action.

Theoretical Framework

Social reproduction theory is a genre of literature that seeks to describe how social classes in a society reproduce themselves (MacLeod, 2009). Cultural capital and determinism are the two major sub-genres that make-up reproduction theory. Playing a critical role in social reproduction theory is the *value* placed on education. Education allows individuals to transcend their original generational status and move to higher life aspirations. A critical piece of education attainment by first generation students, specifically, may hinge on early and continued reading experiences.

Early Reading Experiences

Cunningham and Stanovich (1997) found that "first grade reading ability was a strong predictor of" reading comprehension, vocabulary, and general knowledge in 11th graders (p. 934). They also found "individual differences with print [prior experience] were found to predict differences in the growth in reading comprehension ability" (p. 934). Early reading experiences have an impact on future success in reading (Bojczyk, Rogers-Haverback, Pae, Davis, & Mason, 2015).

Bojczyk et al. (2015) found that the mother's role plays an important role in children's early literacy development. These early reading experiences are often fostered more in those families with a higher socioeconomic status. According to many researchers, there is a strong correlation between reading achievement and socioeconomic status (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985; Jensen, 2009; Walker-Dalhouse & Risko, 2011). In fact, Cunningham (2011) found that "poverty is the largest correlate of reading achievement" (p. 382). Walker-Dalhouse and Risko (2011) reported about 75 percent of children who are living in poverty score below grade level in reading.

A reason many children in poverty read below grade level is because reading is not valued in the home. Additionally, they are not read aloud to as young children. According to Anderson et al. (1985), "the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children" (p. 23). Ivey (2003) found when students were read to aloud by a teacher, it helped the students understand the subject better and made them want to read independently. Teachers modeling reading through reading aloud is a strong influence on students' learning the value of and respecting the reading process (Routman, 2003). Ogle and Beers (2012) stated, "Reading aloud to students can be a very important factor for providing motivation for reading, building critical concepts about reading, and developing an understanding of literature" (p. 151). These early reading experiences are valuable building blocks for future success. However, they also serve as a component of the social reproduction theory.

Theory of Social Reproduction

Social reproduction theorists are researchers whose theoretical works analyze how social classes in society replicate themselves into successive generations of social classes in different time periods. Determinism and cultural capital are the two major schools that make up different ends of the social reproduction theories continuum (MacLeod, 2009). MacLeod suggested that deterministic models include those researchers who employ a structuralist framework, which identifies the origins of social classes in society that spring from the capitalist economic system. Bowles and Gintis (1976, as cited in MacLeod, 2009) are two prominent researchers who support the structuralist approach of viewing the tension in a capitalist society that is between the owners of the factories, raw materials, and land (means of production) on one hand, and on the other hand, the wage workers who do not own any means of production but possess labor power they must sell to the owners of the means of production. The structuralist approach orients researchers to believe the owners seek to perpetuate their privilege positions in society through the intergenerational transfer of resources and power to their children; while workers (in aggregate terms) seek to acquire employment that allows them to live and foster the generation within their families. Thus, the two social classes perpetuate themselves through the different generations of their families replicating the social status of their parents' generation.

The Bowles and Gintis (1976, as cited in MacLeod, 2009) framework identifies that the educational system does not exist in a social vacuum, but the educational system serves as instrument to support the existence of the status quo. They believe few workers will be able to escape from their wage slavery to become members of the upper classes in Western society. Similarly, Bourdieu's (1985) viewpoint partially recognizes that structuralism has a kernel of truth about the origins of society's stratification, which springs from the capitalist system; however, Bourdieu's cultural capital framework illuminates that some workers can change their social place in society.

Theory of Cultural Capital

Bourdieu's (1986) cultural capital approach, like Bowles and Gintis's (1976, as cited in MacLeod, 2009) structuralist model, represents different extremes on the social reproduction theory continuum. The social reproduction theory emerged as a part of a Critical Theory School, which began before WWII in Frankfort, Germany (MacLeod, 2009). Early critical theorists, like Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse, made up the Frankfort School, and they developed an approach that identified the capitalist economic system as the engine that drives society's development, while they also embraced the idea that the superstructure (culture, institutions, and ideas) plays a leading role in shaping and supporting the economic basis of Western society. Briefly, critical theory describes a school of thought and a process of critique mutually (Giroux, 1983).

Bourdieu's (1986) cultural capital and habitus concepts fall under his social reproduction approach (MacLeod, 2009). He argued that cultural capital can manifest itself in several forms: (1) embodied state (long lasting dispositions, (2) objectified state (pictures, books, and machines), and (3) institutionalized state (educational qualifications) (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu defined habitus "as a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions" (cited in MacLeod, 2009, p. 15). In other words, Bourdieu's (1977, 1985) habitus concept explains the invisible tapestry of values, expectations, and practices that exist within different social classes in a stratified society. The family in upper, middle, and lower classes' habitus orients children to follow the pathway and position of their families. Yet, members of families, especially from middle and lower classes, can use their human agency to change their social position in society. MacLeod defined human agency as an individual's reliance on his or her internal motivation and discipline to help navigate the transition from the old social circumstances to an upwardly mobile social position in society. To illustrate, factory wage workers and service workers make up the blue-collar section of the middle class in America (Lareau & Weinninger, 2008). This social strata habitus is that they, in aggregate terms, view acquiring a basic high school diploma as the educational credential they need to acquire a job and social status comparable to their fathers and in some cases their mothers. Yet, some blue-collar families create a hybrid habitus (working class and upper classes) that results in their keeping their factory jobs while assimilating the upper-upper and upper classes' appreciation of obtaining a four-year college degree. All in all, Bourdieu's cultural capital model has influenced recent social reproduction theorists like (Giroux, 1983; Lareau, 2000; Noguera, 2008).

Inter-generational Transmission of Cultural Capital

Giroux's (1983) work examined how the educational system is a part of the superstructure in American society and is not neutral, but it serves the interests of hegemonic social classes. According to Giroux, the K-12 educational system is dominated by the upper classes. Upper classes families' habitus is to socialize their children to acquire high academic achievement, attending elite private schools, and generally scaling the heights of society. Whereas, working class families' habitus socializes their children to assimilate conformity values when they attend public schools. Working class students who attend schools dominated by the upper classes frequently have unsatisfactory educational experiences. Thus, students from lower social classes' background inevitably results in their resisting the type of education they are exposed to in the K-12 system.

Giroux (1983), like Bourdieu (1986), synthesized elements of the deterministic and cultural models into his model. Giroux and Bourdieu shared a viewpoint that humans are not locked into the social system, and they have the capacity to determine their life direction in society. According to Lareau (2000), the cultural capital model makes a major contribution to reproduction theory by unpacking upper-middle class and blue-collar classes' habitus about family patterns in educational attainment in the K-16 pipeline and aspire to the habitus of the upper class.

Lareau (2000), seeking to build on Bourdieu's (1986) definition, described cultural capital as how cultures in the American context are inter-generationally transmitted from one generation to another. She provided a web of evidence that shows America's upper classes from the colonial days until now have more strongly cultivated an educational achievement habitus that fostered the inter-generational transfer of social group values and habits to the next generation (Thelin, 2004). Typically, the lower class habitus is transmitted easily as generations repeat the same status as their parents.

Lareau's (2000) work compared and contrasted how upper class, working class, and lower-income families socialize their children to attend and academically perform in elementary school and beyond. She examined how upper-class mothers consciously pursued a practice called *concerted cultivation* that ensured their children absorbed education in school, attended art and science museums, and participated in family vacations and other culture-building activities. Harris and Graves (2010) found that when parents encouraged and supervised artistic activities that it had a positive impact on their child's academic development.

Mothers' reading to children during the pre-school years was designed to foster intellectual curiosity and interest in reading of children before they entered elementary school (Bojczyk et al., 2015). A major outcome of parents' reading to children at a young age is that the experience created what Kuh, Schuh, and Whitt (1991) called an *invisible tapestry* between themselves and their children's school teachers throughout their education. Invisible tapestry is a concept that describes how shared cultural beliefs between faculty and students serve to connect them within an educational context (Kuh et al., 1991). In much the same way, teachers in upper class school districts gravitate to students who display similar attitudes toward education as themselves. Parents' concerted cultivation efforts contributed in creating an implied covenant of mutual expectations between parents and teachers regarding high expectations for their children learning in school (Jordan Irvine, 1996).

Conversely, teachers in working class and lower income districts frequently face challenges creating a comfort zone that attracts different learners and their parents (Korsmo, 2014; Lareau, 2003). Whereas, working-class families and low-income families, in aggregate terms, habitually pursue a parenting practice of fostering accomplishments of natural growth (Lareau, 2003). These parents frequently seek to encourage their children to follow rules and regulations in school. Many students are oriented by parents to absorb the basic education from their P-12 learning before they enter the work force after high school or attending a trade school. Even the parents' attention to behaviors, like a high rate of attendance, seems to aid students in developing the habitus that education as a key to a better future through the passive assimilation process of attending school regularly.

Lareau's (2003) work implies that outlier working-class parents and low-income parents seeking to foster their children's upward mobility frequently adopt the concerted cultivation patterns of upper-class families. Families, and especially mothers, begin reading to their children early in an effort to foster their intellectual development and academic readiness for elementary

school. These families observed from the upper classes that assimilating cultural capital is a longitudinal process that begins before elementary school and continues through high school. Families intentionally build on their child's future success in school and life by reading aloud to them often and involving them in activities such as taking them to the library at an early age to participate in age-based small reading groups. Additionally, parents seek to draw their children into a range of activities like music lessons, dance lessons, and attend cultural events in an effort to help position their children for success in life. Parents' early reading to children before kindergarten is a major artifact of parents' early efforts to consciously create cultural capital for their children.

The Study

A particular area of interest for us is the early reading experiences of our first generation students. We wondered if it played a role in their aspirations and decision to go to college, and if their background with reading could be a product of cultural capital and habitus within the family. First generation students' perceptions of themselves and their academic reading ability are low (Penrose, 2002; Strayhorn, 2011; Ward, Siegel, & Davenport, 2012). It made sense then to identify our students' early reading experiences and to look for common connections as a way to offset predisposed perceptions. We began with one section of students as a pilot study to determine if we were on the right course for understanding first generation students' challenges. A researcher-constructed survey was distributed to the class as a routine part of the course work. Questions were primarily open-ended allowing students to discuss the broader issue of their early reading experiences. The class was composed of 20 females and two males, with one female student identified as biracial while the other students identified predominately White. No students in this particular class had reported learning disabilities, and all students were from the state in which the university was located. Most of the students were from middle or lower socioeconomic homes.

The survey revealed three broad themes: 1) students were influenced by a variety of factors to attend college but predominately the desire for a better career and life/future; 2) students' immediate families (parents and grandparents) were the champions of early reading experiences in the home (i.e. reading aloud), if there was support at all; and 3) reading aloud by teachers was fondly remembered but typically only happened in the elementary grades. Other supporting themes were identified and gave us deeper insight into the cultural capital and early reading experiences of first generation students. Those subthemes included students' believed in their ability to succeed in college and graduate, their parents' encouraged and supported their quest for higher education, and they were influenced by positive school experiences and affirming teachers along their educational journey. These subthemes seem to reinforce that cultural capital is a lifetime investment, and that perceptions of cultural capital can be influenced purposefully by others outside our own specific cultural group.

We first wanted to identify the factors that most influenced students' decision to attend college to help us identify the connection to cultural capital. Since cultural capital is transmitted from generation to generation, but fostering reading habits as well as other education benefits could be a basis for cultural capital shifts, then identifying those factors influencing the decision to attend college were important. The respondents indicated a college education was needed for a future career (50%), future life success and bettering themselves (over their parents' position in life) was possible with a college education (49%), and family encouragement to get a degree was a primary motivation (40%). One student revealed that "*not going to college was never an option for me….my parents expected me to go to college and [be the first] to get a degree*." This was a

repeated sentiment echoed by many of the students. Parents, who have learned the importance of a college education, were extremely instrumental. Another student summed it up stating, "*I decided to attend college because no one else in my family ever has and I think that in order to feel financially secure in the future I will need a degree. Also, I need a degree for the career I want to have*." On the whole, students' reflections about their parent(s)/guardian's early reading to them aligns with reproduction theorists like Bourdieu (1986), Giroux (1983), Laueru (2003), and MacLeod's (2009) theory of social escalation, where parent(s)/guardian(s) foster early and continuous reading experiences, foster academic achievement aspirations, and foster the pursuit of a four-year college degree.

Next we asked students about their early reading experiences. Knowing that first generation students tend to be less academically prepared (Choy, 2001; Coffman, 2011; Lareau, 2003; Lareau & Weinninger, 2008), we wondered if reading was introduced and reinforced in students' early childhood and if that helped set in motion the point where students' confidence and expertise with the language began. Data revealed that only 54% of these students reported parents and grandparents reading aloud to them during the preschool years. These students related fond memories of cuddling while reading together and loving the stories. Several mentioned growing up with Dr. Seuss books, even citing the titles of their favorites. Interestingly, only one student definitively said "*no one read aloud to me*." What was intriguing to us was that 46% of respondents did not recall being read to as young children. While some students may not have remembered being read to in those early years, it still gave us a moment of pause. We reasoned that not being read to and/or not remembering being read to were, in essence, the same outcome in these students' minds—they believed their early childhood was void of the strong role models for reading.

This perceived lack of investment early in their early reading development connected back to Bourdieu's (1986) concepts of cultural capital and habitus. Research has shown that these early reading experiences are correlated to future reading success (Anderson et al., 1985). When first generation students do not notice early exposure to reading, it may be due to the lack of intentional valuing of reading by the older generation. In other words, families from lower social classes, like families from upper social classes, create a habitus that fosters the reproduction of the next generation in the families. Students' reflection of their parents' lack of investment in their early reading development reflects the habitus that parents created in their families. Briefly, we learned employing a conceptual framework (Giroux's, 1983) of how students from working-class and low-income backgrounds often covertly and overtly resist the school environment that mirrors the image of the upper-class students. Additionally, this upper-class school environment implicitly and explicitly encourages less-privileged students to conform to the dominant student sub-culture in the school.

Our third area of inquiry was first generation students' experiences in schools with teachers reading aloud. Some students indicated they had teachers from K-12 who read to them, while others reported the only grade they remembered teachers reading aloud to them was in kindergarten. More frequently, these first generation students recollected teachers reading aloud to them primarily in elementary school (40%). Interestingly, less than 10% of the students recalled any teacher reading aloud in junior high/middle school or high school. According to Routman (2003), "Reading aloud—in all grades—has long been viewed as a critical factor in producing successful readers as well as learners who are interested in reading" (p. 20). It made us wonder who the role models for reading were during these academic growth years.

We also wanted to know what these first generation students remembered about their experiences in learning to read. Interestingly, 50% of the respondents either did not remember learning to read or they recalled needing extra help because they were behind their peers. Some expressed feeling frustrated and dreaded reading, especially when forced to read aloud. According to the National Survey of Student Engagement (2014) data, 44% of first-year students spent extensive time reading more than 10 books or course pack materials. This amount of required reading is an enormous challenge for students who are slow readers or those who see themselves as below average readers. One student responded, "*I took side classes to get extra help in elementary school and I am still not fully confident but getting there and have gotten better*." Another student stated "*I hated reading*," and several students reported they taught themselves to read. If college and future success is predicated on reading achievement, then first generation students who have few early role models are truly at risk for the rigor of academic study.

As a follow up, we also wanted to know how these students rated themselves as readers, how important they believed reading was to their future success in college, and how important it was to their future success in life. Students rated themselves as readers on a scale of 1-6 with 1 as someone who cannot read and 6 as an excellent reader. Of the 22 students in the class, 32% rated themselves a 6 (excellent), 45% rated themselves a 5 (above average), and 23% rated themselves a 4 (close to average). Regarding the importance of reading for college success, 73% provided the rating of 6 as highly important, and the remaining 27% rating its importance as a 5. Most of the students (77%) rated the importance of reading for their future success in their lives a 6, while the remaining 23% rated it a 5. These data would suggest our students had come to value reading ability as a sign of the more *elite culture* or critical for their future success. Along the way, they have identified the ability to read as a social and cultural capital. Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch (1995) suggested other stakeholders in children's lives can play a major role in promoting reading, for example, as cultural capital. They examined how people with the desired types of cultural capital (e.g. linguistic) in our schools can transmit those valuable resources to their students to increase educational opportunities.

Lessons Learned

Willingham (2012) stated there is a correlation between household wealth and school achievement, which has been repeatedly confirmed through numerous studies previously discussed. He cautioned that it is a correlation and not causality, meaning income does not have to define achievement. As Lareau's (2003) work indicated, students with support from family, teachers, and other personal mentors in their lives can achieve above the mean and defy the correlation. This shift in the messages transmitted through their traditional cultural capital may occur early in their lives and continue throughout their lives. It is important to convey the message to parents and students that education is a tool for positive futures. For our colleagues teaching at universities, we need to constantly reinforce the benefits of lifelong learning and reading. If we take a little time in our classes to reinforce the value of reading and what strategies may help students navigate particular content area texts, we may increase their confidence and skill in reading college-level material. This in turn could assist first generation students in successfully attaining an advanced degree.

From our study, we realized many students do not have strong role models for reading much beyond the early elementary grades. If the students are from lower income families, reading aloud may not have been practiced (Cunningham, 2011). More students reported not recalling

teachers reading aloud to them in middle school or high school. If role models are not seen using a skill like reading, the likelihood of students valuing that skill are limited. Since the strongest educational role models for most students during their school-age years are teachers, it makes sense to call for teachers at all levels to model reading for pleasure and learning. Often this is accomplished through reading aloud to students. Many experts in the field of reading contend reading aloud to students of all age levels is one of the most important activities to develop students' interests and abilities in reading (Cunningham & Allington, 2010; Dorn & Jones, 2012; Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Hoffman, 2011; Ogle & Beers, 2012; Routman, 2003; Trelease, 2013; Vacca, Vacca, & Mraz, 2011).

Because we learned that the transmission of cultural capital can change when alternate tenets are reinforced, parents and teachers can make an impact on the reading achievement if we allow students to witness our reading for multiple reasons and we read aloud to them. This could be a critical point for high school and university professors to consider.

A majority of our students revealed a belief that reading well was an essential skill for succeeding in college. They also believed reading was a necessary life skill. We believe this attitude of seeing reading as a necessity for future success had become part of the cultural capital for these students. Some of them saw themselves as capable readers while others did not. With the high reading demands placed on first-year university students, this lack of confidence in their reading abilities may have added to the stress of learning. For those students who struggle, we wondered if they were internalizing reading as a component of their cultural capital. This begged further investigation on our part.

Implications for Practice

Parents from lower middle class and below backgrounds can level the educational attainment playing field for the children like their upper-class counterparts by fostering their children's educational aspirations before kindergarten. Knowing the impact of these early reading experiences has several implications for educators and others concerned about fostering cultural capital through expanding the pool of Americans who attend and earn a four- year degree.

- Parents and children relationships can be enhanced through parents routine reading to pre-school children.
- Parents regularly reading with elementary age children encourages young people to value books and reading.
- Four-year institutions through Schools of Eduction's Reading Departments should support early literacy development in families through parent and pre-school kids' reading programs held at public libraries and school libraries in the local public and private schools.
- Fraternities and sororities at four-year institutions should develop college student and P-8 reading clubs as a key component of their community service missions. The Greek Letter organizations programs might consider offering their programs at Head Start Programs, YMCA, community centers, community libraries, and public and private school libraries.
- Civic-minded and volunteers oriented independent college students can gain academic credit and experience by volunteer weekly to read books to and with children who attend public and private schools in the shadow of the universities.
- Four-year institutions should partner with private sector entities like Barnes and Nobles to offer discounted books to parents and elementary and middle high school students who regularly read and discuss books together.

In Conclusion

Students shared with us in their own words how their parents' and grandparents' early reading to them played a major role in their efforts to become academically stimulated and paved the way for their subsequent academic success in school and then later in college. Employing Giroux's (1983) school resistance model provided us a conceptual framework to understand the variation in students' responses to the dominant school environment in a school setting dominated by students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. Early reading experiences laid the foundation for the students to develop into self-motivated learners. For us, this was a vivid example of the cultural capital theory. The review of research on cultural capital revealed that parents, especially those of the upper middle class families' cultures, greatly influence the future of their children by intentionally fostering the importance of education and reading (Bourdieu, 1985, 1986; Lareau, 2000).

This study revealed that while some students received this *message* from their families and caregivers, many did not. Especially for first generation students, the intensity of the cultural capital passed to them was often weak. As educators, we need to learn what cultural capital our students bring with them to school at every level. Additionally, we may need to transmit to our students the tools to develop more cultural capital by being positive role models. Future research should seek to learn from first-generation students about their other reflections about their parents' efforts to intentionally foster their upward mobility through emulating the cultural capital practices of upper-class families.

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The Embeddedness of White Fragility within White Pre-service Principals' Reflections on White Privilege

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Abstract

This study analyzes the prevalence of white fragility within the six white, pre-service principals' online responses to readings about white privilege. Six white, pre-service principals were asked to provide commentary to class readings on the relevance of white privilege to their preparation for future positions as principals. The findings showed that all six pre-service principals provided fragile responses, meaning that they minimized the significance of white privilege. The minimization is explained in accordance to individualism, meritocracy, and innocence.

Keywords: *whiteness, privilege, principals, leadership, culture, proficiency*

Schools continue to be filled with students from racially diverse backgrounds (Banks, 1999, 2008; Baron, 2007; Hernandez & Marshall, 2009; Howard, 2007; Young, Madsen, & Young, 2010). However, the teaching force remains predominately white. As such, there is a cultural mismatch between a mostly all white teaching corps and non-white students. Research has suggested a key approach to bridging this gap is through culturally proficient school leadership. Nested within this approach are school leaders who can engage teachers in critical discussions on race, especially white privilege.

White privilege is a system of unearned advantages that are continually afforded only to white people (Kivel, 1996; Lee & Helfand, 2005; McCarthy, & Crichlow, 1993; McIntosh, 1988; McIntyre, 1997; Morrison, 1992). In her classic text *White women, r ace matters: The social construction of whiteness,* Ruth Frankenberg (1993) explained that white people struggle with recognizing the privilege of being white. According to her, difficulties with recognizing white privilege are twofold. First, being white is a location of structural advantage and of race privilege. Second, white people and white values are usually unmarked and unnamed. In other words, the meaning of being white in American society is viewed as normal and neutral forms of racial existence.

Much research has cited the advantages of increasing white teacher effectiveness with discussing race and race related concepts such as white privilege (Horsford, 2011; Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2009; Rusch & Horsford, 2009; Singleton & Linton, 2005; Tatum, 2007). Research has also indicated that these conversations are often derailed by white fragility (Diangelo, 2011, 2012). White fragility is defined as defensive moves used by white people to avoid discussions about race, especially white privilege. The defensive moves range from minimization and denial of the significance of race to avoiding and explaining away race.

Because of the need to understand race and privilege in schools, principals must be prepared to address this topic. A proactive approach is for principal preparation programs to prepare

principals who can discuss race. One way to achieve this goal with white, pre-service principals is through examining white fragility. Better stated, pre-service principal programs should examine the extent to which white, pre-service principals demonstrate white fragility during discussions on race, specifically white privilege. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the prevalence of white fragility among white, pre-service principals' approaches to discussing white privilege.

Research Question

The research question for this article is as follows: To what extent do white, pre-service principals' responses to discussion board prompts demonstrate white fragility?

Significance of Study

The significance of this study is twofold. On the one hand, there continues to be a significant increase in the racial diversity of schools (Banks, 1998; 2008). On the other hand, schools are still rooted in a system of whiteness that privileges white people. Hence the term white privilege. Specifically, white people are often privileged to rarely, if ever, have negative racialized experiences that adversely impact their lives.

White principals will be the key leaders in addressing this racial dichotomy (diversity and privilege). The reason is that the principals of most school are white (Sanchez, Thornton, & Singer, 2009). Consequently, white principals must recognize how white privilege impacts themselves and their non-white students. This level of understanding should be developed during white principals' tenure as pre-service principals. That is, pre-service principals must receive the training needed to understand how being white will influence their knowledge, skills, and disposition to serve racially diverse school populations. By addressing white privilege and white fragility, pre-service principal programs will graduate white, pre-service principals who are better equipped to serve as culturally diverse school leaders.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this research is Robin Diangelo's (2011) concept of white fragility. White fragility is defined as defensive moves used by white people to avoid discussions about race. The defensive moves range from minimization and denial of the significance of race to avoiding and explaining away race, especially white privilege. A key aspect of the defensiveness is that white people seek to avoid the racial stress that results from racial discussions that challenge their racial worldviews.

White fragility remains in place because of the way in which society is constructed in accordance to white people (Diangelo, 2011). In essence, white people are able to live as Americans who are insulated from race-based stress and racial inconvenience. This configuration provides white people with the comfort of experiencing life in ways that reinforces their racial perspectives and views. The high levels of racial comfort are upheld by the premise that only white people are considered to be standard examples of normality, universality, and goodness.

Diangelo (2011) argued that white people become highly defensive when they are presented with ideas that challenge the following racial worldviews:

- Objectivity-White people's views are always non-racial in nature.

- Openness-It is inappropriate to openly discuss race.
- Protection-White people should be emotionally protected by non-white people during discussions about race.
- Divulgence-Non-white people should meet the expectation of providing white people with their experiences and answers to questions about race.
- Solidarity-White people should hold and share the same racial perspectives as other white people.
- Innocence-White people's intentions and actions are and should be viewed as being harmless in nature.
- Individualism-Racial group membership has no impact on the behavior of people, especially white people.
- Meritocracy- Equal access to opportunities and resources exists for all racial groups.
- Authority-White people represent legitimate leadership and authority.

Challenges to these viewpoints disrupt the racial position and equilibrium that create the power, privilege, and dominance of white people.

Diangelo (2012) further explained that there are several reasons that explain white people's fragile responses to race-based discussions. First, many white people apply a good/bad binary toward race and racism. Here, racism is an act that is committed by bad and mean people. That is, people with certain types of character can only be racist. Thus, as long as white people are nice people who treat people nicely, they cannot be inherently racist.

Second, most whites are taught to see themselves as individuals, rather than as part of a racial group (Diangelo, 2012). The disadvantage of this worldview is twofold. First, individualism allows white people to define racism as being isolated acts instead of being a part of the structural fabric of society. Second, individualism convinces white people that they have not benefited over time from the historical and generational accumulation and dissemination of wealth and opportunities to generations of white people.

Third, white people are almost always in the comfort of white spaces (Diangelo, 2012). White spaces are public, segregated racial spaces that are largely controlled and legitimatized by the presence and control of white people. The impact of these spaces is threefold. First, white spaces provide the subtle and direct messages that in comparison to non-white people, white people are better, normal, and superior. This message is reinforced through the centrality of white people in textbooks, media, heroes, leaders, neighborhoods and other representations of America.

Additionally, white spaces nurture a strong sense of racial belongingness among white people (Diangelo, 2012). That is, by virtue of skin color and social standing, white people belong and are considered to be the most valuable members in society. Third, white spaces allow White people to travel through society without navigating race. In effect, white people interact with other racial groups in two nonracialized ways. One way is to never think about race. The other way is to dismiss or minimalize racial discussions and issues. The underlying belief to responses is that only non-white people are racial and therefore have race. This study may indicate whether or not these factors are a part of white, pre-service principals' responses to discussions about race.

Methodology

This study consisted of six white, pre-service principals in a master's level program for educational leadership. The participants were enrolled in an online course entitled "Cultural Proficiency for School Leaders" The purpose of the course was to develop the pre-service principals' understanding of how to demonstrate culturally proficient school leadership. At the beginning of the course, participants completed a written profile of themselves. Key points of the profile are as follows:

Participant	Gender	Years of Experience	Upbringing*
One	Male	4 Years	White People
Two	Male	3 Years	White People
Three	Female	6 Years	White People
Four	Female	14 Years	White People
Five	Female	11 Years	White People
Six	Female	9 Years	White People

*This part of the profile stated, "I have spent the majority of my life around a) white people; b) non-white people; or c) white people & non-white people."

Toward the end of the course, the author conducted a two-week class session entitled "The Relevance of White Privilege to Teaching, Learning, and Leadership." The purpose of the session was to develop participants' competence and confidence to discuss the relevance of white privilege to culturally proficient school leadership. In addition, the session was designed to nurture reflections on how being white would impact the participants' abilities to address white privilege in culturally responsive ways.

During the first week, the participants and I discussed Allan Johnson's (2013) article, "What is a System of Privilege?" and the book, *Power, Privilege, and Difference* (2005). The focus of Johnson's perspective on white privilege were the following points:

- White people enact with privilege because of a system of factors that gives them unearned, socially conferred rights and advantages in society. This system is built on dominance, identification, and centeredness.
- A system of white privilege is white-dominated, which means the default is for white people to occupy positions of power (Johnson, 2013).
- White-identification means that the culture defines white people as the standard for human beings in general (Johnson, 2013). People of color, for example, are routinely identified as non-white, a term that doesn't tell us what they are, but what they are *not.*
- White-centeredness is the tendency to put white people and what they do at the center of attention—the front page of the newspaper or magazine, the main character in the movie (Johnson, 2013).
- When you organize a society in this way, the result will be patterns of unearned advantage that are available to whites simply because they are socially identified as "white."

For the second week's discussion, the students and I reviewed "Diversity vs. White Privilege" (Miner, 2000), a compilation of Dr. Christine Sleeter's perspectives on white privilege. In the article, Dr. Sleeter explained the need to move multiculturalism from just appreciating diversity to addressing racism and white privilege. The section below provides her main points regarding the need to approach white privilege from this perspective.

> Q: You talk a lot about white privilege. Why do you use that term and how do you explain it to white teachers?
>
> A: If I do well at something, nobody is going to say, "You're a credit to your race." Saying that presumes that the race that the person is a member of ordinarily doesn't do very well. Because I am white, nobody says that about me. Yet such statements frequently surround kids of color. People make assumptions about their intellectual ability, about their family support, simply on the basis of their skin color. That's what I mean by reaping privileges of white racism, just on a personal level. At a more institutional level, I sometimes use this example:
>
> My grandfather was a painter and wallpaper hanger who did fairly well in his life by buying property, renovating it, and then selling it. I grew up with the family story that he only had a second-grade education and look how well he did. Yet he was buying property at a time in which property ownership was much easier for white people. As a part of New Deal legislation, Franklin Delano Roosevelt made a deal with southern senators that the money for low-cost federal subsidized housing loans would be made available to white families and not to families of color, because the southern senators wanted to keep African Americans working as sharecroppers. Part of that New Deal legislation was specifically crafted so that people like my grandfather could buy property. I have inherited then, the benefits of that piece of systemic, historic white racism. Even today, I can walk into a real estate office and will more likely be shown places in "better" neighborhoods. I am also more likely to be given a better mortgage deal. Those are examples of how white racism keeps reaping me benefits. Sometimes I am aware of it and sometimes I am not.
>
> Q: A lot of white people resist using terms such as white racism, white supremacy, and white privilege. How do you break through that defensiveness where they might argue, "I am where I am because I worked hard, not because I am white?"
>
> A: One tactic is to look at family stories and situate those stories in a historical context. Let's use my grandfather as an example again. My grandfather worked very hard and I can't say that he didn't. But I can't just individualize his success. I have to look at it in the historical context of who had access to what. This allows me to say that yes, my grandfather worked hard, but in a situation in which the doors were closed to people who may have worked equally hard but who were not white.
>
> Q: A lot of teachers might respond, "That was 80 years ago. Today, we're in a color-blind society and it is illegal to discriminate on the basis of race. How can you say white privilege still exists?"

> A. Often, I have my students go out and do mini-investigations in the community. Here's an exercise that helps. One of the investigations involves students pairing up—one white student and one student of color. Sometimes they've looked at places to rent and one will go in and then the other, and they later compare notes. I have a colleague who's done a similar exercise with the students applying for the same job. Sometimes my students will go shopping together—that seems to be a popular one—and they will compare their treatment by store clerks. With that one, inevitably they come back with biased differential treatment. After these investigations, the students will try to interpret what happened. Students of color aren't surprised by the differing treatment, but the white students tend to be surprised. And some will say, "Well, that was just that store clerk, who was having a bad day."
>
> If the white students are allowed to think of the differing treatment only in terms of one particular instance, they can still minimize and individualize the phenomenon. But in classes where I have been teaching about institutional racism, I'll have groups of students come in and report what they've found. If eight of 10 students report incidents of racism, it becomes much harder to say that racism doesn't happen today. And when they report that data in conjunction with information I bring to class—statistical data about racism and home mortgages, and racism in educational tracking, and racism in racial profiling by police—it makes a powerful statement. (p. 4)

Like the sessions, these readings were designed to develop participants' competence and confidence to discuss the relevance of white privilege to culturally proficient school leadership. Second, the readings were used to develop participants' understanding of how being white would impact their ability to address white privilege as culturally proficient school leaders.

To build on the readings, I provided students with the following writing prompt:

> *Your assignment is as follows:*
>
> 1. *Take the next week to think about our discussions on white privilege.*
> 2. *Provide an online response to the following questions:*
>   A. *As a Person: How do this week's readings on white privilege relate to my life as a white person?*
>   B. *As a Principal: What is the relevance of this week's readings on white privilege to my preparation for demonstrating culturally proficiency leadership?*
>
> *Answers should be one-half page to one page in length.*

The pre-service principals completed these steps and provided an online response to the course website. I used the students' responses to the writing prompt to determine if I met the goals of the sessions and readings.

Data Analysis

I followed Creswell's (2012) design for qualitative analysis to analyze the responses of the pre-service principals. First, I read and re-read the data to become familiar with key details in the

information. I then looked for specific occurrences of patterns in the data. Next, I reread the patterns to determine if the pre-service principals' descriptions were aligned with white fragility. Specifically, I determined if and which pre-service principal responses matched the triggers conducive to white fragility (Diangelo, 2012).

Next, I conducted a member check (Creswell, 2012). Here, I provided the pre-service principals with my description of their narratives. I then asked them to verify my descriptions of their narratives with the original narratives that were submitted to me. Finally, I wrote the findings in ways to reveal the extent to which pre-service principals' responses matched the triggers conducive to white fragility (Diangelo, 2012).

Findings

The findings in regard to the research question showed that white fragility was embedded in pre-service principals' online responses to the research and questions regarding white privilege. The fragile responses emanated from challenges to individualism, meritocracy, and innocence. Unlike Diangelo's (2011) research, the responses did not completely reject the presence and prevalence of white privilege in society. Instead, majority of the participants acknowledged the existence of white privilege. However, the fragility is seen in how the participants' responses minimized the impact, power, and influence of white privilege. The remainder of this section provides descriptions of the fragility-embedded responses of the participants.

Challenge to Individualism

Two pre-service principals provided responses that showed defensiveness to the online discussions about white privilege. For example, pre-service principal one indicated that he agreed with the concept of white privilege. However, he still believed that individualism was more influential than the systemic nature of white privilege. Pre-service principal two did not acknowledge the existence of white privilege. Instead, this pre-service principal responded to the discussions with a description of the importance of treating people as individuals. For this participant, treating everyone as individuals is the best solution to any privilege. In their own words:

Pre-service Principal One

> The text discussed the idea of white privilege and color-blindness. Dr. Sleeter's discussion was rather eye opening. She discusses the idea that many white people have the idea that most of the racial issues of the country were extinguished or nearly resolved with the Civil Rights movement. She says that the idea of white privilege is evident throughout our society through job placement, income, as well as socially. She describes an experiment that she has her students complete that allows the white students to see just how evident white privilege is in our society. Although there is no denying that this privilege exists, I do not agree that it is fair to lump all people into a stereotypical mold of behaviors. I believe that all individuals should be evaluated by the content of their character rather than their outward appearance.

Pre-service Principal Two

> After reading Dr. Sleeter's views on white privilege, I wonder what she thinks is a solution to this problem. She discussed what she does to help her students to see it and how she uses examples from her own family, but what does she think would solve the problem of white privilege. I don't necessarily consider myself color-blind and therefore never see people for who they are. I interact with each person as an individual. I have always gotten to know my students and their parents as people, not as a particular culture. As I have said before, each person is different and there are no absolutes. So instead of assuming about any culture, I get to know the person on a personal level. I have also always had the same high expectations for every one of my students.

Challenge to Meritocracy

The discussions on white privilege challenged three pre-service principals' beliefs about meritocracy. Specifically, these participants believed that everyone has equal access to opportunities. As such, individuals must take advantage of opportunities to achieve success in their chosen endeavors.

For example, pre-service principal three supported her fragile response to the white privilege discussions with a story about meritocracy. She talked about a Hispanic friend who encouraged her husband to move his son from a traditional class to an honors class. According to pre-service principal three, her friend indicated that the change improved his grades. The pre-service principal then opined that the change also provided him with the privilege to be in honors classes. This pre-service principal furthered explained that this level of privilege is the same as the privilege given to her because of being white. She supported this perspective by making comparative points between her white privileged opportunities and the Hispanic child's advanced class privileges.

Pre-service principal four's meritocracy was based on never thinking about being privileged. The reason is that this pre-service principal was taught and tells her own children that "if you work hard you can do anything you want…own a business, be a doctor, be a teacher, a ballet dancer, you can be anything."

Pre-service principal five approached meritocracy with a discussion about exceptionalism. In essence, the pre-service principal reported that she initially started to avoid the request to provide an online response to discussions on white privilege. She then decided to enter the discussion with an example of African American educators who have excelled in her school and district. She indicated that an African American teacher was selected from a pool of white teachers to be the "Teacher of The Year" for her school. She then explained that another African American woman was chosen for a principalship instead of equally qualified white candidates. She indicated that in both instances, the merit—not race—of both African American educators is what caused them to achieve success. She then acknowledges the existence of white privilege. Again, in their own words:

Pre-service Principal Three

> This topic led me to reflect on a recent conversation I had with a very good friend of mine. She is a Hispanic educator working on her doctoral degree and lives in Laredo. She was talking to me about how she encouraged her husband, who has a

7th grader, to put him in honor classes two year ago. The son, who is Hispanic and in a weak school system that is primarily Hispanic, went from being in the regular classroom in the fifth grade to an honors classroom in sixth grade. She was telling me about how not only did his grades improve greatly, his friends changed, and how he spent his free time changed. Even though he was just an average student in the fifth grade he went to exceling in the sixth and seventh grade in the tougher classes because of who he was around and what they were doing. Her stepson, who made the change to honors classes from elementary to middle school, doesn't even recognize the difference. He is just doing what everyone else around him is doing- they talk and competes about grades so he talks and competes with his grades. Essentially, by their decision to move him into honors classes he has now been given a privilege he doesn't even know he has.

This make me think of the white privilege—there are things as a white person that I have always taken advantage of that have benefited me greatly because I am white. Just as my friend's stepson's life will forever be changed because he placed with a group of students that were on a different tract and he has now been privileged to be a part of the honor's group at his school. He doesn't even know what happened to him—but his life will just be a little easier, safer, and a little different now. This really makes me think about how the white privilege is the same. There have been opportunities and situations that I have been put in because I am white that others have not and it has changed the trajectory of my life. While I am thankful for all the opportunities that have come my way, I am frustrated by the path that this is not available to everyone. I agree with what the authors said when they discussed how this is something that exists because it is in our schools and our government and the daily media. I think about how my friend's knowledge of the school system and education gave her stepson the upper hand in his school and how she had to use that knowledge to challenge that status quo of his school and place him in honors classes and how he met that challenge. I feel like the white privilege has 'placed' me before on a better path because it was just there. My friend's example shows me though how better education can and honesty about what is happening in the schools amongst different races, really did affect her stepson in a positive way.

Pre-service Principal Four

After our class, I have had some time to reflect on the idea of being "privileged." I never thought of the white race as being privileged. I grew up in a middle class family and everyone that I knew worked full time, came home to tend to the house, and earned everything that I saw. Not one day in my life did I think I was privileged. The circle activity made me understand the relationship that each of the races has toward one another. I had not thought about living in a "white" world until that discussion.

Our discussion in class also referred back to what we were going to be or what we could be when we grew up or what we tell our children. I was told and tell my girls, if you work hard you can do anything you want…own a business, be a doctor, be a teacher, a ballet dancer, you can be anything. I think that was an eye opener when Dr. Hines spoke of the African American mother that told her son that he could be president but only after Obama was elected, but before that, it was an unreachable goal.

Pre-service Principal Five

> After reflecting on the readings and posts, I was tempted to skip this week's post. My heart was heavy and I thought my comments would be more emotional than logical. Then I started reflecting on recent events I've seen taken place at my current and previous school, and decided to post about these factual events. The school that I'm currently teaching at has one black classroom teacher. She was last year's teacher of the year. She was up against many white teachers and deservingly earned the honor. She is a dedicated and well-respected teacher, and that was all that mattered when it was time to vote.
>
> At the school where I previously taught, a black woman was just promoted to principal and replaced and beat out other white candidates that were equally qualified (as far as years of experience). I honestly believe color wasn't a factor and that she was hired because she truly deserved the job.
>
> While I definitely feel like there is/has been an obvious white privilege, I also believe we as a society are making strides in equality and cultural proficiency. I do believe we still have work to do. I also believe we are headed in the right direction.

Challenge to Innocence

Pre-service principal six's fragility can be attributed to innocence. Specifically, this pre-service principal described white privilege as being a historical slight on race relations that is now largely ineffectual to modern society. He then noted that "I believe that the white culture for the most part are not aware of it or do not act on it, however as others stated we are just white and do not think anymore into it." His statement suggests that white privilege is harmless because of supposedly being unnoticed and not influential to white people. The section below provides an extended description of the views of this pre-service principal.

Pre-service Principal Six

> White Privilege is something that exists due to the history of our country. I do believe that over time it will fade away as it has already weakened in the past 100 years or so. I believe that the white culture for the most part are not aware of it or do not act on it, however as others stated we are just white and do not think anymore into it. I also believe that other cultures as time goes may also have certain privileges that assist them in certain areas. Such as ELL's, although these students do need the extra assistance in class, what about the white students that have a hard time with certain subjects just because they have not been exposed to certain instances. Not taking away from the area of white privilege though. Just something that I thought culturally speaking that every culture could have privileges in certain aspects of life.

Discussion

This research revealed two significant findings. First, white fragility was embedded in pre-service principals' responses to online responses about white privilege. Second, the triggers of individualism, meritocracy, and innocence were also embedded in the responses. In my opinion,

this paradigm created racial cognitive dissonance. Here, participants seemed to employ an "acknowledge-minimize" perspective to their views regarding white privilege. That is, they acknowledged the existence of white privilege. However, the counterpoint acknowledgment is fragility, which is seen in the minimization of the significance of white privilege. In the section below, I analyze specific parts of the responses—again, the actual words of the participants—that highlight minimization of the significance of white privilege.

Individualism

In my opinion, the specific narratives related to individualism are as follows:

Pre-service Principal One

> She describes an experiment that she has her students complete that allows the white students to see just how evident white privilege is in our society. Although there is no denying that this privilege exists, I do not agree that it is fair to lump all people into a stereotypical mold of behaviors. I believe that all individuals should be evaluated by the content of their character rather than their outward appearance.

Pre-service Principal Two

> I interact with each person as an individual. I have always gotten to know my students and their parents as people, not as a particular culture. As I have said before, each person is different and there are no absolutes. So instead of assuming about any culture, I get to know the person on a personal level. I have also always had the same high expectations for every one of my students.

In both responses, the fragility was triggered by challenges to the pre-service principals' beliefs about individuality. For pre-service principal one, the challenge is to see that individualism does not resolve the issue of white privilege. The fragility in pre-service principal two's response is seen in the belief in just looking at individuals instead of culture. This focus allows the pre-service principals to minimize the importance of how culture creates systems of privilege for white people. The focus also allows both participants to overlook the notion that we can look at individuals and cultural tendencies as the same time.

Meritocracy

In my opinion, the specific narratives related to meritocracy are as follows:

Pre-service Principal Three

> He is just doing what everyone else around him is doing—they talk and compete about grades so he talks and competes with his grades. Essentially, by their decision to move him into honors classes he has now been given a privilege he doesn't even know he has. This make me think of the white privilege—there are things as a white person that I have always taken advantage of that have benefited me greatly because I am white. Just as my friend's

> son's life will forever be changed because he placed with a group of students that were on a different tract and he has now been privileged to be a part of the honor's group at his school. He doesn't even know what happened to him- but his life will just be a little easier, safer, and little different now.

Pre-service Principal Four

> Our discussion in class also referred back to what we were going to be or what we could be when we grew up or what we tell our children. I was told and tell my girls, if you work hard you can do anything you want…own a business, be a doctor, be a teacher, a ballet dancer, you can be anything. I think that was an eye opener when Dr. Hines spoke of the African American mother that told her son that he could be president but only after Obama was elected, but before that, it was an unreachable goal.

Pre-service Principal Five

> The school that I'm currently teaching at has one black classroom teacher. She was last year's teacher of the year. She was up against many white teachers and deservingly earned the honor. She is a dedicated and well-respected teacher, and that was all that mattered when it was time to vote At the school I previously taught at, a black woman was just promoted to principal and replaced and beat out other white candidates that were equally qualified (as far as years of experience). I honestly believe color wasn't a factor and that she was hired because she truly deserved the job.

Using Diangelo (2011) as a guide, I purport that all three participants believe that meritocracy positions racial privilege as being based on the idea that hard work creates merit and opportunities. In this context, people from all races can have the same level or privilege. For example, pre-service principal three's narrative shows a belief in how class enrollment allowed a Hispanic/Latino student to achieve a certain level of racial privilege. That is, through hard work, a non-white student was able to achieve racial privilege that is similar to the privilege that comes with just being white. I also equate this perception to the pre-service principals indication of how "Essentially, by their decision to move him into honors classes he has now been given a privilege he doesn't even know he has."

The pre-service principal is overlooking the notion that white privilege is not about tangible items. White privilege is about the intangible of being considered the norm or default race for all other racial groups. That said, no amount of success in a classroom would provide non-white students with the same racial privilege that has been consistently afforded to and inherited by white people.

As with pre-service principal three, pre-service principal four also confuses privilege with merit. In this case, the pre-service principal states that "I was told and tell my girls, if you work hard you can do anything you want…own a business, be a doctor, be a teacher, a ballet dancer, you can be anything." However, the pre-service principal is surprised to learn that an African American perceived that her son could be President of the United States only after the election of the first Black president. Thus, this example showed the pre-service principal that people who are not white do not share the same perspective of believing that merit and hard work alone will

achieve success for non-white people. This pre-service principal saw this perspective as an eye opener because of being white in a country that is based on white privilege.

Pre-service principal five uses the educational advancement of two African American educators to show that white privilege is becoming secondary to equal opportunity for everybody. This pre-service principal overlooks the notion that patterns, not outliers, tell the story regarding privilege. In other words, examples of one or two non-white people's success in career advancement do not erase the establishment of and impact of white privilege on opportunities for non-white people.

Innocence

It appears that the innocence-based aspect of pre-service principal six's narrative is as follows:

Pre-service Principal Six

> White privilege is something that exists due to the history of our country. I do believe that over time it will fade away as it has already weakened in the past 100 years or so. I believe that the white culture for the most part are not aware of it or do not act on it, however as others stated we are just white and do not think anymore into it.

The innocence is seen in the pre-service principals' belief in that there is a universal benignness that shapes the experiences of being white. That is, white people are either not aware of or not wanting to acknowledge the centuries of advantages and privilege that come with being white. Therefore, the influence of white people and white culture is harmless or innocent in nature. Thus, being white affords white people the privilege of benefitting from while not acknowledging their long-term power, dominance, and authority over other racial groups.

Overall, the fragility narratives may be further explained by Diangelo's (2011, 2012) views of the causes of white fragility. For instance, consider white people's views of race through the good/bad binary. Diangelo's description of this binary is evident in pre-service principal six's use of innocence to frame white privilege. His description purports that white privilege was initially committed by bad white people. Nowadays, white privilege has become more innocent because of not being used by good white people.

As another example, Diangelo's explanation of individualism relates to two pre-service principals' (one and two) responses to the course discussion on white privilege. Their responses suggested that white privilege is not about white people as a group. The main reason, as suggested by Diangelo, is that most white people are taught to see themselves as individuals (Diangelo, 2012). Therefore, white privilege can be addressed by simply treating people as individuals without acknowledging the historical and generational accumulation and wealth and opportunities to generations of white people.

I think that the most significant contributing factor to all of the pre-service principals' responses to white privilege is white spaces. Diangelo (2012) clearly communicated that white people's socialization is largely exclusive of people from other racial groups. This type of socialization was probably a key component to the upbringing of the participants for this study.

The participants' responses do not suggest that they have the sense of superiority and belongingness that comes with white spaces. However, their responses strongly suggest that they live

in accordance to some aspect of racelessness. For these pre-service principals, being white has privilege. But the privilege does not hold more importance than individualism and meritocracy. Thus, the supposedly harmless nature of white privilege minimizes the meaning of being in individualized versions of white skin. Evidence to this effect can be seen in these pre-service principals' uses of individualism, meritocracy, and innocence to deracialize and minimize the relevance of white privilege.

Implications

The main implication from this research is for participants to engage in conscious reflections on race. The initial reflection should be on whiteness and white privilege. This reflection would help these pre-service principals to develop a sociocultural consciousness to be culturally proficient school leaders. Villegas and Lucas (2007) defined sociocultural consciousness as "the awareness that a person's worldview is not universal but profoundly influenced by life experiences, as mediated by a variety of factors including race, ethnicity, gender, and social class" (p. 31). In this case, white, pre-service principals would begin to see that their views about race have been socialized through the white norms of individualism, meritocracy, and innocence.

They may then be able to interrogate these perceptions in ways that place their racial perspectives among other perspectives regarding race. This suggestion is consistent with Villegas and Lucas' (2007) beliefs in that without a sociocultural consciousness, educators rely on their own experiences "to make sense of their students' lives—an unreflective habit that often results in misinterpretation of those students' experiences and leads to miscommunication" (p. 31). In the context of this study, the lack of sociocultural consciousness would allow these white, pre-service principals to perpetuate narrow assumptions-based views and interpretations about how race and white privilege works in society.

The presence of this consciousness would increase the pre-service principals' likelihood of recognizing the flaws of their perspectives about white privilege. With regards to this study, the pre-service principals would see that white privilege is reinforced—not minimized—by deracializing meritocracy, individualism, or innocence. In addition, adding racelessnes to white privilege upholds the recurring beliefs, principles, and systems of white supremacy. By understanding this racial structure, the participants of this study may be more likely to see themselves and their racial views as being a part of the racial order that superimposes white people over other racial groups.

By using this structure in place of their fragility, the white, pre-service principals could become principals who effectively display culturally proficient school leadership. Based on my work on race in schools, I believe the racial component to culturally proficient school leadership necessitates the need for demonstrating the following skills:

1. Racial Competence—Principals understand the need to foster a school culture and climate that pursues a clear and compelling understanding of how race works in society and schools and on their particular campuses. This pursuit is also used to reveal the role that white privilege plays in the structure of race on their campuses.

2. Racial Reflection—Principals understand the need to foster a school culture and climate that allows for spaces within race reflections and between race reflections of what "being racial" means. This means that faculty, staff, administration, and students from all racial groups find a spot to make sense of what it means to be a member of their

racial groups both within racial and between racial situations on their campuses. Throughout the space identification process, white privilege is continually examined from the extent of determining how this phenomenon impacts the ability to identify and secure this space in healthy ways.

3. Racial Assertiveness—Principals understand the need to foster a school culture and climate where faculty, staff, administration and students can openly and honestly assert their feelings about race in general and race in the school. There are specific approaches to be taken to address the stress that comes with developing the assertiveness to process and negotiate race. In addition, white privilege is analyzed in terms of its impact on the ability for all school stakeholders to share their racial concerns, views, and feelings.

4. Racial Responsiveness—Principals understand the need to foster a school culture and climate where faculty, staff, administration and students are able to respond to race as a concept to be explored instead of an issue to be ignored within the school. This perspective is balanced against the backdrop of determining the extent to which responding to race is influenced by white privilege.

As principals, the white, pre-service principals of this study could use this skill set to engage teachers in authentic discussions about race and privilege. This outcome could then resolve some of the race-based inequalities that are built into schools and classrooms (Villegas & Lucas, 2007).

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An Investigation of Indicators of Success in Graduates of a Progressive, Urban, Public High School

Christine D. Kunkel, Rhode Island College

Abstract

Using standardized test scores to measure success in schools is a controversial topic in education today. Many feel that test scores are not a valid indicator of success, or are being overused to the detriment of the curriculum. But if not test scores, then what is the alternative? This study examines potential alternatives, or more authentic indicators of student success through a survey of alumni from one progressive, urban, public school, and also how this school might have contributed to this success. Participants in this study identified markers for success both while in school as well as later in adult life. Project presentations, reflective portfolio work, leadership and service experiences, daily classroom and quarterly assessments, graduation and acceptance into college were identified as indicators of success while in high school. Later in life, participants noted that graduating from college, getting a job, purchasing a home, being able to pay the bills, community engagement, and being happy and satisfied with life were also indicators of success. These findings suggest that while standardized test scores offer a snapshot of information about K-12 students, educational leaders need to look far beyond these scores to gauge true success. This study suggests ways to look at how students and schools are actually performing in deep and authentic ways, and presents curriculum that has been reported to foster success in students' lives.

Keywords*: authentic assessment, progressive school practices, indicators of success, urban school, educational outcomes, student success*

Introduction: the Study

> *An appeal to the pseudo-certainties of science might seem finally to settle any question. But this is a moral issue rather than a scientific one; values are at stake here—not facts. It is it the irritating human realm where the interesting difficulties are, and where one might have to really think about and deal with an individual's history, circumstances and reactions. It is the attempted standardization of a human being and of a notion of achievement that is limiting, prescriptive and bullying. (Kureishi, 2012)*

This study looked at indicators of success from a progressive, urban, public school. While many definitions of success in schools emphasize the importance of using test scores to measure achievement (USDOE, 2008; Koretz, 2008), this study looked at potential alternatives to those traditional indicators. Beyond high school, success is often measured by levels of wealth and power (Llopis,

2012). But might not the measure of success in life be more of a personal interpretation? This study will also suggest other ways success could be defined later in life through the responses given on this survey.

The word "progressive" in this study described the type of school these participants attended. Progressivists "believe that the ability to apply knowledge in a variety of contexts is the true test of a well-educated learner" (Nelson, 2011, p. 12). As such, experiential curriculum and authentic practices were incorporated into Key Learning Community's practices to foster student participation and leadership in a democratic society (Key L.C. Web Site, 2010). "Authentic practices" was defined as theme-based, project-focused curriculum, and assessment practices that consider individual student performances as opposed to standardized comparisons (see Figure 1). Indicators of success in this study, then, extended far beyond standardized test scores.

Setting

The school in this study was the Key Learning Community, which originally opened as an elementary Magnet School in 1987. In the following 12 years, the school expanded to include a middle school, and then finally a high school serving a total of over 600 students once the full K-12 was in place. Cited by Howard Gardner as "the first Multiple Intelligences school in the world" (Gardner, 2009, p. 7), the school received much attention nationally as well as internationally. Great thinkers such as Howard Gardner, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, and David Henry Feldman kept close contact with the school as their theories and ideas were being implemented in the school's curriculum and assessment.

The school was a K-12 public school in a mid-size urban city. When the school opened in 1987, approximately 30% of the students received free or reduced lunch. More recently, 84% of this school's students receive free or reduced lunch (IDOE, 2013).

The school did not receive Title I funds until 2006, when the majority of the student population was determined to be "high poverty" by district administrators. While test scores early on (from 1987 through the 1990's) were always above state averages, this school had never met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals in the more recent No Child Left Behind (USDOE, 2001) era (from 2001 to 2015). But during the time the participants of this study attended Key, standardized test scores were never the focus at this school. During this period, Key Learning Community used more progressive means of assessment to document student success such as project presentations and exhibitions, along with the school's unique progress reports that incorporated narratives and descriptive symbols (Key Learning Community Web Site, 2010). The educators at Key considered these practices more authentic "performances of understanding" (Blythe and Associates, 1998).

Historical Perspective

For over a century, many educators in the U.S. have been interested in providing a more progressive curriculum for their students. John Dewey developed his Lab School in the 1890's, and was known for his use of experiential curriculum (Archambault, 1974). In 1930, a grand study was conducted called the "Eight Year Study," where investigators studied the outcomes of progressive school practices (Aikin, 1942). In this study, 30 schools participated and developed curriculum, mostly progressive, that fostered skills and capacities in their students that they felt would better ensure success in college. Interestingly, the Carnegie Foundation and the College Entrance

Examination Board (CEEB) were early sponsors of the study, and pushed for the use of standardized tests to measure the success of this experiment. But the schools involved pushed back because they felt this could not measure the work they were doing, and actually were able to stave off the use of these tests. Since there were no test scores to measure success, these schools had to look to other indicators. In the end, the outcomes reported in students who participated were "…stronger leadership, better intellectual abilities, better understanding of democracy, and a keener interest in good books…" than students who did not (Kridel & Bullough, 2007, p. 22).

Fast forward to 1987, when the current standards and assessment movement was establishing significance in this country, and extensive standardized testing was becoming status quo in most public schools in the U.S. As an important contributor to that work, even Lauren Resnick, noted: "Many of the tests we do use are unable to measure what should be the hallmark of a thinking curriculum: the cultivation of students' ability to apply skills and knowledge to real-world problems. Testing practices may in fact interfere with the kind of higher skills that are desired" (Resnick, L., as cited in Marzano, Pickering, McTighe, 1993, p. 10).

As time moved forward, the standards and standardized testing movement gained ground. At the turn of the millennium, Howard Gardner (2000) sounded a warning cry, "I believe that many of our current testing policies, no matter how well intentioned, are fundamentally misguided. We are moving toward implementing an education that, at best, is suited to an earlier era, where the amassing of mountains of information was seen as the mark of an educated person" (Gardner, 2000, p. 260).

Today's Dilemma

Today, the "Common Core State Standards" (CCSSI, 2014) dominate most public schools' policies in both curricular as well as assessment practices, and PARCC and SMART assessments are being used in many states to measure the Common Core standards (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2015). But while the Common Core standards and these new assessments are only beginning to be implemented, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was reauthorized in December as The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The ESSA (USDOE, 2015) has added wind to the sails of educators who have been frustrated with the constraints of the previous ESEA, the well-known No Child Left Behind Act. Through the years, many scholarly voices have been engaged in public discourse on how to best measure success in today's schools, and now this conversation intensifies. In a recent interview on National Pubic Radio, Linda Darling-Hammond explained some of the problems with the state and federal testing policies, and how the tests are designed and used. She asked: "Will we move from a test-and-punish philosophy, which was the framework for No Child Left Behind, to an assess-and-improve philosophy? Will we move from the old multiple choice tests to more open-ended assessments that allow kids to explain their thinking and evaluate and investigate and research and demonstrate their learning?" (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

Why bother to look at indicators of success that do not focus on the more quantifiable standardized test scores? Basically, because standardized test scores are too simplistic in their function to report on the complexities of what goes on in public schools today. Grinell and Rabin (2013) confirm that when looking for indicators of success in a school, one must acknowledge

> …that a deep understanding of the complexities of the educational landscape must take into account the interdependence of the often competing and at times incommensurable

> educational concepts, theories and practices played out in the context of the multifaceted experiences of actual children in classrooms and in the context of diverse communities with often very different economic and social capital… (p. 751)

In their paper, these authors strongly caution about using simplifications such as standardized test scores to represent the achievement of students, or more generally, the overall quality of a school.

So then, if standardized test scores are too simplistic to fully report on schools' achievements, what is more appropriate? Participants in this study reported important indicators of success both during their high school experiences, and then later in life. Indicators during high school included a successful apprenticeship experience, a quality digital portfolio that reflects many successful experiences during high school, a significant service record, quality project presentations, the achievement of a high school diploma, National Honor Society status, acceptance into college, exhibitions of leadership, and quality daily class work.

The indicators of success reported by participants in this study that occurred after high school included: college attendance and persistence, earning a certificate or college degree, employment, working hard, making a living, paying the bills, enjoying the fruits of your labor, raising a family, home ownership, community involvement, leadership, volunteerism/service to community, pursuing your dreams, project management savvy, and feeling happy, satisfied, and fulfilled.

This study explored indicators of success during school and outcomes experienced later in life. Do these indicators of success offer a quality alternative to standardized measures to show how students are doing in school? This study looks to contribute to this conversation.

Research Questions

This study explored to what degree former students from one progressive, public, urban school perceived themselves to be successful in high school. It also looked at their perceptions of feeling happy and successful today and then to what degree the participants perceived the practices from this school helped them to achieve this happiness and success. The study was guided by the following four questions:

1. What are the participants doing today?
2. In what ways do alumni from this progressive, public, urban school perceive themselves as having been successful?
3. In what ways do participants attribute their success to the practices of this unique school?
4. What are the indicators of success demonstrated by alumni of this progressive, urban, public school?

Theoretical Framework

This study is situated in the social justice framework first influenced by James B. Macdonald (Macdonald, 1995), who looked at curriculum from an "impulse for justice, equity and fairness" (as cited by Pinar et al., 1995, p. 628). He believed that "the liberation of human potential in a framework of democratic rights, responsibilities, and practices, leading toward a better realization of justice, equality, liberty, and fraternity" provides a better foundation for school design (Macdonald, 1995, p.154). Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory also enhances the social justice framework in education, as schools that use MI in their curriculum free students to better

find and express their individual strengths. Many scholars agree that the Multiple Intelligences Theory provides a strong foundation for teaching and enhancing social justice in schools (Johnson, 2008; Gould et al., 2014; Michelli & Keiser, 2005). Gardner has identified 8 separate intelligences (2000), and noted that by recognizing all multiple intelligences people have more capacities and strengths than those found in traditional intelligence tests alone. By realizing, for example, their musical or even intrapersonal intelligence, people are able to express important skills and expertise in more areas than just the two (linguistic and mathematical) utilized on most standardized tests. In this way, ideals of social justice are better addressed as more people are able to develop a sense of agency, make important decisions for their future and contribute to the community. People are not shut out of future opportunities for success due to inadequate test scores that have such a narrow scope.

The work of John Dewey (who strongly influenced Macdonald's work) influences the social justice framework here as well. Dewey (1916/1944) strongly encouraged the full implementation of democratic principles in schools:

> A society which makes provision for participation in its good of all its members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associate life is in so far democratic. Such a society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder. (p. 99)

Finally, one cannot discuss "social justice" in education without considering the work of Paulo Freire. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1970/1994) discussed what it means to be oppressed, but he also laid out the design for the curriculum to achieve social justice: "… it cannot present its own program but must search for this program dialogically with the people, it serves to introduce the pedagogy of the oppressed, in the elaboration of which the oppressed must participate" (p. 105). In this, Freire asserted that this program is: "a pedagogy which must be forged *with*, not *for the* oppressed (whether individuals or peoples) in the incessant struggle to regain their humanity" (italicization and parentheses original to author's work, p. 30).

The school's curriculum in this study was designed to be consistent within a strengths-based Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983) framework, using James B. Macdonald's model for creating theme-centered curriculum (Macdonald, 1971) in the spirit of fostering a democratic environment for students (Dewey, 1916/1944; Freire, 1970/1994). This very progressive model of education was operationalized with project-based learning, and authentic curriculum including a class based on Flow Theory (Csikzentmihalyi, 1990) as well as electives for students called "Pods" to give them time for enrichment in their area of strength. The assessment process, which assessed the cognitive development of each of the multiple intelligences, was developed from the work of David Henry Feldman's "Universal to Unique" Continuum (1999). Student mentorships and internships were integrated into the curriculum as well as weekly Community Learning Opportunities (CLO's) so that students spent substantial time out in the community. Teaching "ideals of democracy" and preparing students to be leaders in the community grounded the vision at the Key Learning Community, and authentic pedagogy anchored the practice. These examples of authentic pedagogy are illustrated on Figure 1, the *Key Learning Community—Theory to Reality Curriculum Model* (below).

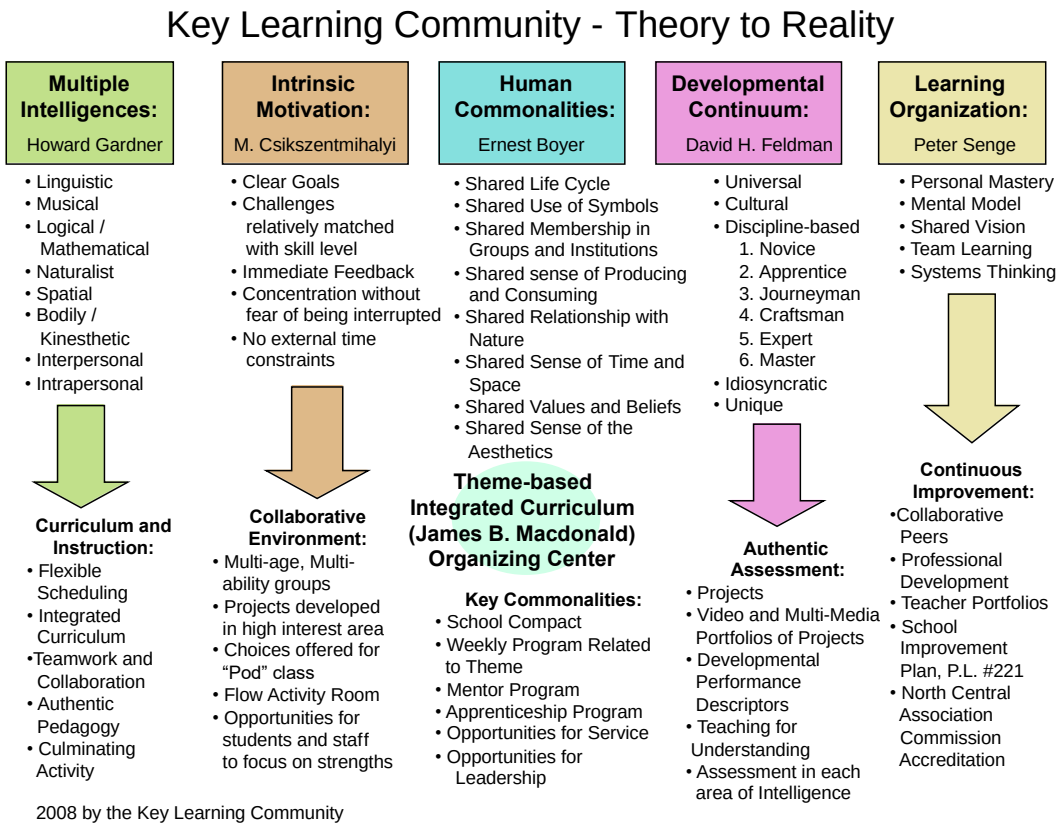

FIGURE 1 - The Key Learning Community Curriculum Model

Education that considers social justice theory looks to liberate students so they might free themselves from the bondages of oppression and/or poverty, and take responsibility for their own learning and life. By providing educational experiences that allow students to discover and use their strengths in their educational process, the power can shift to the personal level where students learn they can control their own destiny, and develop a strong sense of agency. The school in this study looked to implement the democratic ideals of Macdonald, Gardner, Dewey and Friere because by using this authentic curriculum, assessment and pedagogy in daily practice, students had a greater opportunity to realize their strengths, take control of their educational experience, and become the masters of their own success.

It's important to note that if learning experiences had been strongly shaped by test-prep curriculum for the participants of this survey, there would have been a forced math and linguistics focus, teachers would have been required to teach a very narrow curriculum and students would not have had the opportunity to participate more fully in their own learning based on their strengths. They would never have properly learned to identify and develop their individual strengths, including the full array of the 8 multiple intelligences. With this, assessment would likely have taken a heavy multiple choice test focus, and students would not have had the opportunity to experience more authentic assessment practices to display their learning (as is the case in most urban, public schools). Since there was a heavy focus on project presentations and other authentic "performances of understanding" (Blythe and Associates, 1998) at this school, there is an opportunity to analyze

alternative "indicators of success" (beyond test scores) in this study.

Methodology

This research design is an exploratory study. The purpose of the study was to examine participants' perceptions of indicators of success while they attended this school, their levels of success and happiness after high school, and then how their success in life after school might be attributed to their experiences at the Key Learning Community. The responses from the survey in this study will help evaluate how a non-traditional, and non-test prep program prepared urban, public school students for the world after high school using indicators of success other than standardized test scores.

Survey Development

The survey used in this study was constructed collaboratively in 2011 with input from the school's past and current administrators (at that time), past and current teachers, community supporters of the school, as well as with input from Howard Gardner. An initial draft of the survey questions was circulated through e-mail, and the survey development group sent feedback with ideas for questions that should be deleted, added, or re-worded. The intent of the survey was to have the participants (who were all former students) report which specific experiences—during their time at this school—contributed to their success then, as students, and now.

There were 65 questions in the survey. Of these, 36 were multiple selection questions, and 29 of the questions were open ended. The survey could be completed in 30-60 minutes. Topics of questions included current and past educational and employment situations, practices at the school that were helpful with college and career success, as well as current leadership and community participation. Almost every topic queried asked a multiple selection question followed by an open response question designed to draw out more detail in the response. An example would be to ask the participants to select from a list of possible experiences that they valued while at Key (as seen in Figure 2). The follow-up open-ended question would then ask, "Were there any additional valuable experiences at this school not mentioned in the previous question?"

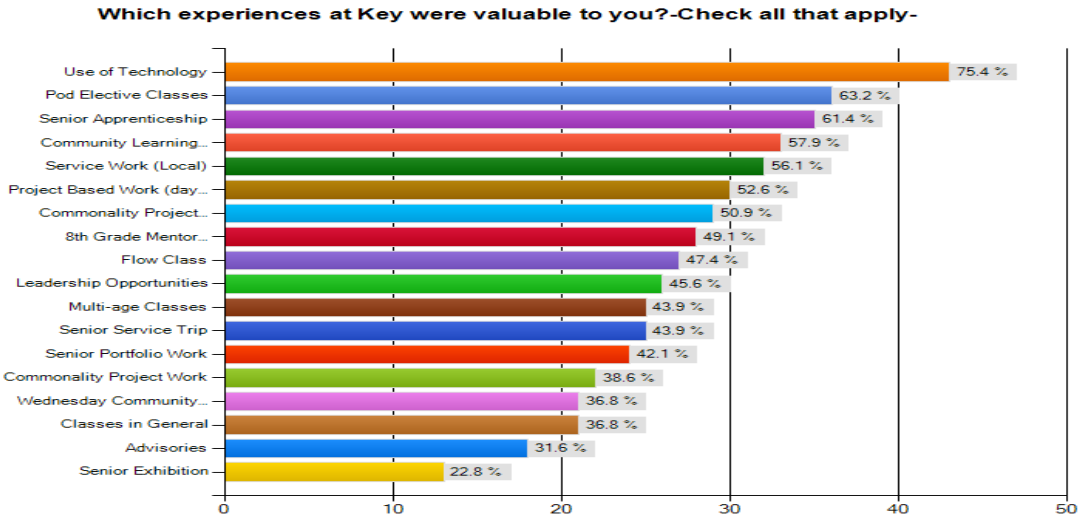

Figure 2: Data Sample

Participants were recruited completely through online social media. The sites used were the school's web site and a Facebook page created and used heavily by the school's alumni and graduates. An invitation to participate and a link to the survey were posted in both locations.

Respondents to the survey ranged in age from 18-30 years old (in 2012). The actual demographics of the school have historically been highly varied as the school worked to recruit a strongly diverse population, so these students came from backgrounds ranging from deep poverty to upper middle class status. The eligibility requirements for the study were that all participants are graduates or alumni of this particular urban, public, progressive magnet school, and all participants reported to be former students. There were 57 completed responses, and there were just under 200 high school graduates from this school at the time of the survey.

Survey respondents were former students who attended or graduated from 1987 to 2012. Their demographics:

- 61.4% of the respondents were female and 38.6% male.
- 64.9% identified as Caucasian, while 26.3% indicated African-American, 8.8% mixed race, 1.8% Native American, and 1.8% "other."
- 52.6% indicated that their family always had the money to pay the bills while they were Key students, 29.8% indicated their family usually had enough money to pay the bills, 14% indicated their family struggled to pay the bills, and 3.5% indicated that their family could not pay the bills on their own, and relied on government help.

Participants of this study were asked about their experiences during their time at the Key Learning Community including their standardized test performance, but also had ample opportunity to report the many other ways they were successful in school and are currently successful in their adult lives. These responses provide a rich data set for this study.

Coding Process

Through a coding process, as suggested by Cresswell (2009), themes were extracted from the data in two ways. The first was through the percentage of times that specific responses were reported in the survey. For instance, participants were asked, "Which experiences at the school were valuable?" They then had the opportunity to check all that applied. (See Figure 2.)

A second means of drawing themes from the data came from the participants' rich and descriptive narrative responses following various questions. These data have been coded and compiled into the themes reported in the next section.

The specific task of coding began by reading through and then organizing all of the survey data. Using Creswell's (2009) method to prepare the data for analysis and interpretation, all of the qualitative data were coded and then triangulated against the quantitative data to determine the overarching themes from the data. Creswell (2009) advised: "The traditional approach in the social sciences is to allow the codes to emerge during the data analysis" (p. 187), and so this was done. The qualitative data were then coded "by hand" by noting and keeping count of all of the relevant terms in each of the narrative responses. Similar responses across all of the narrative data were grouped and tabulated, which determined numerical totals. These totals were compared to questions that were more quantitative in nature (as with Figure 2). This coding process generated ideas or themes that stood out with high percentages on the data tables, and by being mentioned numerous times in the narrative sections in substantive ways. The ideas that were indicated most often

on the tables and/or mentioned frequently in the narrative responses were organized into potential themes. For verification of the themes, in December of 2012, the principal investigator sent the data set to 12 people (without revealing the "potential themes") and then met with these people to see what themes they discovered. This process served to validate the potential themes with these multiple readers before the final themes were determined.

Research Findings and Discussion

Major Themes Found in the Data/Cluster Points

This study looked at a progressive, urban, public, K-12 school to identify indicators of success beyond standardized test scores. As in most schools, the curriculum was developed to attend to the school's general goal. For this school, the general goal was providing "enriched learning experiences" to prepare "students for service and leadership in a complex democratic society" (From the School's Vision Statement, Key Learning Community Web Site, 2010), accomplished through a curriculum based on Multiple Intelligences Theory with a strong emphasis on social justice.

The "Theory to Reality Curriculum" Graphic (as seen in Figure 1) displays a fairly complete representation of the progressive curriculum components implemented at Key Learning Community. The data presented here not only report on outcomes of that curriculum, they also report on the successes of the Mission/Vision of the school. Ultimately, this information will suggest indicators of success seen from the work of this progressive, urban, public school.

The major themes drawn from the survey data that have been illuminated by participants as important components of the curriculum (through Creswell's coding process) include:

1. *Projects, Project-Based Learning and Senior Exhibitions*
2. *Leadership Development*
3. *Strengths-Based Program*
4. *Experiential Learning* including
    - *CLO's* (Community Learning Opportunities, or field trips)
    - *Service Learning and Senior Service Trip*
    - *Apprenticeships*

Projects, Project-Based-Learning, and Senior Exhibitions

As identified in the school's mission and vision, and as seen on the "Theory to Reality Curriculum" (Figure 1), projects were an important practice at this school. Projects were the top method used for assessment, project-based-learning was the recommended method for teaching classes, and project exhibitions were an important component for developing intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences (Gardner, 2007) at Key, as well as leadership. Accordingly, "Projects" were reflected in the survey as an important practice at Key Learning Community by over half of the respondents in the multiple selection questions, and then verified in numerous narrative responses.

Rich description provided by a few of the many participants (in the narrative response areas on the survey) who emphasized the importance of projects: Participant # 35 noted, "Presenting

projects multiple times has undeniably equipped me EXTREMELY well for a professional working environment," while another participant stated, "I believe that my projects were some of my biggest accomplishments at *this school*, especially in High School, I gained a lot of knowledge and skill from doing them" (Participant # 34). Finally, Participant #50 described the benefits he received from developing and presenting his projects through the years: "My great speaking skills, thanks to the project based learning, helped me communicate this to my audience with ease. The projects, both theme and commonality, are one of the things I feel have benefited me the most since I've been at Key."

Leadership Development

Student Leadership Development was an important goal at this school (See Curriculum Graphic, Figure 1). Project development and public speaking are critical skills to acquire in developing leadership, as are the service learning and collaborative aspects of this school's program (Kunkel, 2003). Just over 60% of the participants in the study indicated that they were leaders while in school, and 51% reported holding positions of leadership at this time in their adult lives.

The following narrative responses were a few of the replies to questions that asked respondents to identify strengths developed at this school. Participant #39 wrote: "Due to my exposure to leadership opportunities, I am very comfortable with taking leadership roles in many areas of my life, especially in music." Another participant noted: "I think my teachers would testify to my leadership which I gained through the Key program and the independence that it gave me" (Participant # 34).

Strengths-Based Program

As a school built upon the theory of Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983), educators at Key believed that "knowing their strengths" would provide many benefits for the students (Key L.C. Web Site, 2010), and 84.2% of the participants indicated they knew their strengths while enrolled in this school. There was also a belief that "knowing your strengths" would enhance the intrapersonal intelligence (Gardner, 2007), assist students in knowing how they could make a contribution to the school, and then later to the community (Key Learning Community Website, 2010). 76.8% of the participants indicated in the survey that knowing their strengths did help them to make college and career choices, and 69.8% said knowing their strengths helped them to be more successful at their job.

Each participant selected several of the multiple intelligences listed in this "multiple selection" question as personal strengths (See Figure 3). Many respondents in this study also expanded upon the importance of learning their strengths in the open-ended narrative responses. When asked about the benefits of learning their strengths at this school, Participant #36 wrote: "I excelled in my academic studies after leaving Key. I feel having an intimate knowledge about my strengths/weaknesses in the intelligences allowed me to have a better understanding of how to study/exhibit the knowledge I'd mastered." Another participant noted: "I have a knowledge about what I can and can't do that I learned at Key while discovering my strengths. I know what motivates and discourages me" (Participant #8).

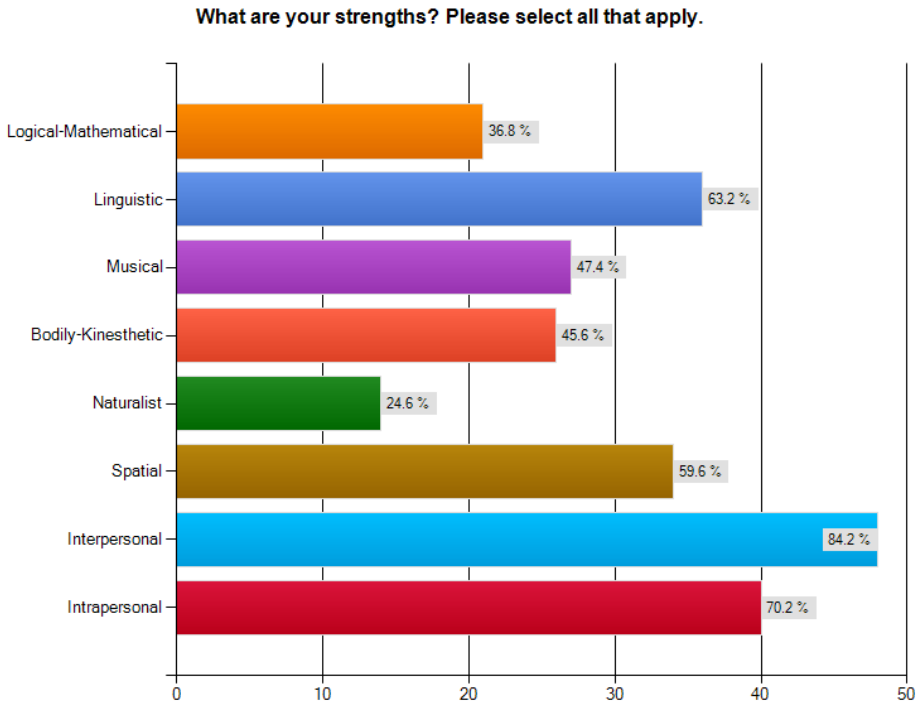

Figure 3: Self-Report of Participants' Strengths

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning has enjoyed global popularity throughout the years; John Dewey favored the practice more than a century ago. After some time for reflection on the process he wrote: "…the teacher should become intimately acquainted with the conditions of the local community, physical, historical, economic, occupational, etc., in order to utilize them as educational resources" (Dewey, 1938, p.40).

In today's educational environment, there are many schools that value and design their school with an experiential curriculum in mind. In a recent writing, Washor & Mojkowski (2013) note that experiential learning (they call it "leaving to learn") "opportunities include internships, travel, community service, work, entrepreneurial ventures, and gap years" (p.xxvii). The Association for Experiential Education (2014) adds that "hands on education, global education, environmental education and expeditionary education" are experiential as well (as reported on their web site). Three aspects of experiential learning reported as important by participants in this study were the "community learning opportunity" (CLO), aspects of service learning, and apprenticeships.

Community Learning Opportunities (CLO's)

Several types of experiential activities were noted by participants in this study as critical to their current success. During their school day, students in this study had frequent excursions out into the local city environs to expand their learning. These were called "CLO's" or "Community Learning Opportunities." 57.9% of respondents felt that CLO's were a valuable experience. Of these, Participant #25 wrote: "I believe that the CLO Trips were very beneficial for myself and other students. I even now still attend plays, musicals, and find myself wanting to get out and

participate in the arts that the local community has to offer here..." Participant #3 added, "I really value the chance we had to go on CLO's during the day. As a teacher (today), I can't imagine how much planning that took!"

Service Learning and the Senior Service Trip

A second experiential focus was to provide the students with many opportunities for service learning and additionally an international service trip was the highlight of senior year. 56.1% indicated that the service component of the school was beneficial to them. Participant #34 noted: "The many experiences I had with service are the foundation to my future careers and goals and working on the senior service trip impacted me…One of the best examples of my leadership would have to be my commitment to the senior service trip and helping my class and advisors with such a big project." Perhaps students who come from a high poverty background benefit from an experiential education the most. This participant (#28) did, and explains:

> The best thing at Key was the Senior Service-Learning Trip to the Dominican Republic. It was great to travel to a foreign country and do service work there. I was amazed to be going on an adventure with my friends and teachers. We worked hard in a lot of service projects, tested out our Spanish skills, and learned more about the history and culture of the country. It was the most memorable experience that I have ever had in my life.

Apprenticeships

As another part of the experiential curriculum, students at this school had the opportunity to spend time with apprenticeship guides most mornings during their senior year. 61.4% (this number might be artificially low as the apprenticeship program did not start until 2002) indicated that their senior apprenticeship was a valuable component of their educational experience, and narrative responses verified this: "The apprenticeship program was helpful in figuring out what you wanted to do. It taught me how to look for an internship here in college" (Participant #5).

While there could be many benefits of such an experience, perhaps the most important would be to see firsthand what the day-to-day experiences might be in the field they plan to major in. Participant #50 said, "Apprenticeship was so valuable to me. It gave me the opportunity to get a taste of being in the work force and realize my strengths and weaknesses."

Additional Indicators of Success and other Interesting Data:

All of the respondents of this survey graduated from high school (except for the 3 still in a K-12 setting). The actual graduation rate at this school was 100% in 2012. The graduation rate at Key has always been much higher than its district average and the state average. For example, in 2012 the district graduation rate was 65.4%, and the Indiana state average was 88.4% (IDOE web site, 2014). In addition, 88% of this school's graduates were accepted into college in 2012, as opposed to the 63% statewide average and the 51.2% district average (Indiana Department of Education Web Site, 2015).

While 44/51 (or 86.3%) of the respondents who took the Graduate Qualifying Exam (the "GQE" – the standardized test required for graduation in Indiana) in 10th grade reported passing it the first time in one or both of the math/English portions, 57.9% felt that their performance on

standardized tests was NOT an accurate evaluation of their success in school.

Two of the 57 were currently unemployed. That is a 3.5% unemployment rate, less than half of the general national average of 8.2% at the time of this survey's completion in 2012 (USDOL, 2015).

69.8% reported that learning about their strengths and the other experiences at this school helped them to be successful in their current job.

88.5% reported that they are being successful in life and 90.7% are happy and satisfied with life.

Analysis

In the final analysis, how do we know when students have been successful in school, and ultimately how do we know whether their K-12 experience has served them well, so they can be successful in life? Creswell (2009) suggests that in order to make an "interpretation or meaning of the data," one must look at the "lessons learned" (p.189). Perhaps this is best accomplished by simply answering the research questions.

What are participants doing today (The 57 Respondents in 2012)?

In Trade School or in a 2-Year College	7.2%
In 4 Year College	43.6%
In Graduate School, Med School, or Vet School	12.4%
In Military	5.4%
Stay-at-Home Mom/Dad	3.6%
Unemployed	3.6%
*Employed	23.6%

(*As: Protein Biologist; Therapist; Teacher (3); IT Consultant; Advertising Agent; Youth Symphony Director; Data Analyst; Business Owner; Car Manufacturer; Cashier; Working Military-Wife—There were 3 students who responded to the survey in 2012 who were still in middle school or high school at the time. Those students were not included in these figures.)

In today's educational accountability environment, there is much discussion about retention in college, or more specifically, the students' "ability to persist." In this study, a great majority of the participants were accepted to college, but what about their "ability to persist?"

The "ability to persist" in college, as defined by Nora, Barlow, & Crisp (2005), is the notion that college students will remain enrolled, or re-enroll each year, past the first year in college and ultimately until graduation, where a degree is earned. So then in this study, 32 of the participants are still in college or university, 3 are in the military and 17 have finished a four-year college. That means that 52 of the 54 are either still in college or already graduated. That's 96% with "ability to persist" in college. Further, these data show that virtually all of these participants are currently either still in school (college), or working.

So where do students find the grit to persist, and finish their degree? Vincent Tinto is respected as one of the foremost scholars in the study of student persistence in college. One theory asserted by Tinto is that the establishment of "learning communities" will improve retention in college (Tinto, 2003). Bean (2005) defines the higher education learning community in terms of

social resources available to the students: "These social resources include faculty, staff, and particularly other students. Social connectedness leads to satisfaction, self-confidence, loyalty, fitting in, and remaining enrolled. The social world of students is important to retention decisions, and there are many potential sources of social support" (p. 229). But what about student access to learning communities during high school? Does that contribute to persistence in college?

The students in this study did enjoy strong learning community experiences in high school. Participant #39 notes: "In most areas, I do feel that Key has been a major factor in my successes in life. I value all the relationships that were created during my time at Key Learning Community and cherish every memory built." Another participant wrote: "The best thing about my Key Learning Community experience was the sense of community encouraged throughout. I know that I can contact any of the people I met while attending Key or through Key Learning Community if I am ever in need (Participant #8).

This study suggests that persistence in college could be related to a strong learning community experience in high school, but more studies need to be conducted to support this finding.

In what ways do alumni from this progressive, public, urban school perceive themselves as having been successful?

What is the best way to define and illustrate student success in schools? Many look to standardized test scores, and thus equate student success to academic achievement.

But others might look at this question totally differently. Factors such as student project performance, student portfolio quality and completion, student service record, student leadership projects, and co-curricular participation might come into play. Some might point to happiness in life, or the feeling that you are being successful as important indicators of success as well.

By the numbers, 88.5% of the participants in this study reported being successful in life, and 90.7% reported being happy and satisfied. Individual open-ended responses were compelling. Participant #16 said:

> I cannot speak for success in college, but for success in a few aspects of my life. If there is something I need to prepare for, I know how to get started because of all the times spent researching topics either for class or the theme projects. I know to never rush into anything, but to prepare and gather information first. Every job I have applied for I have gotten as a result of being articulate, knowledgeable and amiable.

Participant #48 indicated another way to gauge success in life: "I'm young, living life, no debt, working, living on my own, paying for and working my way through college, and training to achieve my dreams and goals."

There were dozens of testaments in the narrative responses that indicated how the participants were experiencing success in their lives today, but perhaps the best summary could be reported in this response: "I am following my dreams and passions, I am working hard for what I want and getting there because of my determination" (Participant #29).

In what ways do participants attribute their success to the practices of this unique school?

Dozens of narrative responses addressed the question of how this school helped the participants of this study to be successful in life. Participant #39 provided just one example: "In most

areas, I do feel that the Key Learning Community has been a major factor in my successes in life. I value all the relationships that were created during my time at Key and cherish every memory built."

To support the numerous positive narrative responses, 76% of the participants in this study indicated that knowing their strengths helped them to make college and career choices, and almost 70% indicated that knowing their strengths helps them to be successful in their current jobs. 65% of the participants indicated that their experience at this school helped them to be successful in college, while 88.5% indicate that they feel that they are successful in life.

What are the indicators of success demonstrated by alumni of this progressive, urban, public school?

Throughout the course of this survey, the participants were asked in numerous ways which aspects of the curriculum in this school were important to their success in high school and then afterwards in college and beyond. They also shared the ways that they were successful in high school and then later in life. This was done through selection of responses on multiple-selection checklists, and also through opportunities to expand their explanations in open-ended narrative response boxes. In the final analysis, these were the indicators of success that were significantly reported by participants in this study:

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS (In High School)

- Quality HS Apprenticeship Work
- HS Digital Portfolio
- Service Record
- Project Presentations/Public Speaking
- Graduation/ Graduation Rate
- National Honor Society/Honors Diploma
- Acceptance into and College Enrollment
- Exhibitions of Leadership
- Quality Daily Class Work/Quality Progress Report Assessment

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS (Post HS)

- College Attendance/Persistence
- Certificate or Degree Awarded in Higher Education
- Holding down a job/working hard/making a living/paying bills/enjoying fruits of labor
- Raising a family/making a life
- Home Ownership
- Positive Community Involvement/Leadership
- Volunteerism/Service to Community
- Pursuing Dreams
- Project Management Savvy
- Happy/Satisfied/Fulfilled with Life

Some might feel that missing from this list of indicators is the standardized test score as an indicator of success. But in this study, only 42% of the participants felt that their test scores were

any sort of indicator of their school success. Even so, most of those 42% indicated in their explanatory narrative that the standardized test scores only really indicated strengths in math or English, or were an indicator important to colleges, so then necessary. One respondent who performed well on standardized tests was asked if standardized tests were an important indicator of school success. She replied: "Absolutely not. Standardized tests are a horrible representation of someone's intelligence, whether they learned a subject, and how successful someone is in school. We all learn, think and process in different ways and we cannot ever expect to have one test that determines whether we are doing all of these things correctly" (Participant #29).

There is much discussion as to the validity and reliability of standardized tests in the education professional literature. Wiliam (2010), for instance, discusses the validity of our current day standardized tests. He posits that the same test is actually valid for some students, and invalid for others. He notes:

> a test of mathematics with a high reading demand may support valid inferences about mathematical ability for fluent readers, but when students with less developed reading skills perform poorly on the test, we cannot know whether their poor performance was due to an inability to read the items or to their weaknesses in mathematics. (p. 256)

Standardized test authors and proponents and those who are promoting the Common Core State Standards (including President Obama and many state and local governments) assume that the outcomes measured on standardized tests today are important, and a valid representation of what should have been learned (USDOE, 2013). But what about those individuals and schools that do not necessarily value only the standards measured on state and national standardized tests, those who value what are sometimes called "nonacademic outcomes"? Ladwig (2010) notes:

> If we are going to make claims about the benefits of nonacademic outcomes and make normative social appeals for their inclusion within schooling, we would do much better if we actually knew which of these mattered for whom, to do what, where, and when…we need to better know just which outcomes of schooling are in fact powerful outcomes. (p. 135)

Nelson (2011) studied some of these powerful outcomes. In her study, she looked at the benefits of a progressive education in "the era of standardization." She found:

> As the participants in this study have indicated, experiencing personalized, progressive education has had many benefits. They have been given the opportunity for student-centered learning experiences, which has led to self-discovery, creativity, and intrinsic motivation. In contrast to a narrowed curriculum, which can lead to student disenfranchisement, the students in this study feel empowered to pursue these learning opportunities. In the wake of increased concern about global competition, this is exactly the type of education we should be giving our students. (p. 32)

Conclusions, Discussion and Recommendations

Many educational researchers and thinkers have been steadily cautioning educational policy-makers, educators, and the general populace about the dangers of placing too much confidence

into standardized test scores as an overall measure of success (Bracey, 2009; Gardner, 2000; Kohn, 2000; Koretz, 2008; McDermott, 2013; Meier & Wood, 2004; Nichols, & Berliner, 2007; Popham, 2001; Ravitch, 2013; Rothstein, Jacobsen, & Wilder, 2008; Sahlberg, 2011; Wolk, 2011; Zhao, 2009). These scholars reported that standardized test scores are not an appropriate way to validate "across the board" learning in school.

This study supports these thinkers' assertions, but here we look at just 57 individuals from one progressive school's story. Where might we find more examples of schools that consider indicators of success beyond standardized test scores? The Met School in Providence, a Big Picture School, is one in a network of progressive schools (they are one of over 60 Big Picture Schools in the U.S.) that de-emphasize the use of standardized test scores for accountability. At these schools, faculty: "define success using measures beyond standardized test scores, grades, or even college graduation rates" (Washor, Arnold, & Mojkowski, 2009, para. 5).

Washor and Mojkowski (2013) go on to explain the Met School's concept of school success:

> Most would define it as good grades, great test scores, a high school diploma, and a pathway to postsecondary learning. While we do not argue with those indicators, our experience tells us they are inadequate. We prefer additional indictors from a wider perspective: obtaining enjoyable and productive work with good prospects for growth, raising a family, contribution to the community and figuring out how to navigate life's ups and downs. Indeed, navigating is an appropriate metaphor, since success is better thought of as a journey than a destination. Like happiness, success is an ever emerging state that differs with each individual. (p. 53)

The Met School uses a sophisticated longitudinal data gathering system that follows graduates and surveys them as part of their own "in house" accountability system. They report a 92% graduation rate (with "low income, urban and minority backgrounds") with 95% of those graduates gaining acceptance to college (Washor, Arnold, & Mojkowski, 2009).

An authentically valid assessment of student performance in school must begin with a contextual analysis of the students' personal situation. This is the only VAM (value-added measure) that makes sense. Since all people come with different advantages and strengths, judgment on success should not be based on a standardized metric. Yet, we are so seduced by the single-score metric. What could possibly replace such an elegant measure?

One suggestion from the literature would be to use a case study method to thoroughly analyze what is going on in schools, since a complex system requires a complex analysis. A Danish social scientist named Bent Flyvbjerg "advocates and models a case study approach to allow understanding of social organizations such as education systems" (as reported in Horn and Wilburn, 2013, p. xiii).

Consider the school being studied. Perhaps a case study analysis could begin with the standard metrics of attendance, graduation rate, grades and even test scores, but the case study could also look at student portfolios, project presentations as well as student exhibitions. Project Zero Classroom (at the Harvard Graduate School of Education) calls these more authentic indicators "Performances of Understanding" (Blythe, 1998). Perhaps these performances, in combination with many other indicators and observations, could give us a more complete picture.

There are much data presented here to illuminate this point, but much more work needs to be done to shift the mindset of accountability in schools to a more logical and reasonable practice.

It is true that the numbers and charts generated by the testing industry are tidy…even seductive. But as argued in this report, those data are not a complete measure of the complexity of a student, teacher or school's work. They might show a sliver of the picture, but are standardized test scores worthy of the money, time, attention and anxiety we are currently investing in them?

Final Thoughts from the Author and Questions for Further Study

The United States and much of the world are locked into measuring school accountability, and ultimately school success, almost exclusively through standardized test scores. Part of the problem is that a suitably acceptable alternative has not been acknowledged. The data from this study could contribute to the current conversation regarding how to foster conditions in a school that will generate the authentic indicators of success that determine successful schools. This new "metric" could potentially break into the collective awareness and provide a viable alternative to the exclusive use of test scores to indicate success.

A hopeful outcome of this study would be to influence or impact the national conversation regarding the use of more authentic assessments beyond standardized test scores to gauge student success. This study looks to illustrate how an authentic and experiential curriculum (i.e. a "non-test prep" curriculum) could foster beneficial capacities in students, regardless of test performance. It is clear that follow up studies are needed. As a concluding thought, I submit that standardized testing is not a useful tool in today's schools. This continual focus on test scores could even be damaging to our students, particularly students who are disadvantaged, because a singular and intensive focus on raising one's test scores could neglect other things that are important to learn. Also, frustrating and continual poor performance will likely damage students' self-concept and self-esteem which can lead to dropping out. Future studies need to be done with an eye towards what is lost perhaps even as scores rise. The ultimate impact could be to inform educational policy, make changes in educational practices and scale back test prep in schools in a major way. In my experience, test prep is not a worthy challenge, and high test scores are not a healthy goal.

Questions for Further Study

> *"For many, a primary reason for getting an education is to become happy, healthy, well-adjusted and fulfilled people who understand how to live balanced lives in the context of ourfamilies, communities, cultures and ecosystems" (Grinell, & Rabin, 2013, p.748).*

What is a worthy challenge in today's schools, and what is a healthy goal for schools to strive to achieve? How can this be measured? Longitudinal studies like those being done at the Met School need to be expanded in schools, both traditional schools and those like the school studied here. How are graduates in schools like Key Learning Community, and other schools that use more traditional approaches, doing today? Comparisons need to be made. Perhaps more specifically, how are students who came from high poverty settings doing today? How do traditional school outcomes compare to more progressive schools with high poverty students? Which schools have better attendance, lower drop out rates and better student success? How should we define and measure student success? Which schools tend to produce happy and successful adults who contribute positively to their community 10 to 20 years down the line? These are all questions that deserve further study.

Disclosure

It need be noted and stressed that the primary investigator of this study and author of this report spent much time as a teacher and administrator at Key Learning Community, from 1993 to 2010, and was one of the founders of the school's middle school and high school. This fact alone suggests that removing all bias from this report would be highly unlikely. On the other hand, this truth could also provide a rich "insider" perspective into the story of Key, and might provide another measure of verification to the themes that emerged, and to the conclusions described.

Even so, the author has been extremely vigilant of potential confirmation bias throughout this whole process, and has been open to cautions suggested by reviewers of the research process from the beginning steps of the development of this study. Collaborative groups were used in the development of the survey, and then again in the analysis and interpretation of the data to help keep the research process valid and on track. Peers from both qualitative and quantitative backgrounds have reviewed the final research findings as well as the report, and have provided critical feedback in the final stages of this work.

Further Limitations of the Study

*Only 57 of the 200+ potential alumni/graduates from Key Learning Community responded.
*Respondents do not represent (demographically) the diversity of the total group.
*Respondents were recruited from alumni Facebook pages and from "a call to participate" on the school's web site. Participants would have to been prone to participate in online social media, which might exclude those who do not.
*Data was dependent upon self-reporting measures, so it could not be externally verified.
*There has to be a certain amount of subjectivity, and indeed bias on the part of the researcher.
*Data cannot be generalized beyond this study.

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Dr. Christine ("Chris") Kunkel began her career in education as a basketball coach and middle school science teacher. Eventually, her love for teaching and coaching led her to the Key School in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Key School (later the Key Learning Community) has been credited by Howard Gardner as "The World's First Multiple Intelligences School." While teaching at Key, Chris was asked by founding principal, Pat Bolaños, to accept the position of assistant principal and focus on developing and implementing these progressive school ideals within a secondary public school setting. After Mrs. Bolaños' untimely death in 2003, Dr. Kunkel became principal of the innovative K-12 Key Program and continued to focus on bringing authentic education to urban students. In 2010, she accepted a position as Assistant Professor in Educational Leadership at Rhode Island College where she brings her voice to the field as an academic. She now teaches Educational Leadership courses and studies authentic ways to determine school success, beyond standardized testing. She has been invited to share her expertise in implementing the Multiple Intelligences in K-12 schools in Barcelona, Spain; Bangalore, India; and Mexico City, as well as across the US. In the summer of 2012 she became summer faculty at Harvard University until 2014, teaching a mini-course on implementing a Multiple Intelligences Program in K-12 settings. This summer, she will take on the Program Directorship at the Rhode Island College Educational Leadership Program and looks forward to continuing work in the field of education.

Working (With/Out) the System: Educational Leadership, Micropolitics, and Social Justice
Edited by James Ryan & Denise Armstrong

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Reviewed by Kimberly White, Marshall University

Abstract

This review of Working (With/Out) the System highlights the major themes found in Ryan and Armstong's (2016) compilation of qualitative studies that examine the micropolitical skills used by educational leaders on behalf of marginalized students. The studies contain findings from interviews with teachers and principals that reveal the daily struggles to counterbalance neoliberal policies in public education and the strategies they use to initiate change, while managing fear of reprisal and professional alienation. The voices captured in this text not only call educational leaders to action, they also lend advice on how to act for social justice on behalf of students and offer professional and moral support for those who choose to act.

Keywords: *micropolitics, social justice, educational leadership*

Working (With/Out) the System is one volume in a series of texts that explore issues related to the practice of urban education. For the purpose of stocking educational leaders' social justice toolkits, editors Ryan and Armstrong (2016) compile an impressive sampling of studies that explore the motives for, practice of, and obstacles to social justice in schools. The chapters contain strategies teachers, principals, and educational leaders at all levels rely upon to strike a balance between policy compliance and the needs of marginalized students. The book's title hints at the need for education leaders interested in social justice to be strategic and flexible in their understanding of the system in order to maneuver it. Throughout the text, the selected authors draw upon the scholarship of notables like Blasé, Mawhinney, Theoharis, Rawls, and Ryan, extending an important body of knowledge to education professionals, who will likely recognize themselves in the example behaviors that are described as social justice practice. Each chapter in the text offers wisdom, support, and feasible strategies educational leaders can assemble into thorough application of educational activism.

In Chapter One, Ryan and Higginbottom (2016) explain the history of educational activism, specifically social justice, by citing Rawls (1972) who defined social justice in comprehensive terms around the concept of equal distribution of resources. Other scholars like Fraser and Honneth (2003) assert that equal distribution of resources is unlikely without the equal positioning of marginalized groups of people alongside members of the dominant culture. The strategies involved in

negotiating fair distribution of resources and the struggle to elevate minority populations are referred to as micropolitics (Innaconne, 1975). Ryan and Higginbottom thoroughly explore the history and evolution of the term micropolitics, as well as its connection to macrolevel politics, helping readers to establish full-scale integration of the concept of micropolitics before leading the audience forward in an explanation of the who, why, and how of micro political practice in educational settings.

Ryan and Armstrong (2016) devote considerable attention to the who, why, and how of social justice oriented micropolitical practice in schools by choosing qualitative studies that provide specific answers to the questions 1) Who is working toward social justice in schools? 2) Why, despite the risks, are they working toward it? And, 3) how do they achieve social justice? Running parallel to these inquiries are studies that delve into the ethical practice of social justice in schools and the fear educational leaders must learn to manage if they are to effectively pursue social justice.

To capture a picture of the "who" in social justice work, Ryan and Armstrong (2016) include in Chapter 5 a case study of educators in 13 countries conducted by the International School Leadership Development Network (ISLDN), which sought to better understand how school leaders, i.e. principles and head teachers give meaning to social justice practice. Angelle, Morrison, and Stevenson (2016), the chapter's authors, make clear that social justice practice in education occurs at all levels and "transcends positional roles" (p. 97), but they add that "the nature of the role, however, places the principal or head teacher as the interface for mediating external policy directives and internal school dynamics."

In Chapter 3, authors Tuters and Armstrong (2016) use qualitative studies to explore educators' internal motivation for risking professional credibility and relationships in pursuit of equitability and fairness. Cranston, Ehrich, and Kimber (2006), authors of a study cited in Chapter 3 state that the skills involved in sorting out the educational dilemmas presented in educational settings have become the "bread and butter" of educators' lives; however, shared throughout the book are examples of teachers who act on these educational dilemmas in a manner consistent with social justice outcomes not as a skillful function of their role as teachers, but from a moral and ethical obligation to their economically, socially, academically vulnerable students. The text also demonstrates that teachers who are morally and ethically committed to social justice practice in schools report feeling "perpetually immersed in struggles" (p. 122) but many report their tenacity springs from early life experiences that shaped the values underpinning their commitment to equitable practices.

Working (With/Out) the System reveals to readers the subtle "how to" strategies for social justice work in schools. One teacher describes an instance when she felt compelled to ask a "hard but necessary question" of her director. She asked the question because "it was the right thing to do" (p. 127). However, she adds that by asking the question, she risked being perceived as confrontational and challenging the director's authority. Risk is inherent to micropolitics; therefore, the book cautions social justice practitioners to consciously establish productive working relationships with administrators, other teachers, students, and parents. The teacher narratives suggest that amicable relationships lessen the intensity of conflict or at least improve the likelihood of recovery from conflict when it occurs. One teacher admits that to make social justice progress in her school, she embraces the philosophy of asking for forgiveness rather than permission.

The word courage appears frequently throughout the chapters because teachers who exercise social justice strategies report the possibility of "professional suicide" as a very real component of their reality in public schools (p. 104). It is an unfortunate position they find themselves in, but teachers who act on social justice principles do so at the risk of becoming vulnerable to

isolation and the loss of opportunities for promotion and professional development. Because peer-teachers fear backlash from their association with outspoken teachers, activist teachers endanger their professional networks and much needed collegial support. Educators who are skillful social justice practitioners are characterized as "fear-wise" rather than fearful (p. 129). According to the research, fear-wise micropolitics require self-awareness and self-reflection, "craft-knowledge," and a thoughtful consideration of consequences to actions. Fear-wise micropolitics also involve the foresight to weigh the consequences of action against those of inaction.

Having graduated from a social-justice oriented teacher credential program, I embarked upon my teaching career fully steeped in multicultural pedagogy. My training prepared me to recognize the barriers to equitable education my students encountered; but, I was naïve to the system. I trusted that the educational system, of which I was a part, would give way to the interests of students when challenged. Schools as "arenas of struggle" (Ball, 1987 as cited in Ryan & Higginbottom, 2016) was not a concept I had internalized, nor was I comfortable with the conflict that arose when I advocated for more equitable practices in the school. After two years of unskillful negotiation of the educational system, I was exhausted and felt like a failure so I left the profession altogether.

Students in teacher credentialing programs will benefit considerably from the information contained in these chapters because the interviews are with teachers whose experience in public schools foreshadow the experience of idealistic educators. To improve resilience and longevity in the field, prospective teachers must graduate with a base-line comprehension of the systematic obstacles they will encounter and a set of skills and awareness that will help them navigate sometimes unfriendly terrain. Seasoned teachers and administrators who are committed to social justice will appreciate knowing they are not alone in the fight.

Anyone working in the helping professions will benefit from reading this text and expanding their understanding of social justice practice within public institutions. Unfortunately, because of the omnipresence of neoliberal philosophy and practice in the public sector, organizations and institutions designed to help people may potentially perpetuate inequality. Social workers in organizations that serve marginalized populations suffer from high rates of burn out because they are overwhelmed by the demands of shrinking resources accompanied by higher and higher performance standards. This text will undoubtedly enhance practitioners' awareness of macro-level influences on the system and build the micropolitical capacity of administrators and staff members.

Neoliberal, market-driven policies that prioritize teacher accountability measures and student outcomes over more equitable approaches to education create highly stressful and competitive environments where educators must compete for resources. In these highly competitive environments, teachers, principals and administrators must weigh the needs of their students against mandated compliance with inequitable federal and state policies. *Working (With/Out) the System* offers real-world examples of the skillful use of micropolitics by social justice educators who are committed to advocating for the interests of their students, however cautiously.

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