

HANDBOOK OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION

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ROUTLEDGE


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Creating a Community of Black Youth as Public Intellectuals

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Introduction

Time, *Newsweek*, *Vogue*, *Cosmo*, and other news and entertainment conglomerates have contributed to the hypervaluation of Whiteness and in doing so have attempted to create a collective memory of Black people as social problems rather than social partners. Movies, TV shows, and print ads romanticize Whiteness, pathologize Blackness and Raza, while rendering Asian and indigenous populations as invisible. In the post-Civil Rights era this has held constant, even during the 1990s and into the 21st century, when a remarkable thing happened: Aspects of youth culture in general, and aspects of White and Asian youth culture in particular, underwent a Black reincarnation via the hip hop aesthetic. Yet through it all, the visible and invisible representations of Whiteness remain quite remarkable; perhaps best symbolized by the "White House" and who occupies it, Disney world's light skinned/mainly blue-eyed "heroes" and "sheroes" (Disney gives creatures blue eyes even when depicting the animal kingdom), Wall Street, or advanced placement classes (Akom, 2001). Collectively these images, representation, and lived experiences have created a world where it "pays" to look (and act) like Snow White or Cinderella—even if your name is Pocahontas.

And yet representations of Whiteness are more than simply products of the corporate imagination (Kelley, 1998). Color-coded public and private spaces signify our country's commitment to what Kozol (2006) refers to as: "Apartheid Schooling in America." Abandoned housing stock, environmental racism, neighborhoods without grocery stores and an overabundance of liquor stores, barbed wire fences, and railroad tracks; stand in stark contrast to green spaces, white picket fences, Whole Foods, and Trader Joe's (Akom, 2006, 2007). However, the most striking element of this human spectacle is the people who occupy these urban and suburban spaces. Prisons and jails are full of Black and Brown bodies whose incarceration has left them plenty of time to contemplate the role that a White supremacist capitalist patriarchal heteronormative society has played in the reproduction of social inequality (Akom, 2004; Torre & Fine, 2007).

In other words, while obscuring unemployment, underemployment, and rising environmental racism, commercial representations of Whiteness powerfully underscore the link between color-coded access to institutional resources and the ways in which the electronic media have become a powerful pedagogical force in shaping the racial imagination of students and teachers with respect to how they view themselves, others, and the larger society. At the same time they highlight the historic development of Whiteness as a commodity, as Du Bois pointed out in his classic *Black Reconstruction* (1935)—skin color privilege advanced the interest of both White elites (materially) and the White working class (psychically) so that "it actually paid to be White." According to Du Bois, "Whiteness yielded a 'public and psychological wage' vital to white workers" (Harris, 1995, p. 325). Specifically, Du Bois discussed how Whites:

Were given public deference...because they were white. They were admitted freely with all classes of white people, to public functions. To public parks...the police were drawn from their ranks, and the courts, dependent on their votes, treated them with...leniency.... Their vote selected public officials, and while this had small effect upon the economic situation, it had great effect on their personal treatment.... White schoolhouses were the best in the community, and conspicuously placed, and they cost anywhere from twice to ten times as much per capita as the colored schools. (pp. 700-701)

Indeed, historically a central mobility strategy for many White teachers lay in their ability to converge "White" and "teacher" in a way that evaded rather than confronted class exploitation, while at the same time, protecting their racial privilege. Although not afforded the same economic and social privileges of the White ruling class, many White teachers reconciled their lower rank in the class hierarchy by erecting an equally virulent racial hierarchy and championing themselves as "not Black" (Harris, 1995, p. 325). By fashioning their American identity as oppositional to the Black "other" Andrew Hacker (1992) and Cheryl Harris (1995) suggest that "the question was not so much 'who is white' but, rather, 'who may be considered white,' for the historical pattern was that various immigrant groups of different ethnic origins were accepted into White identity 'shaped around Anglo-American norms' (Hacker, 1992, p. 155; Harris 1995, p. 325). Despite appearing as a choice, evasive and complicated forms of resistance and accommodation such as "passing" painfully illustrate the power of Whiteness in the reproduction of racial hierarchy. Harris explains:

The decision to pass as white was not a choice, if by that word one means voluntariness or lack of compulsion. The fact of race subordination was coercive, and it circumscribed the liberty to define oneself. Self-determination of identity was not a right for all people but a privilege accorded on the basis of race. (p. 285)

The overarching effect of this hypervaluation of Whiteness, both historically and contemporaneously, has had a powerful effect on public schools, teacher education programs, and the dispositions necessary to effectively teach an increasingly diverse student population. Recognizing skin color privilege as a powerful force that impacts access to institutional resources and privileges requires that we substantially reassess the role of race in the development of political consciousness among urban and suburban youth and the ways in which critical pedagogy shapes oppositional cultures at school and in our communities. More specifically, some of the central challenges that continue to face urban and suburban educators are: How do we integrate a theory of race that ameliorates opportunity gaps in educational space? How do prospective teachers learn to courageously confront differences of race, culture, and language diversity? How do we prepare a disproportionately White teaching force to become more culturally relevant learners and teachers?¹

The purpose of this essay, then, is to offer some suggestive observations about the ways in which critical race theory can inform a critical race methodology in an effort to foreground the impact of race and racism in all aspects of teacher education (Duncan, 2003; Foster, 1997). The approach I take challenges the ways that critical race theory (CRT) and youth participatory action research (YPAR) have been dichotomized in the literature on race and racism in teacher education (Camarrota & Fine, 2007; Kincheloe, 2004; Smith-Maddox & Solorzano, 2002). In much of this literature critical race theory is depicted, in part, as a form of storytelling; a place to provide words, and valuable

insight on racial inequality in America and beyond. However, the theory by itself does not prevent someone from dying, or from the "same old shit happening again and again" as one community expert reported. It is with this sense of reality and purpose that this article attempts to merge CRT with YPAR in an effort to address issues of social justice within a wider framework of self-determination, decolonization, and democratization. Having stated the essential outlines of my argument the rest of the discussion will offer an analysis of the linkages between CRT and YPAR and the ways in which a critical race methodology was used by students of color as a theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical tool to challenge racism, sexism, and classism in the realm of teacher education and beyond (Duncan, 2002; Parks, 2007; Yosso & Solorzano, 2002).

Critical Race Theory and Education

Over a decade ago, a quiet and important theoretical revolution began in the United States in the study of race and education. In 1995, Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate published an article, entitled "Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education," Published in the *Teachers College Record*. This important article detailed how the intersection of race and property rights could be used to better understand inequities in the American educational system. If we are to locate the origins of the opportunity gap, the authors argued, it is important to examine Cheryl Harris's construct of "Whiteness as property" in the realm of education. For Harris (1993), Whiteness was not solely a dimension of self-identity and personhood, rather skin-color privilege has legal ramifications connected to property rights, class status, and citizenship.

Conceived of in this way, Harris goes on to highlight how one of the key privileges of "Whiteness as property" is the absolute right to exclude "others." Building from her framework, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) discuss how the right to exclude has manifested in the educational realm. First, the authors argue, exclusion was demonstrated by attempting to deny Blacks access to schooling altogether (Dixon & Rousseau, 2006).² Second, it was demonstrated by the creation and maintenance of an apartheid-like educational system under the guise of "separate but equal." More recently, forms of exclusion have been demonstrated by the growing insistence on vouchers, public funding of private schools, and schools choice (Dixon & Rousseau, 2006; Savas, 2000).³ Finally, the absolute right to exclude within schools is demonstrated by the ongoing problem of racial profiling in education—or what is more benignly referred to as tracking—and the rolling back and lack of meaningful enforcement of civil rights gains (Akom, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Oakes, 1995; Oakes, Muir, & Joseph, 2000).

According to Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) there are at least five elements that form the basic perspective of CRT in education: (1) the centrality of race and racism and their intersectionality with other forms of subordination; (2) the challenge to dominant ideologies (for example, patriarchy, neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness, and meritocracy); (3) the commitment to social justice and working toward the end of eliminating racial oppression as part of the broader goal of ending all forms of oppression; (4) a transdisciplinary perspective that values and includes epistemological frameworks from Africana studies, ethnic studies, women's studies, etc.; and (5) the centrality of experiential knowledge of people of color.

These five themes are not new; however, collectively they represent a challenge to the existing models of examining racial inequality in education (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 68). Since the publication of their article, several other scholars have written about the application of CRT to education (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001). However, the linkages between CRT and YPAR as an alternative methodology aimed at creating emancipatory

knowledge and schools as liberatory institutions is currently undertheorized (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). In the following pages I begin to address these empirical oversights.

Theory as Liberatory Practice⁴: Repositioning Students as Subjects and Architects of Research

Necesitamos teorías (we need theories) that will rewrite history using race, class, gender, and ethnicity as categories of analysis, theories that cross borders, that blur boundaries—new kinds of theories with new theorizing methods.... We are articulating new positions in the “in between,” Borderland worlds of ethnic communities and academies...social issues such as race, class, sexual difference are intertwined with the narrative and poetic elements of a text, elements in which theory is embedded. In our mestizaje theories we create new categories for those of us left out or pushed out of existing ones. (p. 26)

Gloria Anzaldua (1987, 1990) challenged us to develop new theories because she was hurting and desperately trying to find a place of her own belonging. Her lived experience of critical thinking, reflecting, and analysis, became a place where she could heal, transform, repair her hurt in an effort to transcend the pain. What I have learned from Gloria Anzaldua, bell hooks, Paulo Freire, and Franz Fanon is that theory can be a place to heal—a place to retrieve ourselves and remake what we are (hooks, 1994).

Freire's work in particular provides us with the foundations for a theory of democratic schooling that is linked to serving the most marginalized groups in our society. His critical praxis starts from the premise that all education is political and thus schools are never neutral institutions (Smith-Maddox & Solorzano, 2002, p. 69).⁵ Freire (1967/1970) firmly believed that one of the ways that schools maintain and reproduce the existing social order is by using the “banking method of education.” This approach often leads to: (1) students being viewed as passive receptacles waiting for knowledge to be deposited from the teacher; (2) mono-directional pedagogical formats whereby students do not feel their thoughts and ideas are important enough to warrant a two-way dialogue with teachers; (3) “cradle classrooms” in which students are dependent on teachers for the acquisition of knowledge; and (4) students viewing schools as key mechanisms in the reproduction of inequality rather than places where education is seen as a practice of freedom, a place to build critical consciousness, and social mobility (Ginwright & Cammrotta, 2002).

In contrast to the banking method, Freire suggested a method of social inquiry known as the pedagogy of the oppressed—a social praxis where we learn to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality. At the core of Freire's work was the desire to understand the ways in which *adults* “read” the world's existing political and economic stratifications, as these stratifications organize the system we call education. However, even though Freire's pedagogical techniques revolutionized adult education and literacy programs world wide, absent from Freire's analysis was an explicit commitment to understanding how *young* people “read” existing racial and socioeconomic stratification in the realm of education.

These empirical and theoretical oversights raise a number of questions that need to be explored by critical educators interested in amplifying youth voice, while at the same time, addressing the impact of processes of racialization on educational achievement. For instance, how can youth initiated research be used as a tool to advocate for racial justice in urban and suburban schools? What would a standards-based racially just curriculum look like when informed by racially conscious youth and adults? How does race (in terms of meaning and identity) and merit (in terms of access to institutional resources

and privileges) interact in public and educational space in a way that enables White youth and adults to maintain racial privileges without claiming overt racial superiority (Lewis, 2003)?

In order for Freire's message to remain relevant to today, we must reposition students as subjects and architects of research. Enabling youth to deconstruct the material and ideological conditions that oppress them inspires a process of community building and knowledge production. As Freire (1982) eloquently argued, "the silenced are not just incidental to the curiosity of the researcher but are the masters of inquiry into the underlying causes of the events in their world. In this context research becomes a means of moving them beyond silence into a quest to proclaim the world" (p. 34). For example, "Eronne," a 17-year-old Black American student revealed her understanding of race, identity, and what makes an effective teacher:

The problem here isn't only that the White teachers are racist...I mean...lots of them are...but that is not the only problem that I see.... Another problem is that even when you "luck out" and get a Black teacher they aren't always that good at teachin'...I mean...the young Black teachers I've had can't seem to make up their mind whether they want to be our friends or be our teachers.... They start off bein' real kool and then they want to get real strict all of a sudden...I mean...it's like they have a form of teacher schizophrenia or somethin'.... Make up your mind, man....Are you my friend or are you my teacher?... The Latino and Asian teachers...they kinda kool but they don't really kick it with us Black girls...And the White teachers...they just don't care.... It's their way...that White way...or the highway...Simple as that.... And then they wonder why we don't try in school...part of the problem is you don't give a shit or you don't know how to teach...either way I lose...except for when I'm in this class...I love this class because the curriculum is about me...about my life...my problems...my history.... Why can't we learn about the positive contributions Black people make in regular (read White) history class.... Why is all they teach us about is how Black people were slaves and stuff.... What about all of the inventions Black people have made?... Why can't we talk about that in "regular" history class.... And they wonder why I don't try and don't come to class...I remember they were all laughin' at me because I didn't know who Hitler was...and I was like...I don't give a damn about who Hitler is.... Why do you think the Jewish Holocaust is more important than the African Holocaust? Why should I care who Hitler is? What does Hitler have to teach me about my community?

Eronne's testimony reveals how critical race methodology is an explicit process of self-reflection and critical inquiry (Smith-Maddox & Solorzano, 2002, p. 76). Her comments provide a comprehensive description of her notions of difference and diversity. At the same time, they show how she is deeply aware of the subtle ways in which race, racism, and teacher efficacy are organized and their impact on student performance.

By repositioning youth such as Eronne as researchers, rather than the researched, the popular conception of young people as problems, pathology, and prevention shifts to viewing young people as agents, achievers, and assets (Akom, 2003; Ginwright & Cammarotta, 2007).⁶ Such a position stands in sharp contrast to the current conceptualizations of young people, particular Black youth, as dangerous, disengaged, and disinterested consumers who lack any type of connection to mainstream funds of knowledge, forms of capital, and literacies of power (Morrel, 2006). By legitimating democratic inquiry within schools and outside of schools, YPAR "excavates knowledge 'at the bottom' and 'at the margins'" (Matsuda, 1995) and signifies youths fundamental right to ask, investigate,

and contest policies and practices that reenforce social injustice (Torre & Fine, 2006, p. 272).

Merging CRT and YPAR: Creating Emancipatory Knowledge for Urban and Suburban Educators

Because of its commitment to social justice and action as part of the research process, YPAR represents an orientation to inquiry that is highly consistent with the principles of CRT (Minkler, 2004, p. 684). As a collaborative approach that breaks down the barriers between the researcher and the researched and values community members as equitable partners in the research enterprise, YPAR also underscores the liberatory principles of agency, equity, and self-determination. At the same time, YPAR identifies research as a significant site of struggle between the interest and ways of knowing of traditional Western research and decolonizing frameworks that reflect the inherent belief in the ability of people of color to accurately assess our own strengths and needs and our right to act upon them in this world (Smith, 1999).

Although differing in some of their goals and strategies, CRT and YPAR approaches may be "seen to share a set of core values and principle and have as their centerpiece three interrelated elements: participation, research, and action" (Minkler, 2004, p. 685). Borrowing and extending the work of Smith-Maddox and Solorzano (2002), Fals-Borda (1987), Minkler (2004), Camarotta and Fine (2007), Fanon and others, below I outline the essential elements of combining CRT with YPAR as a form of resistance to oppressive social elements in race and education. My goal is to inform the training of prospective and existing teachers with a fresh innovative approach that avoids the pitfalls of cultural deficit models. The fundamental elements of this approach are as follows:

- it is participatory and youth driven;
- it is cooperative, engaging teachers and youth in a joint research process in which each contributes equitably;
- it foregrounds race, racism, gender, and other axis of social difference in the research design, data collection, and analysis;
- it helps prospective teachers focus on the racialized and gendered experiences of communities of color;
- it challenges the traditional paradigms, methods, and texts as a way to engage in a discourse on race that is informed by the actual conditions and experiences of people of color;
- it is committed to colearning, cofacilitating, and bidirectionality;
- it is transdisciplinary, drawing on Black/Africana studies, Raza studies, ethnic studies, and women's studies, to name a few;
- it involves local capacity building;
- it is an empowering process through which all participants can increase control of their lives;
- it seeks a balance between critical thinking, reflection, analysis, and action;
- it emphasizes a union of mind, body, and spirit rather than a separation of these elements.

It is important to note that where my work differs from Maddox-Smith and Solorzano's conceptualization of "critical race methodology" is that the approach I am proposing is not a method per se, but rather, an orientation to educational research that may employ any number of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. According to Linda

Tuhawai Smith (1999), what is distinctive about decolonizing research methodologies is not the methods used but the methodological context of their application. What is new is not the research itself but who is leading the research, who owns the research, who carries it out, who writes it up, who benefits from it, and how the results are disseminated (Smith, 1999, p. 10).

Educators need to find ways to identify the resources and strengths of youth of color and place them in the center of their research, curriculum, and teaching practicum's (Smith-Maddox & Solorzano, 2002, p. 71). Indeed, by combining CRT with YPAR a critical race methodology can be developed that challenges the dominant mind-set, increases academic engagement and achievement, and builds new understandings of the strength and assets of youth of color and the communities in which we come from.

Bridging Theory with Practice: Creating a Community of Black Youth as Public Intellectuals

For the past four years I have been infusing Black/Africana studies curriculum into urban and suburban high school classrooms. Utilizing Black history, philosophy, social science, and spirituality as weapons in the fight for racial justice is consistent with the mission of Black/Africana studies, which was born in 1968 at San Francisco State University and from its inception has been committed to linking theory with praxis and community service (Kunjuku, 1986; Woodson, 1933). Thus, in an effort to address issues of race and racism in the "liberal" Bay area, in 2004 I began a Step-to-College/Urban Teacher Pipeline Project with mostly Black and multiracial youth from the cities of Berkeley, Oakland, and Richmond, California.⁷

Although there are multiple goals to this ongoing project, four emerge as primary and are important to share here. They are as follows: (1) to infuse Africana curriculum into high schools in an effort to increase the pool of available teachers from a broader and more diverse background;⁸ (2) to increase college access for students of color; (3) to use YPAR to increase literacies of power (academic literacies, critical literacies, civic literacies, and new media literacies), conduct professional development trainings with teachers, and make programmatic changes in local schools and communities; and finally (4) to create an explicit teacher pipeline for students of color to return to communities of color as teachers. Overall, the Step-to-College/Urban Teacher Pipeline Project, founded and originated by my colleague Jeff Duncan-Andrade with the help of Dean Jacob Perea in the School of Education, is an 8-year project committed to supporting young people living in Berkeley, Oakland, and Richmond through high school and the university, while encouraging them to return to community based schools as K-12 public education teachers.

Creating a Youth Bill of Rights

In Fall 2005, The Research Collaborative on Youth Activism (RCYA), a three-tiered, national partnership between youth activists, direct service providers, and researchers approached our Step-to-College program to participate in researching, developing, and implementing a Youth Bill of Rights to improve the quality of life for young people in the city of Berkeley and beyond.⁹ At the invitation of RCYA, and in conjunction with Berkeley High Schools' Communication and Arts and Science Academy and Berkeley Tech, we began to create a multigenerational, multisite team of researchers—youth and adult, urban and suburban—to consider the following questions that we felt central to building more effective schools for all youth in general and youth of color in particular:

- In what ways do young people of color conceptualize their rights?
- What constitutes collective rights for young people?
- What are the social and economic conditions that limit possibilities and opportunities for young people in our community?
- How do state institutions (city governments, schools, police, etc) impede the progress and healthy development of young people in our communities?
- What is the relationship between racial justice, youth rights, and teacher efficacy in the city of Berkeley?
- How do young people perceive the processes and consequences of the opportunity gap in this community?
- What are the organizations or processes that empower young people to become agents of community change?

Against this backdrop, a coalition of high school and undergraduate students directed by myself, and working with a corps of graduate students, and professional film-makers—began conducting surveys, interviews, and focus groups that helped us grapple with the reality of racism in the heart of liberalism and the ways that race still impacts access to institutional resources and privileges in what is arguably the most liberal region in the United States (Fine, Roberts, & Torre, 2004).

Following in the footsteps of the important work conducted by the Participatory Action Research Collective pioneered by Michelle Fine and Maria Torre at CUNY, the first phase of our project involved intensive “research camps” where students were trained in local civil rights history, critical race theory, feminist thought, and indigenous knowledge (to name a few). Students were also immersed in qualitative and quantitative research methods including: survey design and observational research strategies. At this stage we also divided into four student research teams each focused on one core condition of examining teaching and learning as a civil right—quality teachers, a rigorous curriculum, adequate learning materials, issues of immigration and language diversity, and a healthy and positive physical and social environment (Morrel, 2006, p. 116).

During the second phase of our project we crafted research questions pertaining to a Youth Bill of Rights, interrogated each other for potential bias, and worked through the specifics of research design and data collection (Torre & Fine, 2006). In this phase we also began thinking about how Freire’s work influenced our thinking about teaching and learning as a civil right. Freire’s work taught us that in spite of obvious and important power differentials students are in a strategic position to invite their teachers to liberate themselves and transform their present realities. One of our goals, then, became to help teachers see their students, families, and the communities where we come from as assets and sources of strength (Smith-Maddox & Solorzano, 2002, p. 73). By applying CRT we recognized that in order for teachers to no longer be “colorblind” and “culture-blind” they “had to learn how to talk about race, to understand how the knowledge of race has been constructed and reconstructed through time, and to unlearn racism” (Smith-Maddox & Solorzano, 2002, p. 73). In our third phase young people investigated and denaturalized the conditions of their everyday lives by exploring various research and pedagogical tools such as Geographic Information Systems mapping, participatory surveys, participant observation, photo-voice, focus groups, web research, identity maps, individual interviews, archival research, oral histories, policy analyses, and participatory videos (i.e., short films and feature length documentary movies). Youth researchers also conducted open-ended interviews with teachers about the dominant ideology of color-blindness and its impact on teacher recruitment, teacher development, teacher efficacy, and educational outcomes. During this phase we were concerned about the quality of

instruction for all students, particularly, low-income youth, linguistically gifted students, and students of color.

Our fourth and final phase is an action phase where we continue modeling Freirean pedagogy by having students facilitate "critical inquiry groups" with other students about pressing social issues such as race, poverty, police brutality, fratricide, homicide, and teacher efficacy (this occurred at the end of the Fall semester). At the end of the Spring semester, these same students facilitated youth driven professional development "critical inquiry groups" with teachers with the explicit goal of providing continuous feedback loops to improve the practice of teaching and learning. In this manner, the authority of the critical teacher becomes dialectical; as teachers relinquish the authority of the "banking system," they assume the mature authority of facilitators of student inquiry and problem posing (Kincheloe, 2004). "In relation to such teacher authority, students gain their freedom—they gain the ability to become self-directed human beings capable of producing their own knowledge" (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 17). Our youth driven critical inquiry groups have 11 central aims as follows:¹⁰

- Youth driven professional development should deepen and broaden content knowledge.
- Youth driven professional development should provide a strong foundation in the pedagogy of particular disciplines.
- Youth driven professional development should provide knowledge about the teaching and learning processes.
- Youth driven professional development should be rooted in and reflect the best available research.
- The content of youth driven professional development should be able to be aligned with the standards and curriculum teachers use as well as augment those standards.
- Youth driven professional development should contribute to measurable improvement in student achievement.
- Youth driven professional development should be intellectually engaging and address the complexity of teaching and learning.
- Youth driven professional development should be implemented in a way that provides sufficient time, support, and resources to enable teachers to master new content and pedagogy and to integrate this knowledge and skill into practice.
- Youth driven professional development should be designed by students in cooperation with teachers and/or other experts in the field.
- Youth driven professional development should take a variety of forms, including some we have not typically considered.
- Youth driven professional development should be site specific but can also be used comparatively across sites.

Disseminating Research Findings and Advocating for Social Change

Reporting and disseminating our research findings is an important part of our critical race methodology. It follows our first form of research dissemination targeted visual learners (many young people today) by showing our documentary films at the annual Berkeley High Film festival. The festival was attended by hundreds of community residents, teachers, staff, and administrators from the Berkeley Unified School District, SFSU faculty, members of the school board and other elected officials. All films were so well received that a series of conversations are now taking place with the Berkeley mayor's office and city manager's office about having a youth summit with the explicit goal of Berkeley becoming

ing the first city in the United States to adopt our Youth Bill of Rights. Our second form of research dissemination consists of our student projects being uploaded to the KPFA radio station web site and disseminated to thousands of listeners across the Greater Bay area through youth radio blogs. The website is accessed by tens of thousands of people worldwide, many of them aspiring teachers and researchers. Our third form of research dissemination consists of sending teams of student representatives to present at major conferences around the country. In 2006 we sent a team to the Alex Haley Farm in Tennessee, and in 2007 we sent a team of student representatives to present our Youth Bill of Rights to the Black and Latino Caucus in Washington D.C. as well as the annual American Anthropological Association conference also held in Washington D.C. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, our greatest achievement is that in our first year six students from the original 75 enrolled in our Urban Teacher Pipeline Project at SFSU. Their story is to be continued.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that by combining CRT with YPAR it is possible to create a new methodological orientation that Smith-Maddox and Solorzano (2002) refer to as "critical race methodology" (p.80). The most important contribution of this framework is that it is youth driven and that it directly confronts and challenges ideologies of color-blindness, racelessness, and meritocracy that many teachers develop as a result of their own cultural and educational experiences. The framework that I propose attempts to get at these deeply rooted ideologies by introducing students to critical race theory, Africana studies, Women's studies, and so on, and by utilizing professional development—"critical inquiry groups"—whereby students help teachers unlearn stereotypical knowledge of race while analyzing, problem solving, theorizing what it means to teach a diverse student population (Smith-Maddox & Solorzano, 2002, p. 80). Deeply embedded within this framework is a pedagogical approach that uses Freire's critical praxis as a tool for helping students identify and name systemic and institutionalized problems that students of color face, analyze the cause of these problems, and find solutions to them (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Omi & Winant, 1993).¹¹

By employing this methodology students and teachers are able to exchange experiential knowledge about their communities that is critical to understanding systemic processes of racialization that students confront on an everyday basis (Smith-Maddox & Solorzano, 2002, p.80). Critical inquiry groups also create the conditions for students and teachers to "examine the moral and ethical dilemmas of teaching and learning while challenging their own intrinsic assumptions and learning to talk about race" (Smith-Maddox & Solorzano, 2002, p.80).

By engaging young people whose voices are too often marginalized in teacher training and professional development, a critical race methodology provides an innovative way for challenging the status quo and pushing scholarship in new directions by asking new questions and questioning old assumptions (Cahill, 2007). Because the theory of action is developed from within the YPAR process and combined with the critical race literature, there are embedded opportunities for challenging the tacit beliefs, understandings, and worldviews that students and teachers bring with them into educational space (Cahill, 2007). Implementation of this approach in high schools and in teacher education programs around the country is an important way for students and teachers to consistently reflect upon their "epistemological orientation and understand the values and practices of students and their families as well as the racial, cultural, and language difference they represent" (Smith-Maddox & Solorzano, 2002, p. 80). Failure to do so may limit the

possibilities of eradicating racialized opportunity gaps and ensure that many students of color continued to be "left behind" and pushed into the growing prison industrial complex (Torre & Fine, 2007). To interrupt this process we need to be successful in attracting youth of color into our classrooms and engaging them in a combination of critical thinking and social action. The political potential of critical race methodology lies in its role in the development of future teacher-leaders, who, as they graduate from college, have the social, cultural, and economic capital to transform not only their community but also the world beyond (Flores-Gonzalez, Rodriguez, & Rodriguez-Muniz, 2006). As always I am hopeful!

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Notes

1. Although these issues tend to be systematically neglected they have obvious and major consequences for new ways of understanding "racialized opportunity gaps," shifting demographic patterns, and the reconstitution of urban and suburban educational spaces occurring nationwide. For example, according to the 2000 Census, the United States is becoming increasingly racially and ethnically diverse; yet a new survey of teachers' attitudes, training, and practices regarding teaching in multiracial schools indicates that "White teachers have very little interracial experience in their own school experiences, little training for diversity and tend to believe that they can effectively educate across racial lines." While teachers of color—despite having more training and experience for diverse settings, are less likely to believe that other teachers and administrators effectively handle diversity issues (Orfield & Lee, 2006).
2. This was unsuccessful, however, because Blacks have always had a firm commitment to racial and social uplift through liberatory education and autonomous Black freedom schools (Perry, Steele, & Hillard, 2003).
3. This was unsuccessful, however, because Blacks have always had a firm commitment to racial and social uplift through liberatory education and autonomous Black freedom schools (Perry et al., 2003).
4. See b. hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Educations as a Practice of Freedom* (1994, chap. 5).
5. Amanda Lewis and Loic Wacquant go one step further arguing that schools are "race-making institutions" that socialize students into accepting the dominant ideology and existing racial hierarchies (Lewis, 2003).
6. Significantly and problematically, the research about young people too often conceptualizes young people as separate from their communities. They are either constructed as innocent children who need to be saved from dangerous communities—this is particularly true in the literature on urban working class youth and youth of color—or youth are constructed as being a danger to their community. In both cases young people are often assumed to be "at risk" aka in need of reform in order to become productive citizens who will give back to their community instead of dropping out of high school, becoming pregnant, doing drugs, and so on. The focus in the literature upon youth behavior loses sight of structural constraints. What's missing is the understanding of young people as part of communities; a transactional perspective in which youth development equals community development, which is the emphasis of this project.
7. "Less than 28% of California's public school teachers are people of color. However, more than 70% of the state's K-12 public school enrollees are students of color. Two likely causes

for this glaring and persistent disparity are: 1) the lack of college access for students of color; and 2) the absence of an explicit teacher pipeline for students of color to return to their communities as teachers" (see Duncan-Andrade, 2007). The Urban Teacher Pipeline is an 8-year project, started by professor extraordinaire Jeff Duncan-Andrade, committed to supporting young people living in Berkeley, Oakland, and Richmond through high school and the university, while encouraging them to return to community based schools as K-12 public education teachers (see the Cesar Chavez Institute website under Jeff Duncan-Andrade's listed projects for more information).

8. Many students in the program come from underserved, socioeconomically disadvantaged, and environmentally at risk communities. However, others come from elite zip codes. The overall racial and socioeconomic diversity of the project can help other school districts around the country address practical questions of segregation and integration within their schools and communities.
9. Under the guidance of Dr. Shawn Ginwright the purpose of the Research Collaborative on Youth Activism is to facilitate youth led initiatives that will allow students, direct service providers, and university researchers to produce more democratic, just, and critical ways to evaluate and improve schools and communities in the cities across the United States including Berkeley, Oakland, Chicago, Denver, New York, and Tucson. The intent of the collaborative is to train, organize, and facilitate the dissemination of relevant research findings to policy makers, practitioners, and researchers in order to increase support for social change activities that impact educational achievement and youth development locally and nationally (see the Cesar Chavez Institute website under Shawn Ginwright's listed projects for more information).
10. These 11 standards for youth driven professional development were adopted from the American Federation of Teachers.

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