TOWARDS A CRITICALLY COMPASSIONATE INTELLECTUALISM MODEL OF

TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION: LOVE, HOPE, IDENTITY, AND ORGANIC

INTELLECTUALISM THROUGH THE CONVERGENCE OF CRITICAL RACE

THEORY, CRITICAL PEDAGOGY, AND AUTHENTIC CARING

by

Augustine Francis Romero

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As members of the Dissertation Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by Augustine F. Romero entitled Towards a Critically Compassionate Intellectualism Model of Transformative Education: Love, Hope, Identity, and Organic Intellectualism through the Convergence of Critical Race Theory, Critical Pedagogy, and Authentic Caring and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the students whose voices inspired this work, and my family: my dad, Raul Romero; my mom, Margaret Majuta; my wife, Eydie Soto; my son, Raul Edgardo; and my daughter, Talisa Dian.

Oliva, Cami, Blanca, Tina, and Rolando your voices are felt and heard daily in my heart, my souls, my mind, and in my actions. Your lives and your voices bring hope to this world. I love each and every one of you!

Dad most of all I wish you were standing next to me at this moment. I miss you so much! Thankfully, I carry all that you left me: my strength, my drive, my commitment, and path that you helped me find. Thanks to you, I understand what it means to be called *teacher.* Mom, thank you for teaching me how to love; without this quality, I would not be able to fulfill my commitments as a teacher, a father, a husband, a brother, and a friend.

Son, when you came to us, you were the answer to so many prayers; and since then, you have blessed every moment of my life. *Mija*, your coming helped me realize that love has no end. *Mijito* and *mijita,* please understand that the things that Daddy says and does, he does with the two of you in mind. My efforts are directed at making the world around us a better place for both of you, and for all children.

Eydie it has been a difficult five-and-a-half years, but thanks to your support, we made it. I truly look forward to more family time; especially, more time as husband and wife. Thank you and I love you!

Dad, everyday I do my best to make you proud and to live up the commitments of my calling. I hope that I am worthy in your eyes.

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ABSTRACT

This critical race qualitative research study examines the perspectives of Chicanas\os regarding their educational experiences. Critical race theory in education has been critical in the effort to bring a deeper understanding of the racism that is experienced in American schools by Chicanas\os and other children of color. This study examines the intersectionality of American education; the Chicana\o social, political and historical experiences; and racism.

This study is informed by theoretical frames from the disciplines of critical race theory, Latino critical race theory and their educational implications, new racism, Chicana/o authentic caring, and critical pedagogy. These theories expose inequality and injustice that adhere in American schools, and they help me understand that Chicana/o students, their parents and their communities are constructors of knowledge and facilitators of critical transformation.

The study triangulates qualitative data through two critical components: interviews and an archival evaluation of the academic impact of the Social Justice Education Project and its *Critically Compassionate Intellectualism* (CCI) model of transformative education. The interview component consists of one open-ended focus group interview and one open-ended interview. In the archival segment, I evaluate informal open-ended student interviews, end of the year progress reports, post-program surveys, and achievement and graduation data.

These data indicate that racism remains a key variable within the educational experiences of Chicanas\os students in SUSD schools. Additional findings indicate that the student cohorts that participate in the Social Justice Education Project and experience

the CCI model of transformative education have a higher AIMS pass rate and higher

graduation rates than those students cohorts that do not experience both the Social Justice

Education Project and its CCI model.

Given these findings, the study proposes that educational leaders demonstrate the

political will that is needed to discover and implement multiple forms of critical

transformative educational praxis. In addition, the need for more research that centers the

voices of students and that focuses on racism and the Chicana\o contemporary

experience.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

On the national level, the Chicana/o high school graduation rate lags far behind the high school graduation rate of their Anglo counterparts. Yosso (2006) reports that in 2000, 56 percent of all Chicana/o students dropped out of high school, and that only seven percent earned a baccalaureate degree. During that same year, the dropout rate for Anglos was approximately 11 percent, and slightly more than 28 percent earned a baccalaureate degree.

In Southwest Unified School District (SUSD) (district in which I conducted research), 1805 Chicanas/os entered as freshman in the fall of 2001 as the Class of 2005. However, on the last day for seniors, in the spring of 2005, the graduating class of 2005 contained only 1133 Chicanas/os. This represents a 37.3 percent loss of Chicana/o enrollment over the course of four academic years. This decline in enrollment is not an aberration; in SUSD's previous five academic classes the Chicana/o enrollment declined dramatically, —48.8 percent in 2000 to 33 percent in 2004 (the year with the lowest dropout rate).

In 2003-04, SUSD's Controlado High School (pseudonym) (a school with a high Chicana\o enrollment) had the lowest percentage of students meeting mastery in all three phases (Reading, Writing and Math) of the Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) test, Arizona's high-stake graduation examination. In Southwest Unified School District (SUSD), from 2000 to 2005, the gap in the percentage of students who gained mastery in any or all of the three phases of the AIMS remained 10 percent –20 percent greater for white students than for Chicano students. These figures become even more

significant given the fact that over the last five years the Chicano population has increased yearly in SUSD by an average of nearly eight percent, and over the last year alone, the Chicano population increased by 13.5 percent.

Given the national and local data regarding the inadequate education outcomes for Chicanas/os, I would like to find out whether or not Chicana/o students believe that the education system values who they are as not only Chicanas/os, but as creators of knowledge (Delgado-Bernal, 2002). Within the literature there are a few contributions that suggest that the education system may not fully value the Chicano/a students; in fact, there are contributions that articulate the notion that Chicana/o student are not provided the resources and experiences necessary to attain academic, economic and life outcomes that are equal to those of their white counterparts (Donato, Menchaca & Valencia, 2002; Duncan Andrade, 2005; Pizzaro, 2005; Solórzano & Yosso, 2000 & 2005; Valenzuela, 1999; Yosso, 2006). Other contributions look to the notion that racism is part of the programs, practices, institutions, and structures that are deeply rooted within American life with the intent of maintaining a social and racial order wherein white domination is perpetuated and intensified (Acuña, 1998; Delgado, 1995 & 1999; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Others contend that racism is reflected in entrenched policies, practices, biased curriculum, and standardized testing. Traditionally the aforementioned methods concomitantly and deliberately benefit the white students and victimize students of color (Delgado, 1999; Pine & Hillard, 1990; Yosso, 2002; Haymes, 2003).

This study will investigate the perceptions that Chicanas/os high school graduates have regarding their educational experiences. This study will be guided by the following questions: *Do Chicana/o students believe that racism influences their educational*

experiences? If so, what do they think can be done to counter the educational racism they face on a daily basis? What influence does an education model that merges critical race theory, critical pedagogy and authentic caring have upon the educational experience of marginalized Chicana/o students?

Chicanas/os in American Public Schools: The Study

The participants in this study were all members of a unique social science program in SUSD emphasizing an innovative curriculum that serves the cultural, social, and intellectual needs of Latinas/os. This program called the Social Justice Education Project (SJEP) provides students with all social science requirements for their junior and senior years of high school. The SJEP supplements the state mandated standards with advanced-level readings from Chicana/o studies, critical race theory, and critical pedagogy. The intention is to help students enhance their level of critical conscious through a curriculum that meets states standards that affords students the opportunity to develop a more sophisticated critical analysis. A more complete and elaborate description of the SJEP is forthcoming.

This study was conducted with the intent of gathering data in three components: (1) The Evaluation of Archival Data from the Social Justice Education Project (SJEP). (2) The State's High Stake Exit Exam Data for the students in the SJEP. (3) Original Data collected through a focus group interviews with the five participants and one individual interview with each of the same five participants who are graduates of the SJEP's first cohort.

The evaluation of the archival data consisted of data collected by the Social Justice Education Project (SJEP). These data were collected as part of the standard

reporting processes involved in the operations and maintenance of grants. These data were not collected for research purposes. However, as a result of the inherent value of these data for this dissertation, I evaluated and analyzed the data as a means of contributing to the understanding within the Chicano education literature.

SJEP's data from the states high stake exit exam were the focus of component 2. Data from all three parts: math, reading and writing were was collected while an aggregate of all three parts of the exam was created to determine the SJEP group outcome. Thereafter, this aggregate will be compared to the scores of the aggregate of non-SJEP students. The purpose of this comparison is to measure the SJEP's education model's level of academic effectiveness.

The original data component entailed two different interviews: a focus group interview with all of the five participants, and an individual interview with each of the five participants. Each of the participants is a graduate of the SJEP's first cohort. This group was made up of three females and two males. Each of the individual interviews were 75 – 100 minutes in duration, and the focus group interview was 127 minutes in duration. In all the interviews comprised of 665 minutes of data.

<div align="center">Rationale for Research</div>

Fifty years after the Brown v. Board of Education decision, and forty years after the Civil Rights Movement, the academic outcomes for Latino and Chicanas/o students are still significantly lower than those of Anglo students. In 2003, The College Entrance Examination Board issued a report on a 16 year overview of the scores for the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT). The report finds an increase in the achievement gap between Chicanas/os and Anglos; in 1986 – 87, the averages scores for Chicanas/os were 457

verbal and 455 mathematics; and 524 verbal and 514 mathematics for Anglos. This represents a gap of 67 points verbal and 59 points in mathematics. According to the report, in 2002 – 03 the average scores for Chicanas/os were 448 verbal and 457 mathematics, and 529 verbal and 534 mathematics for Anglos. This represents a gap of 81 points verbal and 77 points mathematics, which are 14 point and 18 point increases in the gaps from for 1986 -87.
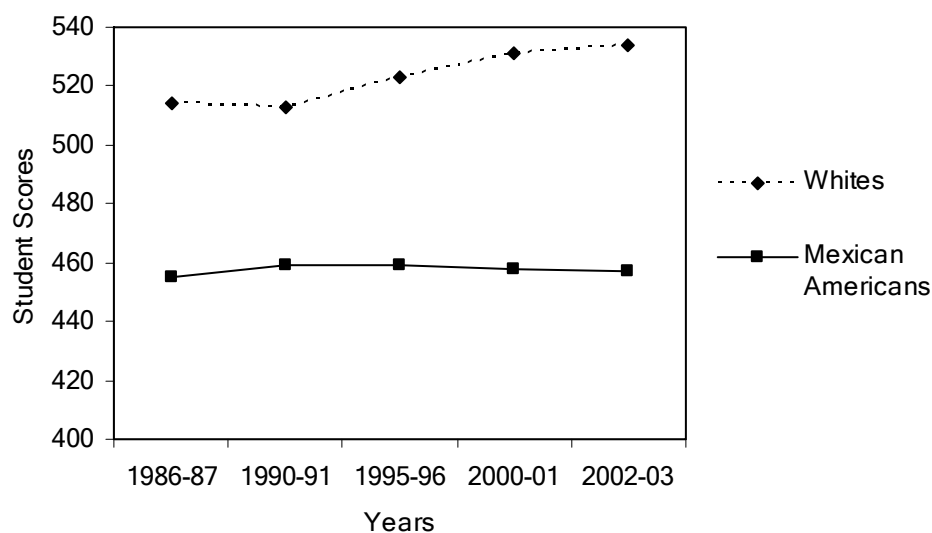
Figure 1. Analysis in the Trend of SAT Math Scores for Whites and Mexican Americans.
Scholastic Assessment Test was formerly known as the Scholastic Aptitude Test. Possible scores on each part of the SAT range from 200 to 800.

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[1]From the College Entrance Examination Board, National Report on College-Bound Seniors, selected years 1986-87 through 2002-03.Copyright 2003 by the College Entrance Examination Board.
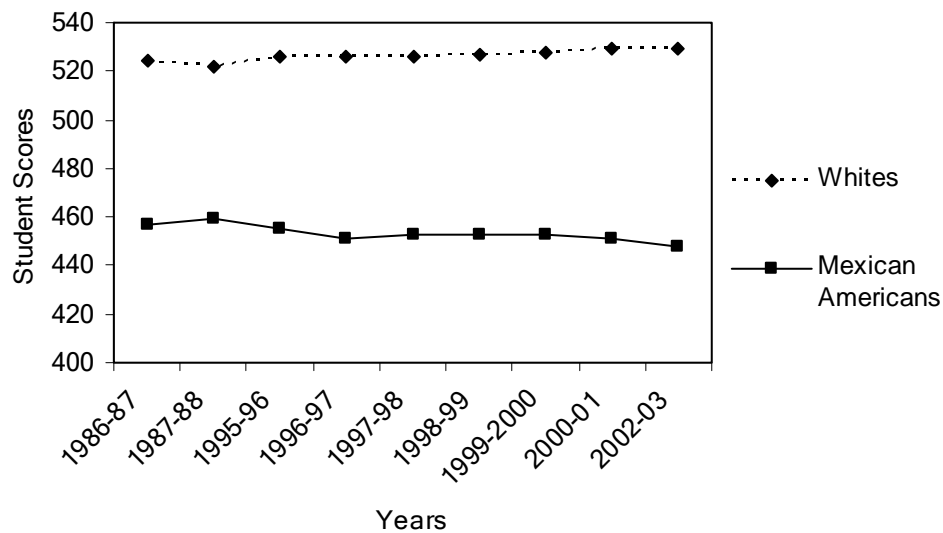
Figure 2. Analysis of the Trend in SAT Verbal Scores for Whites and Mexican Americans. Scholatic Assessment Test was formerly known as the Scholastic Aptitude Test. Possible scores on each part of the SAT range from 200 to 800.

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[2]From the College Entrance Examination Board, National Report on College-Bound Seniors, selected years 1986-87 through 2002-03.Copyright 2003 by the College Entrance Examination Board.

In terms of educational attainment, the gap between Anglos and Hispanics[3] increased from 1985 to 2004. In 1985, the percentage of Anglos with a Bachelor's degree or higher was just over 25 percent, this increased to nearly 31 percent in 2004. In 1985, 8.5 percent of Hispanics had earned a Bachelor's degree or better, and in 2004 this percentage grew to 12.1 percent. The growth for Anglos over the same period of time was 5.2 percent in comparison to the 3.7 percent for Hispanics. The gap in baccalaureate attainment between Hispanics and Anglos grew from 16.9 percent in 1985 to 18.5 percent in 2004.
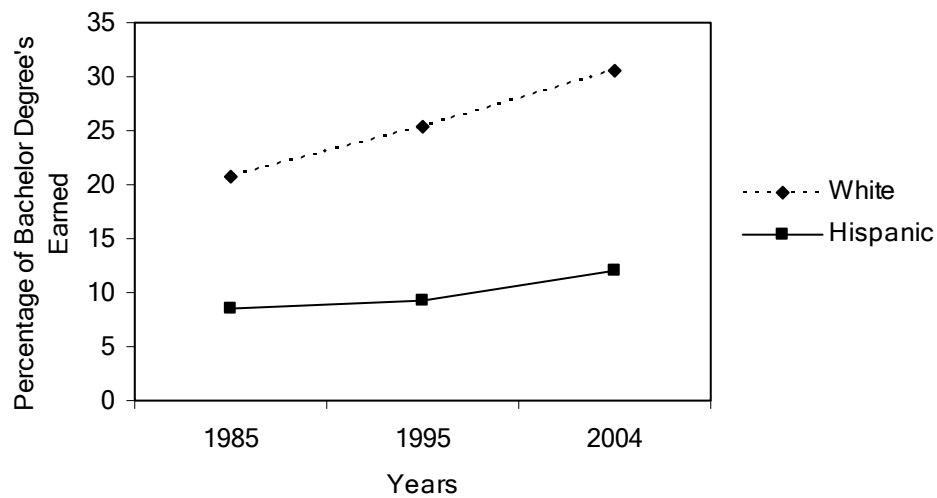
Figure 3. Trend in the Percentage of Degrees Earned from 1985 – 2004

[4]Adapted from U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau; U.S. Census of Population, 1960, Volume 1, part 1. Current Population Reports, Series P-20 and unpublished tabulations; and "1960 Census Monograph, Education of the American Population," by John K. Folger and Charles B. Nam.

The high school completion gap also increased between Anglos and Hispanics. In 1985, the high school completion rate for Hispanics was 47.9 percent and 77.5 percent for Anglos. In 2004, the percentages for both groups increased to 58.4 percent for Hispanics and 90 percent for Anglos. The high school completion gap in 1985 was 29.6 percent and that gap increased to 31.6 percent in 2004.

Furthermore, the high school completion rate for Hispanic and Chicanas/os still significantly lags behind that of Anglos. Pearl (2002) also found that Chicanos lag behind other Chicanos in attainment of high school diplomas and college degrees. In regards to higher education, in 2001 Chicanos made up only six percent of all undergraduates, while Anglos compromised 66.6 percent.
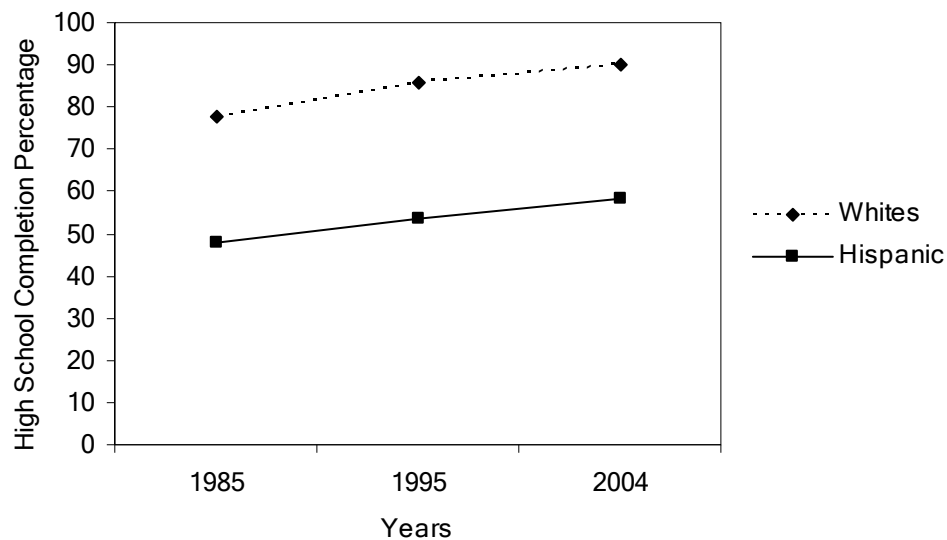
Figure 4. Analysis of the High School Completion Trends for Whites and Hispanics

[5]Adapted from U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau; U.S. Census of Population, 1960, Volume 1, part 1. Current Population Reports, Series P-20 and unpublished tabulations; and "1960 Census Monograph, Education of the American Population," by John K. Folger and Charles B. Nam.

Within undergraduate enrollment today, Anglos still grossly outpace Chicanas/os, while the Chicanas/os who do go to college are disproportionately enrolled in two-year institutions. In 2000, Hispanics made up 14 percent of the undergraduates in two-year institutions, but only seven percent of the four-year undergraduate population; Anglos during the same time frame made up 64 percent of the undergraduates in two-year institutions and 71 percent of the four-year undergraduate population. (See U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Report, 2000, September).

In Arizona, the state where Controlado is located, the high school attended by the participants in the study, the comparison of academic outcomes between Anglos and Chicanas/os reflects the inequality that exists at the national level. According to a report by the state department of education (http://www.ade.state.az.us/srcs/statereportcards/statereportcard04-05.pdf), the 2005

dropout rate for Chicanas/os was more than 143 percent (2.3%: Anglos to 5.6%:

Chicanas/os) higher than that of Anglos; and in 2004 Chicana/o dropouts were 105

percent (3.7%: Anglos to 7.6%: Chicanas/os) greater than Anglos. According to the same

2005 State Department of Education report the graduation rate for Anglo males was 83.7

percent and 88.7 percent for females, while the graduation rate for Chicanos was 66.9

percent and 75.4 percent for Chicanas. This represents a 22 percent gap between males

and 17.6 percent for females.

     In regards to Arizona's high stake graduation exam, an analysis of the two tests

administered between during the spring and fall of 2005 demonstrates the maintenance of

the gap between Anglos and Chicanos. In fact, Anglos in their worst set of outcomes

(Fall 2005) outscored Chicanos during their best set of outcomes (Spring 2005). A point

of interest not reflected in the chart below is the accelerated increase of the number of

Chicanas/os (as compared to Anglos) not taking the exam despite the remaining need to

pass the exam.

     The class of 2006 was the first class required to pass all phases of the exit exam in

order to be eligible for graduation. An analysis of the last four exams administered to

them prior to the spring 2006 exam (the last test available to the class of the 2006 prior to

May commencement; please note that the results from the spring 2006 exams were not

available at the time of this writing). A positive aspect is the decrease in the gap within

the math scores from the spring of 2004 to the fall of 2004. However, the gap did not

close any further during the next three administrations of the test. The reading test also

demonstrated a decrease within the gap between Anglos and Chicanos.
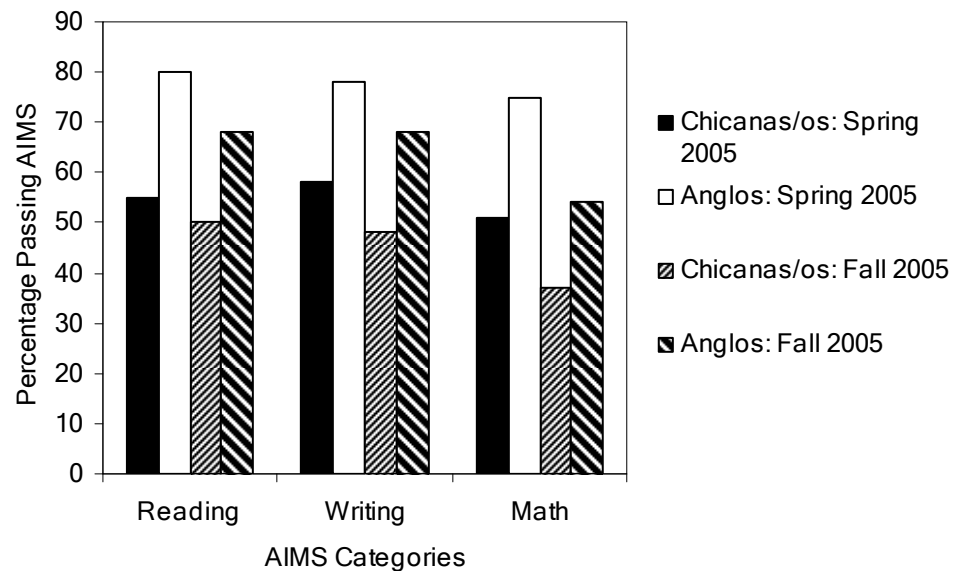
Figure 5. Spring and Fall 2005 Chicana/o and Anglo AIMS Results Comparison

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[6]Adapted from Arizona Department of Education, Accountability Division Research and Evaluation Section, State of Arizona, AIMS Report Wizard.

However, with math scores, this trend did not continue. As the chart reflects, by the fall 2005 exam the scores started to slightly diverge (see appendix 2). With respect to the writing exam, the convergence took place between the fall 2004 examination and the spring 2005 examination. However, similar to the other tests, the scores within the writing exam start to diverge at the very next administration in the fall of 2005.

In Southwest Unified School District (SUSD), 2135 Chicanas/os entered as freshman in the fall of 2002 as the Class of 2006 (see Figure 6). However, on the last day for seniors, in the spring of 2006, the class of 2006 contained only 1254 Chicanas/os. This represents a 42 percent loss of Chicana/o high school enrollment over the course of four academic years. This decline in enrollment is not an aberration: in SUSD's previous

six graduating classes, the Chicana/o enrollment declined dramatically, from 48.8 percent in 2000 to 33 percent in 2004, the year with the lowest dropout rate. Over the span of the seven academic classes the average loss within the Chicana/o student enrollment is 41 percent.
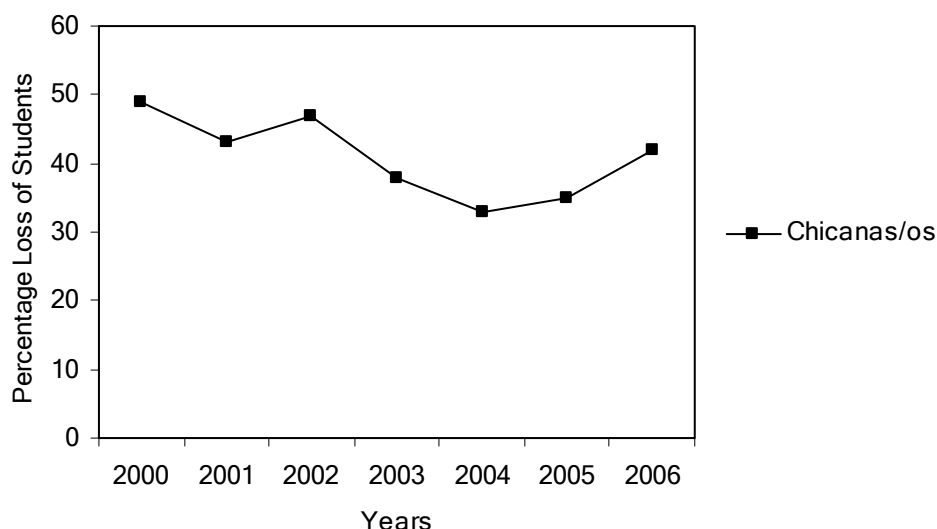
Figure 6. SUSD's Loss Chicana/o Enrollment for the Academic Classes 2000-2006

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[7]Adapted from SUSD's Accountability and Research website. The data is specific to SUSD's enrollment page and the ethnic breakdown.

Moreover, the average Chicana/o ninth grade enrollment for the last seven graduating classes has been 2018. If one factors the 41 percent average loss in class enrollment into the 2018 students that makeup the average Chicana/o ninth grade class, the average number of Chicana/o students that have left the SUSD system over the course of four academic years is 827. This means that on the average at least one Chicana/o high school student leaves the SUSD system everyday.

Controlado High School, the alma mater of the participants in this study, had a 52 percent decline of Chicana/o enrollment in the Chicana/o Class of 2006. In the fall of 2002, there were 315 Chicanas\os enrolled in the freshman class and at the end of their

senior year in the spring of 2006 that number had dropped to only 151. Over the last

seven graduating classes the loss Chicana/o enrollment at Controlado ranged from 37

percent for the class of 2004 to 60 percent for the class of 2002 (see Figure 7).
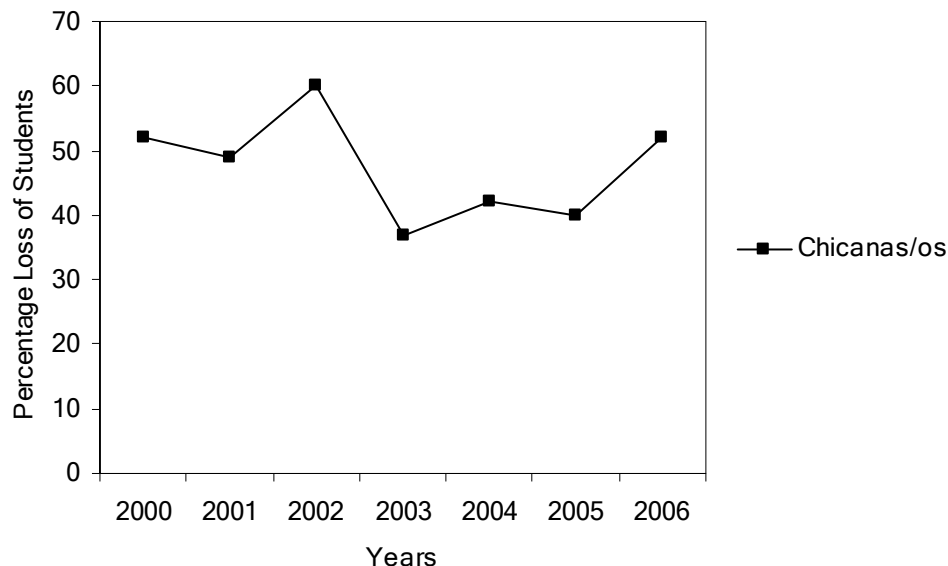
Figure 7. Controlado's Loss Chicana/o Enrollment for the Academic Classes 2000-2006

[8]Adapted from SUSD's Accountability and Research website. The data is specific to SUSD's enrollment page and the ethnic breakdown.

Through the racial constructed popular perception that seeks to perpetuate the

present-day racial hierarchy (Guillaumin 1992), a loss of 96 Chicana/o students out of 256

is not too bad; given that these students come from a sector densely populated by

Chicanos. This area of the city displays one of the lowest median household incomes,

which translate into 55.3 percent of Controlado's Chicana/o students being enrolled in

SUSD's free lunch program as compared to the district's average of 35.2 percent.

However, for many others these statistics are proof of injustice and inequity.

This articulation becomes more pronounced when the Chicana/o achievement data

for Controlado is taken into consideration. In 2003-04, Controlado had the lowest

percentage of students meeting mastery in all three areas of the AIMS[9] test. Furthermore, in SUSD, from 2000 to 2005, the gap in the percentage of students who gained mastery in any or all of the three phases of the AIMS remained 10 percent to 20 percent greater for white students than for Chicana/o students.[10] These figures become even more significant when coupled with the fact that over the last five years the Chicano/a population has increased yearly by an average of 7.9 percent, and over the last year alone, the Chicana/o population increased by 13.5 percent. This means that every year more and more Chicanas/os are being left behind by SUSD.

Moreover, when quality education is taken into consideration, Chicanas/os have long been denied this opportunity (Chapa & Valencia, 1993; Garcia, 2001; Gonzalez, 1997; Moreno, 1999; Rumberger, 1991; Sanchez, 1997; Solórzano, 1994, 1995; Solórzano & Yosso, 2000; Spring, 1997; Valencia, 2002). However, when education is afforded Chicanas/os, it in most cases has been offered in a manner that domesticates or indoctrinates Chicanas/os to a state wherein they are easily controlled and in many cases become agents of the oppressor group and their racism (Freire, 1994; McLaren & Leonard, 1996; Delgado, 1998, Duncan – Andrade, 2005; Parker, Deyhle & Villenas, 1999; Darder, Torres, & Gutierrez, 1997; Cammarota, 2006). Controlado is no exception to this unfortunate reality. Over the last five years, Controlado has had the lowest Advanced Placement Student Access Indicator (APSAI) [11](Solórzano & Ornelas, 2002; 2004) in the district. During the 2005 -2005 academic year, Controlado's AP Student Access Indicator was 217, placing it at the bottom of all SUSD high schools. In comparison, the school with the best APSCI was DG High (63% Anglo & 20% Chicano) SUSD's academic flagship school, which had an APSCI of 9.9. The upshot is that

Controlado has one advance placement course for every 217 students, while DG has one advance placement course for every 9.9 students.

The chart below is a six year comparison of SUSD's Advanced Placement Student Equity Congruency Ratio (APSECR)[12] as it is reflected by its Advanced Placement Student Equity Index (APSEI).[13] A ratio of zero would indicate that the APSECR was congruent with the demographic representation within SUSD high school population. For example, if School X had an Anglo population of 20 percent and an Anglo AP student population of 20 percent, the APSAI congruency ratio would be zero (balanced or congruent). This chart is an articulation of SUSD's APSECR for the academic years 1999 – 2000 through 2004 – 2005. The academic year with the greatest disparity was 1999 – 2000, during which the Anglo AP enrollment was 15.6 percent above congruency, while the Chicano AP enrollment was 12.98 percent below congruency. This creates an incongruity (inequality) ratio of 28.58 percent during the 1999 – 2000 academic year; as the chart reflects the 2000 – 2001 reflected a state of lesser incongruity; however each year thereafter has been a demonstration of greater incongruity. Given the setting, both nationally and locally, this study examines the perceptions that Chicana/o graduates of the SJEP have regarding whether or not racism was a part of their educational experiences. And, if these young adults experienced racism in their educational experiences, what influence did racism have on their education?
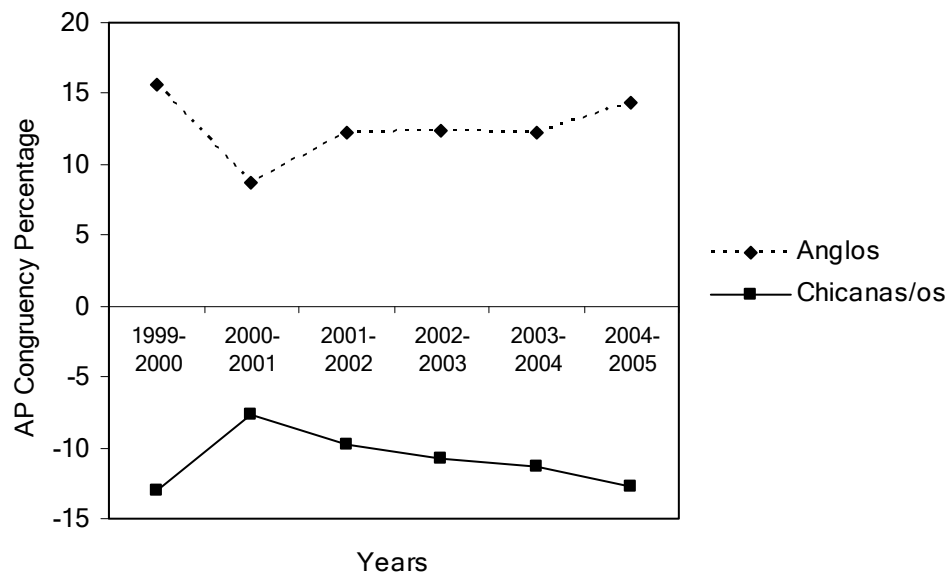
Figure 8. 1999-2000 through 2004-2005 SUSD's A.P. Parity Index

[14]Adapted from SUSD's Accountability and Research website. The data is specific to SUSD's enrollment page and the ethnic breakdown.

Setting

The site for this study is Controlado High School. Controlado High School is located in a large city in the southwestern portion of the United States and within the second largest school district in the state. Controlado is a Chicana\o majority high school with a high concentration of low achieving Chicana/o students.

Controlado is located in an urban section of the southwest. The socioeconomic statuses of the neighborhoods that surround Controlado are among the lowest in the city's greater metropolitan area. A May 2006 report revealed that of the city's 32 zip code areas, Controlado was located in the area whose average income ranked 26th. The median income per zip code was $48,612 as compared to Controlado's zip code average income of 30,082. The majority of these neighborhoods have traditional been home to Chicano families, which helps to explain Controlado's 63.2 percent Chicana\o student

population. Furthermore, 55.3 percent of the students at Controlado receive free lunch, this more than 20 percent higher than the district average of 35.2 percent.
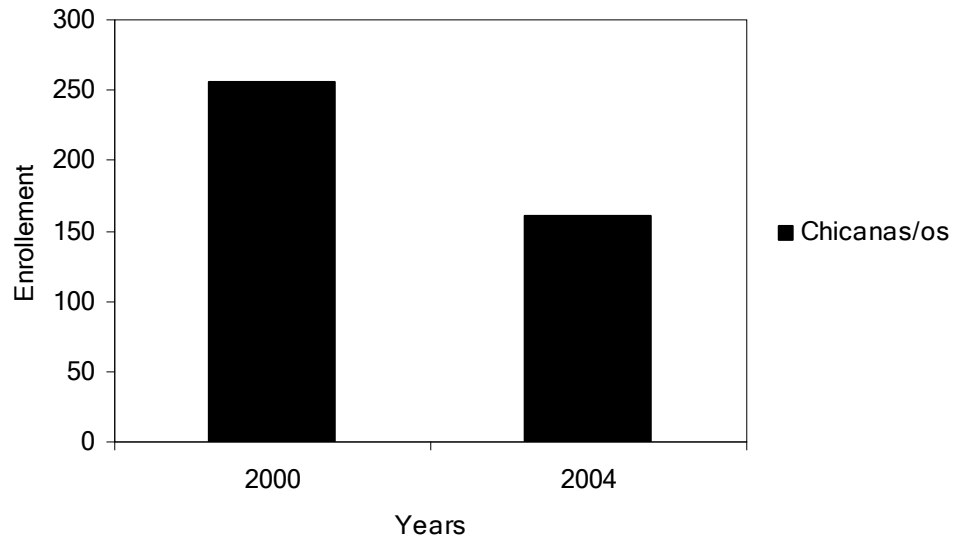
Figure 9. Controlado's Chicana/o Enrollment from the Fall of 2000 to the Spring of 2004: Class of 2004

[15]Adapted from SUSD's Accountability and Research website. The data is specific to SUSD's enrollment page and the ethnic breakdown.

A cohort comparison demonstrates a significant reduction in enrollment of Chicanas/os in the class of 2004. In the fall of 2000 there were 256 Chicanos enrolled in the freshman class at Controlado. At the end of their senior year, in the spring of 2004 that number had dropped to only 160. This presents a 37.5 percent reduction of Chicana/o enrollment for the class of 2004

Participants

The Participants in are Chicana/o graduates of the Social Justice Education Project's 1st Cohort (an explanation of why I have decided to focus on the 1st Cohort is forthcoming). This transformative education project is a partnership between SUSD's Chicano Pedagogy Department (pseudonym), Controlado Magnet High School, and a

university in the same city as SUSD. The participants in this study included three females and two males, all of whom will be 20 – 21 years of age and fully proficient in the English language during their participation in this study.

Each of the participants was a member of the SJEP's 1st cohort. Each of the participants within the 1st cohort had strongly considered dropping out of school, because of his or her disillusionment with the education system. The majority of the students in the 1st cohort entered the SJEP (their junior year) with six or less credit (instead of 12 they needed to be on schedule to graduate with their class). These were the students that were beyond the love of the system (Delgado, 1995), placing them on a path whereby they would be left behind.

I have decided to focus on the graduates of the 1st Cohort because of its truly experimental nature and the transformations it was able to create. More importantly, the SJEP experiment was successful in its efforts to transform the educational experiences and outcomes for each the participants within the SJEP's 1st cohort. The SJEP and its model helped a group of students of color transform their educational experiences from a situation of very little academic success to a situation significant success. The most impressive example is the 1st Cohorts graduation rate. Of the 17 students in the SJEP's 1st Cohort, to date 16 have graduated from high, with the 17th in process of graduating.

Furthermore, it is my belief that the students from the 1st cohort have stories that need to be heard. These students have stories that I believe can truly contribute to way in which we view and approach Chicana/o education.

Methodology

This critical race qualitative research study is based upon the triangulation of data.

This triangulation involves the following components: (a) one open-ended focus group interviews, and (b) one open-ended interview that were conducted after the focus group interviews. The reason for this type interview framework is the attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of the participants. I have placed the focus group interview before the individual interviews with the intent of gaining a collective understanding, as well as, an understanding of the individual participants. The new collective and individual understanding gained in the focus group interview created the questions for the individual interviews that motivate a deeper understanding of the experiences held by the participants. After all five of the individual interviews, I attained a multi-layered understanding of the experiences of the participants.

The general topics that make-up the interview questions are: questions about the participants educational experience, questions about familial education background, questions regarding racism within the social and educational experiences of the participants; questions regarding the creation and social engagement of critical consciousness; and the impact of the SJEP's educational model upon the participants education and their life experiences. It is important, to reiterate that the participants within the original research component were all young adults between 20 – 21 years of age during their participation in this study.

In the SJEP archival research segment, I evaluated informal open-ended student interviews, progress reports that incorporated into end of the year reports to funding agencies, and post-program surveys that pertain to certain themes such as: the program effectiveness in developing academic identity; the development of academic proficiency; and the development of critical consciousness.

The district data segment consisted of an evaluation of how the students who experience the SJEP's CCI educational model on a daily basis over the course of two academic years performed on the state's high stake exit exam. The comparison group will be Anglo students in the same grade and from the same sites as the students who experience the CCI model.

The methods within this study follow the framework established by the critical race theory qualitative research methodology (Parker, 1998; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999; Duncan 2002 & 2005; Parker & Lynn, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). This methodology gave me the opportunity to generate data from unstructured individual interviews with open-ended questions, and two unstructured focus group interviews with open-ended questions. It also provided the lens through which I evaluated, documented and archived data gathered by researchers from the SJEP. This methodology follows the pattern proposed by proponents of CRT (Duncan 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Delgado Bernal, 2002) wherein the words of people of color are viewed as offering new knowledge. These voices are viewed as vehicles through which we can make more informed examinations of the material conditions that are basic to and inextricably part of lived experience. In other words, critical race qualitative research methodology seeks to engage the multiple ontological categories that give meaning to the lived experiences of those who have marginalized. Therefore, in order to ensure that these voices and experiences are heard, this study utilizes a critical race qualitative research methodology (see Duncan, 2002 & 2005; Fernandez, 2002; Gilborn, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Parker & Lynn, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, 2001b and 2001c; Yosso, 2005).

Critical Race Theory's qualitative methodology transcends other methodologies through its focus on the impacts and implications of racism (Duncan, 2005; Gilborn, 2006), the centering of marginalized voices and the engagement of research as a tool of survival (Duncan 2005; Pizarro, 1999). At its essence, CRT's qualitative methodology places at the center of its analysis the stories and counter-narratives of those who have been placed at the bottom of the well by American society (Bell, 1992). A CRT qualitative methodology creates an opportunity for the stories of Chicanas/os to be heard. Through these new voices, we come closer to new knowledge and epistemologies, which bring us closer to social change (Palmer, 1993; Freire, 1996).

Furthermore, a CRT qualitative methodology gave me the opportunity to elicit from the participants their perceptions regarding their educational experiences and how, if at all, racism has influenced these experiences. Due to the centering of racism within the data collection, the data uncovered by this type of method are often less accessible in other types of settings and with other methods (Delgado-Bernal, 1998). Serving as facilitator allowed me to include of the notions of theoretical sensitivity (Straus & Corbin, 1990) and cultural intuition (Delgado-Bernal, 1998). Both concepts (more explanation of how they do this) acknowledge the importance of having a certain degree of knowledge that allows the researcher to find deeper meaning from the data collected. Both the students and I will participate in analyzing and authenticating the data, and together we will bring a high degree of community memory to this process (see Delgado-Bernal, 1998).

Moreover, CRT's qualitative method affords me, other critical researchers and our compañeros on the ground, in the barrios, and in the schools with the opportunity to

rethink; and if necessary, reconstruct traditional school policies and practices. This process or methodology centers on the insights of those who experience the heaviest burden of educational injustice. CRT and its methodology seek to make what was once opaque, perfectly lucid.

<div align="center">The Ideology of Racism</div>

The ideology of racism creates, maintains, and justifies the continual production of injustice, inequality and oppression. These products lead to the creation of a system of ignorance wherein historical and present-day Chicanos and other people of color are exploited and oppressed (Solórzano & Yosso, 2000). Racism is the sum of programs, practices, institutions, and structures that are deeply rooted within American life with the intent of maintaining a social and racial order wherein white domination is perpetuated and intensified (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Pine & Hillard, 1990). Racism is reflected in entrenched policies, practices, biased curriculum, and standardized testing. Traditionally the aforementioned subjects concomitantly and deliberately benefit the white students and victimize students of color (Pine & Hillard, 1990; Yosso, 2002; Haymes, 2003).

Omi and Winant (1994) state, "The hallmark of this [American] history has been racism…The U.S. has confronted each racially defined minority with a unique form of despotism and degradation." (p.1) The American reality (versus the American Dream) for people of color has been one of inequality, injustice, and exclusion. These experiences run from expulsion, to slavery, to invasion, to occupation, to colonization, to genocide and to extermination. Given the racist reality of America's past, present and most likely its future, it is critical that as we engage in praxis, we understand that racism is not a

mistake, it is not periodic, it is not irrational, but rather it is a social construction that

seeks to at best maintain the present day status of white domination and at worst it seeks

to advance the state of injustice and inequality experienced by people of color in the

United States. Today, racism seems right, customary, and inoffensive to those who

engage in it and to those who benefit from it (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997)

Solórzano and Yosso (2005) state that LatCrit theory in education, "is a framework that

can be used to theorize and examine the ways in which race and racism explicitly and

implicitly impact the education structures, processes, and discourses that affect people of

color generally and Latinas/os specifically" (p.81). In the case of this study, using the

experiences of Chicana/o students (who fall into the generic category of Latino) to

counter "new racism's" rhetoric of "neutrality" and "objectivity", to set forward a social

justice praxis and educational agenda, and to offer new theoretical model for

transformative urban education that connects students, parents and community to the

education system fits within the objective set forth by Solórzano and Yosso (2005).

LatCrit also helps create the understanding that as this study and others like it move

forward the knowledge created by those who struggled to create the spaces in which we

now operate. Furthermore, LatCrit helps us to understand that this marginalized

knowledge must be incorporated into our socio-political counter-hegemony, or the

institutional cultural and ideological struggle that Gramsci (1999) refers to as a *war of*

position[16], as we move towards the attainment of greater political power and racial

equality.

　　As for critical race theory, William Tierney (1993) defines CRT as an attempt to

understand the oppressive aspects of society, so that through this understanding we can

effect societal and individual transformations. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) argue that Critical Race Theorists view institutional and structural racism as the reason for student disengagement and dismal academic performance. CRT will allow for a view of educational inequity that transcends class based research that has provided some understanding for the inequities experienced by students of color; however, this research is incomplete in that it is unable to fully explain why people of color historically and presently have occupied the lowest rungs of the social, political, economical and educational ladder within the United States. CRT allows us to ask the questions that are not asked or have not been answered because the emphasis as been place on cultural deficit models (Yosso, 2005) or class models (Omi & Winant, 1994). It allows us to reexamine the racialized nature and scope of our society and to ask the hardest questions. In the specific case of this research, it will afford me the opportunity to gain a deeper and more organic understanding the educational experiences of the Chicanas/os participants and to ask if racism has had an impact on their educational experiences. And if so, what are the nature and scope these experiences; and equally important what the participants' beliefs regarding the transformational resolutions that are needed to move the educational outcomes of Chicanas/os to a level that is at least equal to their Anglo counterparts.

Critical pedagogy (Freire, 1994; McLaren, 1994; Solórzano, 1997; Darder, 2002), LatCrit in education (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Solórzano & Ornelas, 2002), authentic caring (Noddings, 1984; Blair, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999: Schwerin, 2004), and other valuable contributions have been made to the literature regarding Chicanos and schooling. For instance, Rhumbaut (1995) and Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (1995) each concentrate on how Chicanos develop negative attitudes

towards their schools. Stanton - Salazar (2001) addresses the notion of "social capital" and the reality that Chicanos enter mainstream institutional settings with less "social capital" than their Anglo counterparts. Despite the significance of these contributions, each falls short in the analysis of the impact racism has on the structure of schools and the educational experiences of Chicana/o students.

Studies that examine racism, education and Chicanas/os are limited (see Cammarota, 2004; Delgado Bernal, 2000; Fernandez, 2002; Solórzano & Solórzano, 1995; Pizarro, 1999; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2000; & Villenas, Deyhle & Parker, 1999). Although some studies document the social and economic factors within and beyond school that influence the academic process (MacLeod 1985; Olsen 1997; Willis 1977), there has yet to be a study that centers on the voices of Chicana/o students as they speak about two primary issues: racism within the educational setting; and the impact the convergence of critical pedagogy, LatCrit and authentic caring have had on their educational experiences.

Critical pedagogy and LatCrit have contributed significantly to the literature. From critical pedagogy this study has taken some of the tools needed to help students create an emancipatory educational experience. Among these tools have been the problematization of *true words*[17], and the tri-dimensionalization of reality. Also, critical pedagogy calls upon educators to engage in praxis that works towards critical transformation within schools and the community (Parker & Stovall, 2004). However, until recently critical pedagogy had not given much emphasis to racism; due to the Marxist origins of critical pedagogy, the emphasis of its analysis was placed upon critiques of class relations and class structure. From LatCrit this study gained a lens

through which the Chicana/o educational experience could be better understood within the context of racism and outside the context of the black-white binary (Perea, 2000; Solórzano & Yosso, 2005). It is critical that we understand racism within a Chicana/o context, particularly because the structure of United States of America was created and is being recreated by racism (Omi and Winant, 1994, Bell, 2000, Delgado, 1995). The inclusion of this understanding helps create a lens that will allow for a deeper understanding of the educational inequities faced by Chicanas/os and this lens will help guide the analysis.

LatCrit offers very few practical tools that can be used in the emancipatory K-12 educational setting. The bulk of LatCrit's contributions within the education movement have focused upon higher education (Solórzano & Yosso, 2005; Villalpando, 2003, 2004) research methodology (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001a, 2001b, 2002) or theory (Espinoza, 1997; Valencia, 2005). The convergence of LatCrit and critical pedagogy has the potential to create an educational experience that incorporates elements of critical pedagogy through which Chicana/o students and emancipatory educators can engage in the creation of: pedagogy, curricula, an epistemology, ontology, and a praxis that addresses racism in schools and within the community. This convergence represents an opportunity for the creation of a new way of understanding schools and society; this new understanding has the potential to create a new analysis of the inequalities and inequities within education and in the end lead to new answers to these issues.

A few contributions to the literature have examined the use of CRT with critical pedagogy (see Smith – Maddox & Solórzano, 2002; Cahill, 2004; Lynn, 2004; Parker & Stovall, 2004). However, these contributions address gaps within the literature that differ

from the gap that this study intends to address. Cahill's (2004) focus is on creating a research methodology out of the collaboration between critical pedagogy, CRT and feminist inquiry. Lynn (2004) focuses on how CRT and critical pedagogy can be used to better inform the praxis of Black educators, and the lens through which he analyzes and interprets his findings relies upon an Afrocentric frame of reference. Parker and Stovall (2004) seek to address needs within teacher education programs and they place a strong emphasis upon an African American racial experience. Parker and Stovall (2004) do take time to include LatCrit in their analysis, and like this study their intent is to change what is offered within most present-day teacher education programs. Smith–Maddox and Solórzano (2002) recommend that teacher education programs use of CRT with critical pedagogy as a new instructional and pedagogical methodology. As stated in reference to Parker and Stovall (2004), this study intends to inform teacher education programs; however, unlike other studies it will do so through the voices of marginalized Chicana/o young adults.

The contributions made by those working with CRT and critical pedagogy have been extremely valuable and they are, in part, the inspiration for this study. It is through this study that I hope to pick up where they have left off. In this study, the voices of Chicana/o students are central and racism has been placed at the core of the research and the analysis. It is with community understanding or memory (Delgado Bernal, 1998) that I have approached this study. I forward the questions and findings within this study as a means of creating a new lens through which I can examine old questions and new questions regarding the disparity in academic outcomes between Chicanas/os and whites. I will do so, with the intent of providing new answers to old and new questions alike.

Equally important, this study has presented Chicanas/os with an opportunity to propose anti-racist solutions that can enhance the level of academic outcomes of Chicanas/os making their way through the public school system. It also presents the participants with the opportunity to evaluate and describe the impact the convergence of critical race theory (CRT), critical pedagogy and authentic caring had on their educational experiences. Though there have been significant contributions to the literature within the areas of critical pedagogy (Freire, 1994 & McLaren, 1994) Latino Critical Race Theory in education (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2005) and authentic caring (Noddings, 1984; Valenzuela, 1999), there is a significant gap within literature regarding the merging of these three fields of study. Moreover, what is missing is the voice of Chicanas/os students reflecting upon the convergence of these theories; a convergence that Cammarota and Romero (2006a; 2006b) refer to as CCI. Other studies have been done regarding Chicanos, but very few have placed racism at the center of the study and used CRT as the lens through which the study is conducted and analyzed by the students as well as other researchers. Delgado-Gaitan and Trueba (1991) have documented the teaching and learning that takes place within Mexicano/ Chicano families, demonstrating how this process is vivacious, authentic, and how it builds cultural strengths; other studies (Delgado Gaitan, 1994; Romo & Falbo, 1996; Valdés, 1996) show how parents use consejos as a means of teaching Mexicano / Chicano cultural values, and Valdes (1996) also expresses the notion that working–class Mexican families view the world through a different lens than the one utilized by the white middle-class mainstream.

The strongest theme common among these studies is the argument against the notion that Mexicano/Chicano families do not care about or value education; the societal disconnect is that the perceptions and realities of Chicanas/os do not align with those of the white imagintion and its conscious, dysconscious or unconscious need to maintain white domination.Therefore, the Mexicano / Chicano epistemology is given significantly less capital, which forms a barrier that Chicana/o children have to constantly negoiate as they attempt to make their way through the American educational system.

There are few if any studies that have used CRT and LatCrit to examine how the Chicana/o high school students articulate the impact racism has had on their educational experiences. The use of CRT and LatCrit is critical due to its focus on racism and how racism impacts the educational experience of Chicanas/os and other people of color. Villenas, Deyhle & Parker (1999) state:

> CRT strategies also require that teachers, administrators and community members to inquire seriously into the nature of the problems related to race and into the racial impact of school policies. In addition, school staff and community members are challenged to develop the racial knowledge, compassion, and capacities needed to engage in difficult dialogue and to make changes in school practices that seriously attempt to address racial discrimination there (p.34).

LatCrit and CRT are the best lenses through which to analyze racism because they provides the greatest understanding of how racism impedes the equity-based transformation that can lead to greater equality in life outcomes for Chicanas/os. The understanding and insight provided by this study will move us further along the continuum away from the negative impacts of racism, towards a state of educational

equality within academic outcomes that can lead to greater social, economic and political outcomes for Chicanas/os.

Data Analysis

I organized the data analysis process around the grounded theory approach (Charmaz 1983). The first part of the data analysis process involved the evaluation of archival data. This process involved the reviewing field notes, interviews, and post-project surveys, and standardized test scores and developing analytical codes that assisted my analysis and interpretation of the data. The second segment included reading transcripts from individual and focus group interviews and refining previous codes generated from field notes. Once I completed the coding system, field notes and the interviews were reviewed again to check the substantive quality of each analytical code. The final part of analysis involved turning the codes that reflect the major patterns in the data into longer analysis memos. These are one to two pages of written analyses of the topics to which the codes refer. The memos form the basis of analysis and preparation for dissertation chapters.

I organized the data, analytical codes, and memos with the assistance of NVivo7 (the latest version of the Nudist qualitative software), a computer systems that helps with managing the various products of the research as well as ensure the analysis reflects the prevalent patterns or themes emerging from the data.

Potential Implications

This study has the potential to offer a new theoretical framework through which educators can better understand what is needed in an educational experience that seeks to nurture critical transformation within students, and that seeks to engage in activities that

critically transform our society. Ultimately, the goal is to create an educational experience that engages and overcomes some of the negative academic effects of racism. In this study, the voices of students are central, thus presenting them with the opportunity to claim, define and articulate an intellectual space. It is within this space that we can better understand the perceptions, the values, and the needs of students who have been marginalized by racism within the American education system. Furthermore, it is from this position that we can formulate and redefine the services that we can and will offer these students as a means of guaranteeing greater inclusiveness within our society and the direct engagement of racism within education.

Overview

This entire dissertation and its student voices are leading to the understanding of the CCI model, and the space it occupies within the gap ignored and left behind by other theories. Chapter two is a review of the literature. This chapter examines the theoretical frameworks that were used to create the space wherein intellectual revolution could be gain a foothold. In addition, these frameworks also helped me establish the unanswered questions that were needed to create and recreate the CCI and the SJEP.

Chapter three is my interpretation of critical race theory qualitative research, and the critical imperative to create and advance theories that create spaces wherein greater inclusion and justice are realized, and establish the perpetuation similar research.

Chapter four is entitled *Los Estudiantes* (the students), it is an attempt to humanize the participants and there social realities. In commitment to critical pedagogy, I position myself as a student within this chapter. I believed that is important to establish this reciprocal teacher-student relationship within the context of this research, this

dissertation and any in research projects that seek to replicate this project. Moreover, it is important to note, that I am as much, and in some case more of a student than the youth whose voices will be heard herein.

In chapters five through seven, the voices of the students are the emancipatory verbalizations that answer the questions that drive this study: Chapter five: Do Chicana/o students believe that racism has influenced their educational experiences? Chapter six: If so, what do they think can be done to counter the educational racism they face on a daily basis? Chapter seven: What influence does an education model that merges critical race theory, critical pedagogy and authentic caring have upon the educational experience of marginalized Chicana/o students? As these questions are answered, the wisdom, power, and intellect within youth voice become more and more evident.

Chapter eight is a detailed explanation of the CCI model; more importantly, it establishes the liberatory responsibilities of the teachers who chose to engage in CCI. This chapter outlines the three foundational piece of the CCI model: curriculum, pedagogy, and student – teacher – parent interactions. In addition, it thoroughly explains each of elements within each of the foundational pieces.

Chapter nine explains the nature of what I refer to as transformative interactions. Within these transformative interactions is the realization of a tri-dimensionalized reality. I will explain this thought later; however, it can be explained briefly as the active connection between the past, present and future, and the meaning it has within an emancipatory project.

Within chapters eight and nine, I attempt to impart the understanding that CCI is not a toolbox or resource kit model. In essence, it cannot be pulled out of a box for implementation. Instead, I want to establish that it is a model that calls for an active and constant investment from teachers and students; and in a best case scenario, it calls for the same type of investment to be made by parents and community.

The data within chapter 10, I demonstrate the relationship between the participation in the SJEP and the CCI model and a heightened state of academic achievement. In this chapter I use AIMS data, graduation data, student survey data, and student voice to demonstrate a multi-dimensional correlation between SJEP and CCI participation, and greater student achievement.

Chapter 11 is an explanation of the limitations and implications of this research. In this chapter, I offer the shortcomings I faced; however, I also offer the hope that can be created through an investment in CCI.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

I select a few bodies of theoretical literature to help guide me through this study. This literature base includes: (a) Critical Race Theory, (b) Latino Critical Race Theory, (c) Critical Race in Education, (d) Critical Pedagogy, and (e) Authentic Caring. These bodies of literature will aid in the examination of the following areas:

(1) Educational Discourse and the Theory of Surplus Equality: This section is the prologue through which I will contextualize the space Chicanas/os are given within the American educational system. This will be done through the lens of critical race theory (CRT) and its derivative Latino critical race theory (LatCrit). These theories afford me the opportunity to challenge the notions of racism that are advanced by the hegemony of white oppression (Bell, 1995; Calmore, 1992; Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995; Delgado, 1995 a & b, 1996; Gilborn, 2006; Lynn, 2006; Lopez, 2000; Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001a; Solórzano & Ornelas, 2004; Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005) as it relates to educational theory, pedagogy and the interactions of teachers, students and parents; moreover, I will apply these theories specifically to Chicanos within SUSD's system. This section will set the foundation for the forthcoming sections wherein I discuss the literature of the Chicanas/os continued struggle within an educational system that fails to meet their needs while nurturing a sense of hopelessness and subordination within these same students.

(2) Critical pedagogy is a process that requires educators to critically examine and challenge issues of power, ideology, cultural politics, hegemony and conscientization within education and society (Darder, 1991; McLaren, 2003a; Moss, 2001; Wink, 1997).

I will examine the need to transform and reinvent critical pedagogy to meet the present day needs of marginalized Chicanas/os (Darder, 2002 & McLaren, 2000).

(3) The Discourse of Chicana/o Education. I set the context for the two following chapters. I examine how Chicanas/os are defined within the discourse of the American public school system. Furthermore, I examine how we can use the theory of surplus equality (Delgado, 1999) to better understand the discourse that surrounds Chicanas/os within American public schools.

(4) The Social Construction, Social Reproduction and Rearticulation Racism in Education: In this section, I examine the idea of racism as a social construction and how this social construction supports social reproduction through which white domination is perpetuated. I also examine how the rearticulation of racism is used as a mean of reproducing and enhancing America's racial order, and how this phenomenon influences the education system.

(5) Deficit Thinking and Education: In this section: I examine how a cultural deficit or deficit thinking as been used to explain the achievement gap.

(6) Subtractive Schooling Versus Additive Schooling: This section explores how Chicanas/os have been subtracted from the official curriculum of America's schools (Valenzuela, 1999; Yosso, 2002). I discuss the need to advance a critical race curriculum as a means of greater engagement, which often translates into greater academic outcomes (Gibson & Bijinz, 2002; Rodriguez et al., 2004). In addition, I will articulate upon the need to create an educational environment that is structured according to the needs, values and understanding of Chicana/o students, their parents and their community (Gonzalez, et al., 1995; Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992; Sandoval – Taylor, 2005;

Tan, 2001).

By no stretch of the imagination are the themes within the above six sections new; however, collectively they create a highly critical framework through which this study has been approached. This framework hypothesizes and studies the ways in which racism impacts the structures, processes, and discourses within the educational experiences of Chicanas/os, and the educational system in general. Furthermore, this framework can be used in other anti-racist education projects as a means of eliminating racism and other forms of oppression within the American education system.

Critical Race Theory (CRT), Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) and their Implications in Education; the Discourse of Chicana/o Education and the Theory of Surplus Equality;

Racism: Normal Science, Reproduction, and New Racism

Critical Race Theory, Latino Critical Race Theory and their Educational Implications

Solórzano and Yosso (2005) state that LatCrit theory in education, "is a framework that can be used to theorize and examine the ways in which race and racism explicitly and implicitly impact the educational structures, processes, and discourses that affect people of color generally and Latinas/os specifically" (p.81). In the case of this study, using the experiences of Chicana/o students (who fall into the generic category of Latino) to counter "new racism's" rhetoric of "neutrality" and "objectivity," that regardless of their rhetoric have a very intentional and subjective racial agenda wherein white privilege is maintained; moreover, white detestation for minorities is open and elevated. This understanding and perspective fits within the objective set forth by Solórzano and Yosso (2005) wherein a social justice praxis and educational agenda are

set forward, and offer a new theoretical model for transformative education that connects students, parents and community to the educational system.

LatCrit also helps create the understanding that the knowledge created by those who continue to struggle to create the spaces in which we now operate, must be incorporated into our political counter-hegemony; this war of position, (Gramsci, 1999) in order move Chicanas\os towards the attainment of greater Chicana/o political power, racial consciousness, racial equality, as well as, class consciousness must find a dominant voice in mass media and the education system.

As we create this counter-hegemonic space we must redefine racism so that it transcends the limits established within the black-white binary notions of racism. Our understanding of racism, as all systems, policies, and actions that intentionally or unintentionally establish a doctrine of racial supremacy of one race over all others, helps us establish a higher level of strategic conjecture[18] for our war of position.

As for Critical Race Theory, William Tierney (1993) defines it as an attempt to understand the oppressive aspects of society, so that through this understanding we can effect societal and individual transformations. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) argue that Critical Race Theorists view institutional and structural racism as the reason for student disengagement and dismal academic performance. CRT will allow for a view of educational inequity that transcends class-based research, which has provided some understanding for the inequities experienced by students of color; however, this research is incomplete in that it is unable to fully explain why people of color historically and presently have occupied the lowest rungs of the social, political, economical and educational ladder within the United States. CRT allows us to ask the questions that are

not asked or have not been answered because the emphasis has been placed on cultural deficit models (Yosso, 2005) or class models (Omi & Winant, 1994). It allows us to reexamine the racialized nature and scope of our society and to ask the hardest questions. In the specific case of this research, it gave me the opportunity to gain a deeper and more organic understanding of the impact racism had on the educational experiences of Chicana/o high school students in the study.

LatCrit offers very few practical tools that can be used in the emancipatory K-12 educational setting. However, the majority of LatCrit's contributions within the educational movement have focused upon higher education (Solórzano & Yosso, 2005; Villalpando, 2003, 2004) research methodology (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001a & b, 2002) or theory (Espinoza, 1997; Valencia, 2005). This study represents an opportunity for the creation of a new way of understanding schools and society; this new understanding has the potential to create a new analysis of the inequalities and inequities within education, and, in the end, lead to new answers for these issues.

Many valuable contributions have been made to the literature regarding Latinos (Chicanas/os) and schooling (Blair, 1996; Darder, 1997 & 2002 Freire, 1994; McLaren, 1994; Noddings, 1984; Schwerin, 2004; Solórzano, 1997; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001 a &b; Solórzano & Ornelas, 2002; Valenzuela, 1999). For instance, Rhumbaut (1995) and Suárez-Orozco (1995), each concentrate on how Chicanos develop negative attitudes towards their schools. Stanton - Salazar (2001) addresses the notion of "social capital" and the reality that Chicanos enter mainstream institutional settings with less "social capital" than their Anglo counterparts. Despite the

significance of these contributions, each falls short in the analysis of the impact racism

has on the structure of schools and the educational experiences of Chicana/o students.

Studies that examine racism, education and Chicanas/os are limited (see Cammarota,

2004; Delgado Bernal, 2000; Fernandez, 2002; Solórzano & Solórzano, 1995; Pizarro,

1999; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2000; & Villenas, Deyhle

& Parker, 1999). Although some of the research documents the social and economic

factors within and beyond schools that influence the academic process (MacLeod 1985;

Olsen 1997; Willis 1977), this study is one of a small number of to focus on the voices of

Chicana/o as they speak about racism within the educational setting.

The Discourse of Chicana/o Education and the Theory of Surplus Equality
Discourse of Chicana/o Education

This section will be a brief articulation of the discourse within public education as

it has been defined by the youth within this study. In addition, due to their subsistence

within the discourse of Chicana/o education, this section will serve as the prologue for

the forthcoming sections within this chapter. Furthermore, historically and presently, the

subjects within these sections: racism, social and cultural reproduction, deficit thinking

and education, and Chicano authentic caring have perpetuated or countered the discourse

of Chicana/o education as it is defined in this section.

A complete examination of education discourse is beyond the nature and scope of

this dissertation; however, in order to provide clarity and direction, it is critical that

discourse and racist discourse are defined. Through these definitions, the context of

Chicana/o education can be analyzed and defined from an orientation that is critical of the

American structure and the inequality and injustice through which it was created and

upon which it recreates itself.

Foucault (1972) defines discourse as, "a body of anonymous, historical rules, always determined in the time and space that have defined a given period, and for a given social, economic, geographical or linguistic area, the condition of operation of enunciative functions" (p.117). Discourse is more than oral or written language; discourse is how we speak and write. It is how we behave, how we think; it is what we value, how we feel, and how they all interface (Baez, 2000), and discourse influence how we engage society.

Racist discourse intentionally excludes the voices, the thoughts and the values of the poor, the non-white, and those of non-Western European descent (Said, 1979). This deliberate exclusion enunciates racist ideals, and it makes claims of white superiority (Baez, 2000; Garcia, 2001; Rodriguez, 2001; Said, 1979). This discourse of racism often becomes the discourse of the institutions (political, educational, economical and social). These institutions foster the structures that perpetuate the racial order, the racial order that historical and presently places people of color at the bottom of society (Bell, 1992). Moreover, the racist discourse of these institutions often takes on the belief (within themselves or those they oppress) that this relegation of Chicanas/os to the bottom rung of society is not oppressive, but rather a form of liberation (Said, 1979).

Given these definitions, and the voice of the participants within this study, it is easy for me to make the claim that in regards to Chicanas/os experience with education to tighten up has been one of exclusion (Roitmayr, 1999), repudiation (Roitmayr, 1999), dishonesty (Villenas, Deyhle & Parker, 1999) and false generosity (Freire, 1994). Moreover, each of these characteristics has been used as vehicles for the advancement of

the American education system, which subsequently has a similar impact on other American systems (political, economic and social).

It is important to clearly articulate how racist discourse has been created and how it becomes a cohesive and imperceptible part of our daily way of doing things and/or handling our business (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001; Haney-Lopez, 2003; Perea, 1997 & 2000; Said, 1979). Potvin (2000) states the following:

> The main theoretical writings on racism have shown that 'classical' racist discourse had a certain structure: which went beyond making accusations. It claimed, first, to be a system (based on a scientific theory) and, second, to constitute a general representation (doctrine) based on a "will to persuade" aimed at promoting a political order (an ideology) (p.3).

According to Potvin (2000), this led to an ideology that constituted the political weapon of persuasion, creating another oppressor group explanation or justification for the privileges they have constructed for themselves. Through this ideology a oppressor race articulation is constructed and becomes a rearticulation of the justification of injustice and inequality that favor the interest and advancement of whites in America (Memmi, 2000). These racist articulations, whether in legal, political or educational texts, and/or the practices influenced by these expressions, were all informed by racist principles: conscious, dysconscious, or unconscious (Garcia, 2001). These explanations and justifications have been expressed through the theory of biological inferiority, in which/the political and racial order have been established by creating laws and educational policies e.g. Plessy v. Ferguson and the ideology of separate but equal, and socio-educational policies such as SUSD's 1C[19]; Arizona's Proposition 203[20] and 200[21];

and California's Propositions 187[22], 209[23], and 227[24]; and the propose HR 4437[25]. Each of these policies was articulated as having the intent of defusing or remedying some negative element within our society with the intent of creating a better society. However, these remedies were constructed through an anti-Chicano form of cultural deficit discourse. According to Solórzano and Solórzano (1995) cultural deficit models argue that Chicano education failure is the result of the failure of parents to assimilate to oppressor group values, and the continued passage of values that impede educational success and economic mobility. Therefore according to the oppressor group, laws and policies must be created remedy these so-called cultural deficits (Said, 1979; Solórzano & Solórzano, 1995).

These policies advanced the discourse that perpetuates the hegemony that maintains the structure of our society. This social structure has the capacity to mutate (Parker & Stovall, 2004) or rearticulate itself (Omi & Winant, 1994). These mutations through political polices and political practices protect the inferiortization, oppression, and the re-enforcement of the racial and power structure (Guillaumin, 1992; Wieviorka 1991). Today, most formalized forms of racism have been eliminated, with the exception of few groups or individuals who formally declare a racist ideology. However, racism is still a large part of the social reality of the United States (Bonillas – Silva, 2003 & 2005; Darder, 2004, Darder & Torres, 2003; Memmi, 2000). The perpetuation of racism is not spontaneous, meaning there are spaces where racism is accessible. For instance, Arendt (1982) argues that ideology is the space and the weapon through which racism is advanced. Racist ideology of the day is often wrapped in the popular perception[26] of what America is and should be which is based on individual and structural needs and desires.

More importantly, the articulations that meet these desires, more often than not, are not based on scientifically reliable facts (Arendt, 1982, Moreno & Valencia, 2002, Solórzano & Solórzano, 1995; Villenas & Foley, 2002). The truth or falsehood within scientific finds is relative to the discourse one seeks to advance (Stoler, 2002). That is, the rhetoric of truth and racist discourse often become the political weapons that serve to enforce the power structures (Foucault, 1981). They are also the social apparatuses that recreate or rearticulate a racist ideology that is based upon the desire and need to dehumanize and oppress as a means of maintaining the racist status quo in America.

The experiences and perceptions of the youth in this study reflect the racist discourse I have defined above. The youth see their schools as places where racism and oppression are common place. The youth describe the attitudes and beliefs of the teachers and administrators as been based upon racial and stereotypes; rather than, an authentic understanding. Moreover, the participants describe schools and their education experiences (outside of the SJEP) as, being racist and oppressive.

The Theory of Surplus Equality

Richard Delgado's (1999) theory of surplus equality explains how and why racist discourse is used in an era that is loaded with the rhetoric of equality. Delgado argues that in a capitalist system, there is a need for an underclass that can be exploited. This creates two problems: (1) There is not enough equality for all Americans; and (2) There must be people who are constructed and/or labeled for exploitation. Simultaneously, America's commitment to equality prohibits the outright exploitation of people of color or any group in general. Delgado (1999) clears this confusion with his theory of surplus equality. Through the theory of surplus equality, Delgado argues that the notion of

equality for all, at this time, is a falsehood. He states that because of America's true commitment to capitalism, "more equality inheres in our national principles than can be accommodated at any time. Someone, usually Blacks and Latinos must end up constructed as unequal" (p. 10); in this social construction of inequality, Blacks and Latinos or Chicanas/os are labeled as undeserving, unmotivated, and of lesser intelligence. Delgado (1999) believes that after social construction and labeling has taken place,

"undeserving and merit less" people of color can be exploited without the concern of the majority of Americans. This translates into the reality that opportunities for equality and justice for people of color are finite, rather than infinite.

Racist discourse and negative social construction has led to the creation of a Chicana/o educational experience that has been filled with inequality, inequity and injustice. These iniquitous educational experiences have been the foundation of the perpetuation of the status quo in America's racial and social order (Lynn and Adams, 2002). Even sadder and more harmful, is the modern day sense of normalcy of these inequalities, inequities and injustices.

The voices of the participants in this study articulate Delgado's notion of surplus equality. Each of the students stated that before their SJEP experiences they believed that they would occupy a space on the bottom rung of the social ladder. These youth had bought into the socially-constructed notion of inferiority, and few expressed a belief that they and many other Chicanos were undeserving of a better life. Equally important, before the SJEP, none of the participants questioned these perceptions. In fact, each of them accepted these perceptions as their primary frame of reference. In a few cases, the

participants were able to see the finite nature of equality and opportunity, but they expressed the belief that the only reason this was true was because Chicanos were less deserving than Anglos. These students viewed these injustices as harmless; no harm was committed because no one deserving of more was affected.

Racism: Normal Science, Reproduction, New Racism, Common Sense and Normal Science

Race is a social construct that has been and is used in United States as a tool to perpetuate white oppression. This is critical because in most cases people do not recognize their daily exercises of racism. These exercises are a significant part of America's natural order, which supports and perpetuates the racialized hierarchy of white domination (Bonillas –Silva, 2003). These exercises are at the core of America's common sense (Haney Lopez, 2003), its natural science (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001) and its everyday racism (Essed, 2002). Haney Lopez (2003) defined common sense as "a complex set of background ideas that people draw upon, but rarely question in their daily affairs" (p. 6). The background ideas are the references we depend upon as we make our daily decisions and as we seek to understand and engage our world. This process is historical, and, as such, it has created a societal process of white domination. This is a process that is neither blind nor is it unconscious, despite the notion that the masses who subscribe to this process may be unconscious and/or without critical sight; this process has created a script for the perpetuation of white domination that the masses of American society follow without question. According the Haney Lopez (2003), common sense is an ideology and practical process that consumed with racism that lead many to engage in racist practices that ensure the maintenance of the racial hierarchy of white oppression.

A similar concept is Delgado and Stefancic's "normal science." Delgado and Stefancic draw from Thomas Kuhn's concept of the same name; although Delgado explains this concept through a race and racism point of reference. Kuhn (1996) defines normal science as "research firmly based upon one or more past scientific achievements, achievements that some particular scientific community acknowledge for a time as supplying the foundation for its further practice" (p.10). It is in this process both scientist and society have deliberately narrowed the scope of their imagination. Pedagogy, epistemology, discourse, and the imagination are restricted by a set of historical rules created to ensure the maintenance of the reigning paradigm. The indoctrination of normal science has been so complete that the discovery of results and theories outside the paradigm are ignored and/or devalued. Kuhn (1996) states the following about normal science:

> …an attempt to force nature into the performed and relatively inflexible box that the paradigm supplies. No part of the aim of normal science is to call forth new sorts of phenomena; indeed those that will not fit the box are not seen at all…normal scientific research is directed to the articulation of those phenomena and theories that the paradigm already supplies (p.24).

Delgado and Stefancic (2000) define normal science as a state wherein "racism is ordinary, not aberrational –the usual way society does business, the common, everyday experience of most people of color in this country" (p.7). In an earlier writing, Delgado (1991) uses normative theory to explain how racism becomes normal science. At it essence, racism has become easy to overlook. It is okay not to engage in it, and it is okay not to question it. Racism has become a normal part of the fabric and the daily functions

of American life. As Delgado (1991) states, "normativity…enables us to ignore and smooth over the rough edges of our world… (p.12)" Unfortunately, the racism of the 21st century has lost much of its edge.

Essed (1991; 2002) has engaged the complexity of racism by transcending the structural and ideological orientations within the study of racism. For Essed, it is important to connect racism to everyday practices or what she refers as "everyday racism." Essed (2002) defines everyday racism as the following:

> A process with which (a) socialized racist notions are integrated into meanings that make practices immediately definable and manageable; (b) practices with racist implications become in themselves familiar and repetitive; and (c) underlying racial and ethnic relations are actualized and reinforced through these routine or familiar practices in everyday situations (p. 190).

This definition implies that everyday racism is a complex process that is affected by many variables, such as content and structure of a person's everyday life, which is impacted and interpreted by such things as gender and class

Everyday racism is the connection of "structural forces of racism [to] routine situation in everyday life (Essed, 2002, p.177). Racism and everyday racism in their current forms are much more complex and sophisticated than they were during the Pre and Post Civil Rights Era pre and post (Omi and Winant, 1994). However, the intent of racism and everyday racism is still the preservation of America's social, racial and political order (Stoler, 2002). Everyday racism is the nexus between ideology and practice. Everyday unseen, unheard, and in some cases, unfelt racism is so finely woven into the American reality that is has become the pattern of American society. By this, I

mean that racism is expected, in most cases it is unquestionable, and because it is viewed as normal by the oppressor group when it is questioned, those asking the questions about racism are accused of being racist's (Solomos, 1989).

Unfortunately, in education, this reality has become a huge part of how we think of and treat the Chicana/o children that walk into our classrooms, or "ditch" our classes. It is how we think about and treat the Chicana/o parents of these children as they walk through the gates of the school yard. It is how we think of and treat the Chicana/o parents who can not fully participate in our educational system as it is presently structured. Moreover, even when the educational system seeks to help and support Chicana/o students and parents, this effort is not created through a critically transformational Chicana/o imagination, but, rather, through the paradigm of white domination, e.g. affirmative action (Bell, 1988), civil rights laws (Delgado, 1991), Arizona's Proposition 203 or SUSD's 1C program.

I have connected these policies as articulation of the how racism has manifested itself in a manner that has become part of everyday life in America. Furthermore, I have come to realize that with each day racism is recreated or rearticulated over and over again, creating to a society that has become desensitized to the repugnance of racism. The students in this study helped me to understand that although racism is common practice, it's the manifestations and the perceptions and understanding of it is different from student to student. It is through this understanding that we can and must address racism. Using the multitude of youth's experiential voices regarding racism in education will provide us with an opportunity to counter the complexity and multiplicity of racism.

Furthermore, it is critical that as cultural workers (Freire, 1998), transformative intellectuals (Shor, 1996) or as organic intellectuals (Gramsci, 1999), we understand that a paradigm contaminated by racism will articulate and rearticulate racism; moreover, because of its racist orientation, the paradigm cannot and will not support anti-racist or equity-based phenomena and/or theories. As workers or intellectuals advocating for a true egalitarian reality, we must understand that the Anglo oppressor cannot liberate us; because of its dehumanized state, the Anglo oppressor is without the emancipatory capacities (Freire, 1998). It must be the workers, the intellectuals, the community, and the students who create the equitable transformations that are needed in order for Chicana/o students to realize educational and social equality.

Social and Cultural Reproduction

Valenzuela (1999) argues that schools are organized and structured in a manner that perpetuates inequality and produces Chicano youth who are ill-equipped to adroitly function as mainstream members of society. Historically, Chicanas/os have been relegated to the position of the exploit group. The masses have been perceived as being inferior to Anglos and, therefore, are easily exploited for huge levels of profit (Delgado, 1999). This reality is created by American schools that rather than creating a level playing field, schools reproduce America's racial and social order (MacLeod, 1995; Spring, 1997).

> This is not a new phenomenon. Just before the turn of the 19th century, a Texas
> school superintendent offered this point of view: You have doubtless heard that
> ignorance is bliss; it seems that is so when one has to transplant onions … So you
> see it is up to the white population to keep the Mexican on his knees in an onion

patch or in new ground. This does not mix well with Education (Spring, 1997, p. 83).

In *Schooling is Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions to Life,* Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (1976) articulate how the American educational system, regardless of its rhetoric, was not the great equalizer. On the contrary, American education was (and is) fully engaged in reproducing America's class [and race] relation structures and their inherent inequalities.

This cultural and racial oppressive educational realism has led to segregated schools, inferior facilities, deculturalization programs, Americanization programs, biased (indoctrinating and subordinating) curriculum, etc. These racial, cultural and social organizing tools were implemented as a means of reproducing the American hierarchical structure, in which Whites are the dominating group and their culture is presented and interpreted as being natural or normal (Bourdieu, 1977).

Writing from a Marxist perspective, Bowles and Gintis (1976) critiqued schools and their role in the reproduction of America's stratification and the social class inequality inherent within that structure. However, absent from this critique was a strong analysis of racism and its central role in the reproducing of America's racial and social order. By contrast, Katz's (1971) *Class, Bureaucracy, and the School: The Illusion of Educational Change in America* offers an analysis of how the American educational system perpetuates class bias and racism. Both these analysis have greatly contributed to the advancement of our understanding of how schools function as reproduce of social order, and the inequality within that order. Still, without placing race at the center of the analysis, findings fall short. The role racism plays in perpetuating inequality in our society is undeniable, and

its acknowledgment is paramount to divining a solution. Bowles and Gintis (1976) help

inform a deeper understanding of inequality within American schools; however, their

framework does not accommodate an understanding of the impact racism has on the

creation of a Chicana/o educational experience that is unjust and unequal.

Racial Formations

The reproduction of the racial dimensions within America's social structure is

most often and most effectively conducted through state policy or activity (Omi and

Winant, 1994). Historically and presently, racism in America has led to significantly

disparate treatment between Whites and people of color. This disparity lies in the fact that

"…race continues to signify difference and structure inequality" (Omi & Winant, 1994,

p. 57). Regardless of its rhetoric, the United States of America was founded and

constructed on racism (Bell, 2000). From its inception, America and Americans have

operated on the belief that whites were superior to all other races, especially those of the

tawny persuasion (Takaki, 1994).

I started this section with the above paragraph in order to articulate America's

racial legacy. This racial legacy continues to shape the present, and most likely will shape

the future. In order to better understand this process, Omi and Winant (1994) use the

"racial formation theory." They define racial formation as, "the sociohistorical process by

which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed and destroyed" (p.55). Racial

formation treats race as the nexus of the social relations that establish the objects and the

importance of racial categories. Race is then the determining variable within American

social relations at both the macro level (shaping all dimensions of social life), and the

micro level (shaping the understanding of the individual actors) (Essed, 1991; 2002).

Historically and presently, racial formation has been executed by the racial project. A "racial project" is, "simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines" (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 56). In essence, a racial project is the nexus between the meaning of race and the organization of micro and macro social levels that are based upon that meaning.

America's racial formation and it racial projects have shifted on occasion: the emancipation of slaves, Mendez v. Westminster[27], Hernandez v. Texas[28], and Brown v. Board of Education[29] and its impact on the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. At the time these events took place, the racial formation and it racial projects were engaged in a discourse that rearticulated the American social and racial order. This rearticulation was exemplified by the rhetoric and notions of greater opportunity and inclusion. In the case of Brown v. Board of Education, it has been argued by Derrick Bell (1980) that the rearticulation in these cases was accomplished, not by the goodness of White America, but rather because these events served White interest. Bell (1980) argues that the Cold War and foreign policy were the impetus for Brown v. Board of Education, rather than the quest for equality. Dudziak (2000) supports Bell's claim that the precedents within Brown v. Board of Education were established through a convergence of white interest with the interest of people of color. Dudziak (2000) agrees that if the interest of greater equality for people of color had not converged with America's need to preserve its international image of "the land of equality," this advancement for people of color would have never come to fruition. Dudziak (2000) quotes from an amicus briefs that was filed by the U.S. Justice Department, wherein it is argued that desegregation was in the

national interest, and failure to accomplish this unfilled social standard severely compromised American foreign policy: "The United States is trying to prove to the people of the world, of every nationality, race and color, that a democracy is the most civilized and most secure form of government yet devised by man" (p. 107). Consequently, Bell argues (1980) that without the convergence of white interest, Brown v. Board would have never occurred.

The Brown case was argued before the U.S. Supreme Court at a moment when the sanctity of America's doctrine and tenets, e.g. democracy, justice, and equality, had immense foreign policy implications. The United States hold the belief it could save the world with its democracy and ideology (U.S. President Press Conference, June 14, 2006), which it still holds today. Many politicians proclaim that the United States Constitution and the Bills of Rights protect Americans from tyranny. However, as Dudziak (2000) points out, the United States, then or now, cannot save the world with its doctrines and values, if its core values are tainted with white oppression.

Through a convergence of interest, the United States Supreme Court struck down the precedent of "separate but equal" with the Brown decision. This precedent shifted the racial formation within the United States. It challenged the pre-existing racial ideology and, for an instant, changed the meaning of race. Omi and Winant (1994) refer to this process as the *rearticulation* of racial ideology. This rearticulation of racial ideology, "paved the way for the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's and 1970's" (Banks, 2005, p. 93).

Bonilla – Silva (2005) maintains that the Civil Rights Movement was able to produce definite, although limited, reforms (e.g.1964 Civil Rights Act & the 1965;

Voting Rights Act). This rearticulation could not hold its meaning, however, "No sooner had egalitarian and antidiscrimination policies emerged from the political tempests of the 1960's that they began to decay" (Omi and Winant, 1994, p. 78). As a challenge to the dominant racial ideology, once the legislation of the Civil Rights Era entered into American political discourse, it became the target for rearticulation by those interested in maintaining the oppressive nature of America's racial and social order.

By the 1970's, the neoconservatives set the stage for rearticulation. The foundation of this rearticulation was "reverse racism." This rearticulation was not as extreme as the previous conservative racial formation, as it did not argue against the principles of racial equality and did not advocate for resegregation. (Bonilla – Silva, 2005). Even so, they were and they have been successful in challenging and in many cases eradicating the means by which equality is achieved (affirmative action, anti-bilingual education legislation, failure to equitably fund the No Child Left Behind legislation).

For Omi and Winant (1994) the neoconservative articulation of the racial formation created by the Civil Rights Movement was the one greatest example of rearticulation that was fully against the advancement of people of color:

Beginning in the 1970's the forces of racial reaction seized on the notion of racial equality advanced by the racial minority movements and *rearticulated* its meaning. Racial reaction repackaged the earlier themes – infusing them with new political meaning and linking them to other key elements of conservative ideology … The far right for the most part revived the racist ideologies of the previous periods…The new right's use of code words (non-racial rhetoric used to disguise

racial issues) was a classic example of rearticulation, geared to mobilize a mass base threatened by minority gains, but disinclined to embrace overtly racist politics. Neoconservatism represented the most sophisticated effort to rearticulate racial ideology (p.118).

Through this rearticulation and its racial projects, neoconservatives created a racial formation that envisioned and created a social structure wherein state policy would no longer take race into consideration. In this articulation, a color-blind racial attitude was the center piece. This color-blind racial ideology is the nucleus of what is referred to as "new racism."

New Racism

Racism is defined by Bonilla – Silva (2003) as the following:

> Practices that are subtle, institutional, and apparently nonracial. In contrast to the Jim Crow era, where racial inequality was enforced through overt means (e.g., signs saying "No Niggers Welcomed Here" or shotgun diplomacy at the voting booth), today racial practices operate in a 'now you see it, now you don't' fashion (p.2).

New racism is covert, non-confrontational, more sophisticated, and uses the rhetoric of colorblindness. Instead of proclaiming that the current social stations occupied by Chicanas/os to be the result of physiological or intellectual inferiority; today, new racism and its colorblindness perpetuate white privilege through the rhetoric of "work ethic" and "cultural values". In essence, the majority Chicanas/os remain at the bottom of societies well not because institutional or individual racism, but rather they do not work hard or they have not adopted the "appropriate" cultural values.

Educational examples of new racism are high-stake testing, anti-bilingual education policies, and academic isolation. In this era of new racism, Chicanas/os still receive an inferior education, even when they attend integrated schools. In these integrated schools, Chicanas/os experience low expectations, irrelevant curriculum, and "banking" education; and, as the participants in this study have articulated, these experiences foster or enhance a lack of hope.

Most Whites believe they do not play a role in the creation or perpetuation of new racism. Moreover, most Whites believe that the lack of equality within educational outcomes is due to the idea that something is wrong with Chicana/os (Sowell, 1981). Whites often use cultural racism to explain the inequality within Chicano educational outcomes, and, in some cases, Whites still believe that Chicanos are biologically inferior to themselves (Bonilla – Silva, 2003; Solórzano & Solórzano, 1995). New racism, instead of proclaiming that minorities are inherently inferior to whites, articulates an argument from the past, which suggest that academic shortcomings are a product of poor work ethic or a devaluation of education (Gould, 1932; Lyon, 1933; Taylor, 1927).

Furthermore, new racism maintains White privilege by allowing whites to claim their commitment to racial equality and, at the same thing allowing them to remove or denounce any method as means to that end (e.g. affirmative action) or creating political or legal obstacles to that same end (e.g. No Child Left Behind, Proposition 203, and Proposition 200). New racism and the veil of colorblindness give whites the opportunity to maintain and advance their racial interest without giving the appearance of being racist. It also gives leverage for claims of reverse discrimination by whites (Bonilla – Silva, 2003, 2005).

Before racism is used as a theoretical lens through which the experiences and perceptions of Chicana/o students are analyzed and interpreted, it is important to define and contextualize racism. The ideology of racism creates, maintains, and justifies the continual production of injustice, inequality and oppression. These products lead to the creation of a system of ignorance, wherein historically and presently Chicanos and other people of color are exploited and oppressed (Solórzano & Yosso, 2000). Racism guides and influences the programs, practices, institutions, and structures that are deeply rooted within American life; moreover, the maintenance of a social and racial order that normalizes white oppression is perpetuated and intensified (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Pine & Hillard, 1990). Racism in the education is entrenched in policies, practices, biased curriculum, and standardized testing. Traditionally, the aforementioned subjects concomitantly and deliberately benefit the white students and victimize students of color (Haymes, 2003; Pine & Hillard, 1990, Yosso, 2002).

The topic within this section was introduced with the intent of broadening the context of racism within this study and within the United States. The normalcy and the multiple rearticulations of racism create difficult and complex phenomena. Therefore, helping students engage and negotiate racism is critical and challenging. The SJEP was established with the intent of providing students with a vehicle through which students could nurture and develop the skills needed to address racism and enter into activities that limit and impede its influence.

Deficit Thinking and Education

For the last 500 years, Chicanas/os have challenged the oppressor group's form of schooling and education (Villenas & Foley, 2002). Since the 1970's, Chicanas/os and

critical researchers have challenged "deficit thinking," which has been used to explain the lack of success experienced by Chicanos in American schools. Deficit thinking is the notion that students who have lesser academic outcomes than Anglos (in this case, Chicanos/as), do so because these students, their families, and/or their culture are defective or inferior. Deficit thinking does not take into consideration the unjust and unequal nature of American society it's the schools. The accountability of educational outcomes falls solely on the people who are exploited by the America's educational and racial systems (Valencia, 1997).

Within the deficit thinking model, the two primary theoretical foundations are genetic determinism and cultural determinism. According to Solórzano and Solórzano (1995), "genetic determinism" and "cultural determinism" can be explained as follows: the genetic deterministic model, "takes the position that the educational attainment of minorities generally, and Chicanos specifically, can be traced to deficiencies in their genetic structure" (p. 297); and cultural deterministic model "argues that Chicanos' cultural values are the primary determinant of low achievement and attainment" (p. 297). From the perspective of genetic determinism, with the exception of genetic transformation, there is little that can be done to elevate the educational attainment of Chicana/o students.

At its essence, genetic determinism argues that Chicanos are genetically inferior to Anglos, and equality in educational outcomes is outside of their genetic capacity. Although, it seem as though genetic determinism is less prominent in social science literature and lacks evidentiary support, it has seen a resurgence through the work of the Minnesota Twin Studies (1990), Frederick Goodman (1993), and Richard Herrnstein and

Charles Murray (1994). Today, in lunchrooms, meetings, and even in classrooms teachers, administrators and staff still make reference to the "*bell curve.*" Herrnstein and Murray (1994) argued in their book, *The Bell Curve* that the failure of America's poor ethnic minorities could be attributed to their genetic inferiority.

Given that the idea of genetic inferiority has not and probably will not disappear from the educational discourse, it is critical that we understand it at its foundation. Solórzano and Yosso (2001) trace genetic determinism in education to the work of Lewis Terman (1916), who claimed that Mexican American children are inherently dim-witted and should be placed in separate classrooms from their inherently genetically and intellectually superior white counterparts. Terman also stated that Mexican Americans should be prevented from reproducing due to their genetic inferiority.

Cultural determinism models argue that Mexican American parents don't value education; they do not place enough emphasis on competition; they focus more on the present rather than the future; and they lack the vision of upward mobility. The Coleman Report (1966) and Oscar Lewis' (1965) "culture of poverty" hypotheses help solidify the notion of cultural deficit thinking within the mindset of America. The Coleman report used standardized tests and grades to measure school achievement. In the report, it was argued that the integration of the races would improve the dilapidated physical nature of "colored schools" and help these children become like their superior white counterparts. Lewis' (1965) "culture of poverty" confirmed the conservative perception of Mexicans and the poor as being inferior to whites. Lewis (1965) characterized the Mexicans and the poor as "violent," "fatalistic," "unproductive in values and attitudes" and as products of unstable families and community. In her attempt to explain why Mexican Americans

lacked social mobility, Celia Heller (1966) stated that the culture in Mexican American homes lacked a focus on excellence and high expectation of achievement. She, therefore, concluded that these deficiencies led to the inability of Mexican American children to contribute to society (Solórzano & Yosso, 20001).

The cultural determinism solution for Mexican Americans is acculturation to the dominant cultural group's values and behaviors, while simultaneously denouncing and eradicating Chicano cultural values and behaviors (Solórzano & Solórzano, 1995). Cultural determinists believe that transformation of this kind would lead to greater educational outcomes and upward mobility for the current generation and generations to follow. It is important to note that the notion of cultural determinism remains prevalent in American research and in American colleges of education. Yosso and Solórzano (2001) and Solórzano and Solórzano (1995) argue that despite claims about the diminishing use of cultural deficit models, they are still the norm in social science research, in teacher preparation programs throughout the United States, and within society. What they represent is considered the common sense of America (Steigerwald, 2005, Crockatt, 2004).

Cultural determinism as the norm is exemplified by the comments of SUSD's superintendent in regards to Chicana/o and Black students and his belief in SUSD's need to move out from under a federal desegregation order:

> Schools can be held accountable for only a 'small piece' of the achievement gap, and poor children often have parents who are undereducated and therefore unable to help them get ready for school before kindergarten. If they don't have adequate healthcare, don't have a comfortable bed to sleep in, if they haven't eaten before

they come to school, all of these factors have effects, and a teacher is not going to

be able to cure all these societal ills (Tucson Citizen, June 21, 2005).

The Superintendent, by focusing on a deficit-thinking perspective, missed the opportunity

to focus on the cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005; Moll et al., 1992) inherent in the lives,

homes and culture of all SUSD students. Unfortunately, the superintendent chose to

articulate a perspective that perpetuated the hideous level of cultural deficit thinking that

exists within SUSD.

A Chicana/o Authentic Caring: Subtractive Schooling vs. Additive Schooling

Chicana/o Authentic Caring

The problem of the Chicana/o achievement gap can be linked to the lack of

authentic caring found in school-based relationships and the Americanized educational

structures that deliberately eradicate Chicano / Mexicano culture. The primary

mechanisms of eradication are the Euro-centric curriculum and the absence of genuine

interest and affection of. For many Chicana/o students, the eradication of culture within

the curriculum and pedagogy and student-teacher interactions that are not based upon

authentic caring has led to a dual reality. In this reality many Chicana/os students reject

schooling (Freire, 1994) and they reject the structure and process of this non-educational

experience (Valenzuela, 1999). Chicanas/os commonly reject schooling and its process

because they attempt to enact social and intellectual control. Because schooling is void of

praxis, Chicanas/os often do not have the opportunity to recreate their schooling

experiences. This inability to remake or recreate their schooling experiences leaves

Chicanas/os without the opportunity to complete and realize their humanity. Without

their humanity, Chicanas/os struggle to gain a critical consciousness. Without humanity

and a critical consciousness, these students become the premier prey for cultural and

capitalist predators (McLaren, 1995). This process often leaves Chicanas/os at the bottom

of educational ladder, which also translates to the bottom of the social ladder (Bell, 1992)

where they become the exploited group that is needed to perpetuate capitalism (Delgado,

1999).

In the mind of some Americans, the eradication of the Chicana/o cultural identity,

forces open the "path" on which these students can become ideal Americans (San Miguel,

1999). Simultaneously, within this same ideological framework, those students who do

not assimilate themselves onto this path are in most cases, labeled by teachers and

administrators as students who do not care enough about school. These are the children

who are placed in the lower non-academic tracks, or even worse, in the Exceptional

Education system. These are the brown children that are labeled as unworthy, the

children that have been marked as the underclass, and those that our racist capitalist

system will violently exploit.

The binary and libratory opposite of subtractive schooling is authentic caring.

Valenzuela (1999) creates the understanding that effective education is built upon

authentically caring and additive schooling. Authentic caring in education is a form of

education that accentuates a respect and love based on a reciprocal relationship between

teachers and students. As an articulation of authentic caring, Valenzuela cites Noddings

(1984; 1992):

Teachers' ultimate goal of apprehending their students' subjective reality is best

achieved through engrossment in their students' welfare and emotional

displacement. That is, authentically caring teachers are seized by their students

and energy flows towards their projects and needs…Thus, the difference in the way students and their teachers perceive school-based relationships can bear directly on students' potential to achieve (p.62).

However, for Valenzuela, the present-day description of authentic caring within the literature is insufficient. "Students' cultural world and their structural positions must also be fully apprehended, with school-based adults deliberately bringing issues of race, difference, and power into central focus" (p.109). For Valenzuela, authentic caring within an additive schooling context is arguably most productive. The concepts of additive schooling and authentic caring, at least the definitions that evolve in this work, may ultimately be synonymous, because both concepts convey a profound respect and love of community, as well as an enhanced awareness of the Mexican American historical struggle for equal educational opportunity, educational sovereignty (Moll & Ruiz, 2002), or put simply for the ability to have a "say" in the education of their children (Ruiz, 1997). Again, from the perspective of this study, additive schooling and authentic caring originate from the same impulse, to love and respect students as they come to us in their most organic states.

Additive schooling presents an opportunity for Chicanas/os to create an education space in which equal opportunity and a sense of power is achieved. This space is defined by the bicultural experiences of the Chicana/o student, and it is through this bicultural space that Chicanas/os can incorporate themselves into American society (Valenzuela, 1999). It places the community and home-school relations at the center of its educational process. Additive schooling is about the incorporation of the family and the community into the educational process. This type of educational experience uses the language, culture, and

identity of the students, parents and community as assets. These assets create the foundation on which the Chicana/o students' educational experiences will be built. Authentic caring and additive schooling in a Chicana/o context are built upon the love and respect for the Chicana/o community and culture; in addition, an elevated level of understanding and appreciation is given to the Chicanas/os historic struggle for educational equality. The classroom experiences in this study incorporated and demonstrated authentic caring and additive schooling throughout the curriculum, pedagogy, and the student-teacher-parent interactions. It also fostered a reciprocal sense of respect and love between students and teachers/researchers.

The participants in the study commonly spoke about a *weird feeling* they had in their SJEP experiences. When reflecting upon a conversation after a presentation at the 2004 National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies Conference, I asked three of the participants if they recalled that conversation. All three of the participants said "yes." This conversation was focused on this *weird feeling*. I asked the students to think about the conversation and to articulate their thoughts then and now. One student said, "We talked about whether is it was a good or bad *weird."* I asked "have you changed how you felt?" The student replied, "No." Tell me about this weird feeling, One of the students said, "It is just what we said in the presentation, it is weird for us because, you know, you guys like us, you guys hug us, you

guys help us, it feels kind of stupid to say, but you guys love us. We are like a family." Another student jumped in saying, "It does sound stupid, pero si es la verdad." The other two students articulated full concurrence with what was said by the other participants.

The love and respect we demonstrate by building this educational experience around the realities of the students has been greatly appreciated by the students and their parents; above all, it has been appreciated for the environment of love that is fostered by teachers and students alike (Noddings, 1994). This is an environment wherein love and respect is reciprocated, cherished, and perpetuated by all. This type of environment leads to other realities. For instance, on numerous occasions, each and every one of the participants stated that for first time in their educational experiences they realized an educational connection. Each for the first time, felt as though education was something "intrinsic," rather than something that was imposed or forced upon them. This sense of intrinsicness led students to believe that they could negotiate and mediate the inequality and injustice within the schooling process, and also for the first time, each had the desire to seek out new and future educational opportunities. As will be stated later, for many of these students, hope for the first time was a reality.

Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy is a process that requires educators to look critically at issues of power, specifically challenging and questioning the influential values, beliefs, and interests that represent the realities of only a handful of people in American society (Moss, 2001). CP also makes a concrete connection between macro-societal constructs that affect schools (Wink, 1997). When deconstructing macro and micro societal forces, several components of critical pedagogy are usually addressed, namely: cultural politics, economics, historicity of knowledge, dialectical theory, praxis, ideology, hegemony, critical discourse, dialogue, and conscientization (Darder, 1991).

Critical pedagogy is a process of engaging, negotiating and transforming the relationship that exists among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge,

institution and structure of schooling and the social and material structures within the community and the nation state (McLaren, 2003a). Moreover, Giroux (1983) states that critical pedagogy can be defined as "an entry point in the contradictory nature of schooling, a chance to force it toward creating conditions for a new public sphere"(p. 116). Our praxis within critical pedagogy frameworks has helped me fully understand how, "…pedagogy functions as a cultural practice to produce rather than merely transmit knowledge…" (Giroux, 1992, p. 98)

With respect to the SJEP, challenging power relations is central to its mission and central to the ideological foundation of critical pedagogy (Freire, 1994). Both SJEP and critical pedagogy are based on an analysis and critique of structural and cultural power, as well as the perpetuation of a racist social/political order. With these notions in mind, critical pedagogy and the SJEP serve the purpose of gaining a deeper understanding of how the unjust present-day power relations can be challenged and transformed.

Furthermore, from critical pedagogy this study has taken some of the tools needed to help students create an emancipatory educational experience. Among these tools have been problematization, true words, and the tri-dimensionalization of reality. Also, critical pedagogy calls upon educators to engage in praxis that works towards critical transformation within schools and the community (Parker & Stovall, 2004). Both true words and the tri-dimensionalizing of time are centered within praxis, and have been selected because of the redemptive powers they have fostered within our youth. Through the exercise of true words, the SJEP students have been able to tri-dimensionalize their realities. The students have gone from a state of uni-dimensionalism, wherein nihilism

prevails to a state of tri-dimensionalism wherein hope prevails and dreams of tomorrow are had for the first time.

Despite the powerful tools offered by critical pedagogy, some of the leading critical theorists (Darder and Torres, 2003; Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; Lynn, 2004; McLaren, 2000; Parker & Stovall, 2004; Solórzano & Smith – Maddox, 2002) within the field of liberatory education are advocating for the creation of new paradigms that can effectively answer the questions of today and that can transcend the rearticulation of the liberatory paradigm. From McLaren's (2000) perspective, there is a great need to transcend the current state of critical pedagogy, which he believes has reached its radical limits. He says, "Critical pedagogy has become in recent years so completely pyschologized, so liberally humanized …that its current relationship to broader liberation struggles seems severely attenuated, if not fatally terminated" (p. 97).

Some extremely valuable contributions have been made by those working within critical race theory in education and critical pedagogy. The body of this work has articulated and created a deeper understand of the intersectionality of race and critical pedagogy. Especially for American educators, the convergence of theories is critical for educators who are seeking to help guide their students down on the path of emancipatory education. However, these contributions address gaps within the literature that differ from the gap that this study intends to address. For example: Cahill's (2004) focus is on creating a research methodology out of collaboration between critical pedagogy, CRT, and feminist inquiry; Lynn (2004) focuses on how CRT and critical pedagogy can be used to better inform the praxis of Black educators, and the perspective from which he analyzes and interprets his findings relies upon an Afrocentric frame of reference. Parker and Stovall

(2004) seek to address needs within teacher education programs, and they place a strong emphasis upon the African American racial reality. Parker and Stovall do take the time to include LatCrit in their analysis, and like this study, their intent is to change what is offered within most present-day teacher education programs. However, their primary focus is the Afrocentric reality. Smith–Maddox & Solórzano, (2002) recommend that teacher education programs use critical race theory with critical pedagogy as a new instructional and pedagogical methodology. As stated in reference to Parker and Stovall (2004), the intention of this study is to better prepare teachers and to better inform teacher education programs without any real implications towards on the ground / in the classroom praxis.

Through this investigation, I hope to pick up where these other studies have left off. The voices of Chicana/o students will be central, and racism will be placed at the core of the research and the analysis. Through the voices of youth, this study could potentially inform Chicana/o students' classroom experiences. Lastly, this study seeks to honor the words of Paulo Freire (from a discussion with Donaldo Macedo):

> I don't want to be imported or exported. It is impossible to export pedagogical practices without reinventing them. Please tell your American educators not to import me. Ask them to re-create and rewrite my ideas (xi, 1998).

In honoring Paulo Freire, this study is a humble attempt to reinvent and re-write the ideas he has left for us to use as tools of transformation.

Conclusion

In an era when almost all formalized forms of racism have been reduced or eliminated, and, with the exception of some marginal groups, very few people openly

declare themselves as racists, at least on the philosophical or doctrinaire level, it must be understood that racism remains a social reality. We must continue to seek new ways to overcome this reality.

This study is forwarded with the understanding of the persuasive power an ideology holds. I am also aware of how constructed ideologies emerge from relations of institutions and individuals with the need to reserve the structure of power relations (Memmi, 2000). Moreover, I understand how ideology shapes political action, legal precedent and discourse (Delgado, 2005; Nunn, 1999; Davis 1999); and how ideology creates powerful common-sense meanings. These common-sense meanings are the mechanism through so much racism is created and legitimized (Gilborn, 2006; Hall 1980). Because of its persuasive capacity ideology has the power to define a set of ideas that can then be used to explain historical trends (Arendt, 2004). As in the case of this study, ideology does not appear spontaneously; rather, it comes to fruition and is maintained according to social and/or political desires or is necessity (Arendt, 2004). The essence of this section and this study in general is to revisit the ideologies that impact the educational experiences of Chicana/o students, with the intent of advancing a new educational theory that can act as a political weapon (Arendt, 2004) that benefits those that have historically been left behind by the American educational system.

CHAPTER THREE

Design and Methodology

The objective in this study is to explore the educational experiences of Chicana/o students through their voices. These students attended a Westside high school in LaTusa, a community in the Southwestern United States. The students in this study, like many others in the United States would be considered unsuccessful as gauged by traditional indicators i.e. standardized test scores, grade point average, and specific course enrollment. Furthermore, Chicanas/os in Southwest Unified School District (SUSD) have historically and presently experienced significantly less academic success than their Anglo counterparts. With this reality in mind, the three questions guiding this study were: (a) Do Chicana/o students believe that racism has influenced their educational experiences? (b)If so, what do they think can be done to counter the educational racism they face on a daily basis? (c) What influence does an education model that merges critical race theory, critical pedagogy and authentic caring have upon the educational experience of marginalized Chicana/o students?

I had the opportunity to analyze and contextualize the counter-narratives (Delgado & Stefancic, 1993) or counter-stories (Delgado, 1989) of these Chicana/o students through informal interviews, two open-ended focus group interviews, one open-ended interview that was conducted in-between the focus group interviews. The Chicana/o counter narrative/story was also constructed through the evaluation of the data gathered by researchers from the SJEP.

Through the series of interviews and the evaluation of the SJEP, I was also able to construct detailed synopsis of the realities and perceptions of these students. These

synopses when placed together create a deep and clear picture of the educational reality these youth faced. This reality has been used to answer the questions that guide this study. Furthermore, the answers from this study construct stories that counter the stories of the status quo that perpetuates inequality and injustices. Critical race theorists refer to these stories as "counter-narratives" (Delgado, 1989 &1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001b; 2002). These counter-narratives are used within CCI and the SJEP to recontextualize and rearticulate the epistemology and intellectual agenda that impacts the educational experiences of Chicana/o students.

The doctrines of critical race theory and critical pedagogy are the theoretical frameworks that create the lens through which I examine the questions of this study. It is critical to note that I view the world with the vision that is created by the convergence of these theoretical frameworks. It is through the combined and simultaneous actions of both theoretical frames that experiences and voices of Chicana/o students can be truly seen, heard and valued.

Within this chapter, I will describe the design of this study, and I will also offer a rationale for the necessity to counter the majoritarian story that legitimizes the Anglo story as the American story. Equally important, the use of critical race theory qualitative research methodology presents me and other researchers with the opportunity to counter the majoritarian story, and in fact, this type of research exposes the lie that is white supremacy (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002b; Henry, 1998).

<div align="center">The Approach of the Study</div>

My orientation towards a critical race theory qualitative research methodology was inspired by the words of Gloria Anzaldua:

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 and sexual

difference are intertwined with the narrative and poetic element 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 (1990, p. xxv-

xxvi).

Anzaldua (1990) challenges critical researchers to push the envelope into a space wherein

new theories and new methods are created with the objective of enhancing understanding

of those silenced by society (Auerbach, 2002; Hart, 2006; Langhout, 2005; Novinger &

Compton – Lilly, 2005). Solórzano and Yosso (2002) argue that new methods are needed

to answer the questions created by new theories such as critical race theory. Therefore,

the application of critical race theory then requires a critical race methodology. CRT

methodology has afforded me the opportunity to enter into this research project with the

intent of transforming the understanding of the educational experiences of Chicana/o

students. This transformation legitimizes and centers the voices that challenge the

oppressor group's hegemony.

One of the primary objectives of this paper is to contribute to the manufacturing

and nurturing of educational revolution. I believe that I and other critical researchers can

make this type of contribution if we have the courage and the *cultural intuition* (Delgado

Bernal, 1998) to heed the words of Anzaldua (1990) and Solórzano and Yosso (2002), for

as Kuhn (1996) states, "new concepts will not be forthcoming if historical data continues to be sought and scrutinized mainly to answer questions posed by the unhistorical stereotype drawn from science texts. (p.2)" It is critical that new questions and new lenses guide us in our search for greater inclusion and greater academic outcomes for Chicana/o students.

The stories of the students are central to this study, so a critical race theory qualitative research methodology is the most relevant approach. According to Solórzano and Yosso (2002), critical race methodology is theoretically grounded research that foregrounds racism and race in all aspects of research, while simultaneously recognizing the insectionality of class and gender upon social, cultural and historical experiences of students of color. Furthermore, it shifts away from the traditional research paradigms and theories that have been used to perpetuate the narrowly viewed stories of students of color; this methodology, because of its focus upon the experiences of students of color and its liberatory intentions, offers liberatory and transformative solutions to oppression that takes place in the educational experiences of Chicana/o students.

Furthermore, as critical researchers seek to aid in the transformation of the realities of the oppressed within our society, it is critical that we center these efforts upon the voices of those we are serving. Failure to respect and recognize the world of those we are serving would simply place us in the role of the oppressor. The centering of the voices of the Chicana/o students we serve is one of the first steps towards transformation and liberation. Therefore, it is in this space and through these voices that we can accomplish at least two things: 1) gain the most authentic and organic data; and 2) aid in the empowerment of the voices of those who have carried the greatest burden of the

American public school system.

The convergence of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire (1994) and critical race theory gave me the vision with which to approach this study. The reading of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was a deeply spiritual experience. It was through the reading of this book that I developed the belief that educators possess god-like qualities, in that we have the ability to either create or destroy. Our power to create is found in our capacity to nurture and foster new and emancipated epistemology, ontology, and consciousness, especially the epistemology, ontology, and consciousness that leads to the recontextualization of a student's social reality. The destruction that we do is done through the perpetuation of the oppressor group's epistemology and consciousness. The students in this study have defined this epistemology and consciousness as being built upon a sense of inferiority, fear, and hopelessness. Most often, all that is created from the oppressor group's epistemology and consciousness is the perpetuation and rearticulation of itself. However, these same students have articulated that in their recontextualized ontology, a different reality is created regarding them and what is possible within their world.

Each of the students in this study articulates their belief that the development of a recontextualized way of knowing and thinking helped them to engage more effectively with the world. Each of the students believes that he or she can and does contribute positively to society; and each believes that he or she has the capacity to change his or her present-day and future reality. For the unconscious or dysconscious, these recontextualizations may seem insignificant, but for students who were caught in the state of hopelessness and despair, these transformations have led to a new state of hope and

critical consciousness. The beauty of this state is the students' understanding that it is from these conditions that they can truly create new truths for themselves.

<div align="center">Participant Selection</div>

The students in this study took part in an educational experiment entitled the Social Justice Education Project (SJEP). The project is sponsored by a university in the southwest and SUSD. The Social Justice Education Project is the convergence of a social justice curriculum that has a parallel focuses on critical pedagogy, critical race theory, and authentic caring.

This on-going project is broken into two-year cohorts; in the first year – the students develop and engage a curriculum that is culturally, socially and historically relevant with the concepts of race and racism used as the primary lens of inquiry and understanding. During the course of year – one, students are led through many exercises that require them contextualize and problem-pose their realities through a lens that is created by a deeper understanding of their cultural, historical and social realities. At the end of year – one the students have earned their required United States History credit. It is important to note that curriculum used in year one is developed in a manner that is in complete alignment with the state's U.S. History Standards.

In year – two, the students enroll in a United States Government / Ethnic Studies Perspectives course. This course satisfies the United State States Government graduation requirement. Again, the curriculum used in this course is developed in complete alignment with the state's United State States Government Standards. Furthermore, Loviando Lozano (the teacher of record for the SJEP courses at Controlado) and I had the

privilege of developing a curriculum from the perspective of the themes and social realities offered by the students in year one.

The participants in this study were members of the SJEP's first cohort. They were between the ages of 16-17 at the beginning of the SJEP's first year, and the membership was made up of 17 students: 16 Chicanas/os and one Tohono O'Odham student. Each of the students in the project had been labeled "at-risk," and many had already dropped out or were on the verge of dropping out at the start of the project. With the exception of two students, each of the students was self-selected. In fact, as late as three days before the start of school in August of 2002 the project co-coordinators were not sure whether or not the course would be offered.

For the most part, participation in the SJEP was based upon the desire of the student – participants. The same was the case for this study, wherein the primary participation variable was the participants' desire to elaborate upon their educational experiences before, during, and after the SJEP. The secondary participation variable was dependent upon each participant's availability. This was difficult, given the fact that most of the participants were trying to manage life as students, while simultaneously working full-time. Others had left town to pursue education or start lives in other places, and/or were doing all they could to just face life. The other variable that made participation difficult was my work schedule. The 70 -80 hours per week demands of my position in Southwest Unified School District made it difficult to create a schedule that accommodated the participants.

Furthermore, my personal standard for participation created limitations. I did not want any student to feel compelled to participate in the study. If a potential participant

had any reservations, I respectfully did not pursue their involvement. I knew that if I put pressure upon these students, each and every one of them would comply with my wishes and for many of them, juggling college, work, and/or life was already difficult enough.

This was both easy and difficult for me. It was easy because I knew I had to respect the decisions of those who would not or could not participate, especially knowing their added burdens and responsibilities; to take time away from work and/or school was not something that I was willing to do, above all because I knew and understood their realities. At the same time, I realize that we have lost information, and true knowledge, that would have come from the true authorities, the students! I am also aware that we need the voices of these authorities because it is their words and voices that will help us transform our epistemology and ontology; and establish the counter – hegemony (that we will introduce as a means of creating and recreating knowledge and the hegemony of the time and the future).

In the effort to create and recreate knowledge and affect present–day and futuristic hegemony, the composition of participants in this study was diverse in terms of gender, length of time in the United States, place of birth, and level of academic success (based upon the aforementioned traditional forms of measurement). Please note that pseudonyms are used for the participants in the study and their sites as a means of maintaining confidentiality.

<div align="center">The Setting</div>

The setting of this study is a high school that I will call Controlado High School. Controlado is located in the southwestern section of the United States in a city that I will call LaTusa. Chicanos make up 29.3% of LaTusa's population, while Anglos make up

61.5% of the population (Pima Association of Governments, June 1, 2006). Controlado is

located in urban southwest section of LaTusa, which is surrounded by several Chicano

neighborhoods. The socioeconomic status for many Chicano families in the areas served

by Controlado is among the lowest in the greater LaTusa metropolitan area.   The

Chicana\o student population at Controlado is 63.2% and 55.3% of the students at

Controlado receive free lunch, which is more than 20% higher than the district average of

35.2%. Moreover, in regards to academic performance, Controlado has a high

concentration of low-achieving Chicano students.

A cohort comparison of Controlado's class of 2006 demonstrates a significant

reduction in its Chicana\o enrollment. Over the span of four academic years (2002 –

2003 to 2005 – 2006), SUSD's Chicana/o student enrollment fell from 2135 to 1254. This

was a decline of 881 students, representing a 42% loss of Chicana/o enrollment. During

the same span of time, the Anglo enrollment declined by 28%. This translates to

Chicana/o loss of enrollment that is 50% greater than that of Anglos. Furthermore, this is

not an anomaly; the Controlado Chicana\o classes of 2000, 2001 and 2002 had 52%, 49%

and 60% losses in enrollment.

In an analysis of advancement placement courses offered by SUSD and

Controlado, Solórzano and Ornelas' (2002) Advancement Placement Parity Index (APPI)

has been applied. This index measures the level of the school's and the district's college-

going culture by dividing the overall student enrollment by the number of advanced

placement courses offered. In 2005 – 2006, Controlado APPI was 217, at the bottom of

all SUSD high schools. In comparison, the school with the best APPI was DG High, the

only college preparatory school in the district; SUSD's academic flagship had an APPI of

9.9 This means that Controlado had one advance placement course for every 217 students; whereas, DG High had one advanced placement course for every 9.9 students.
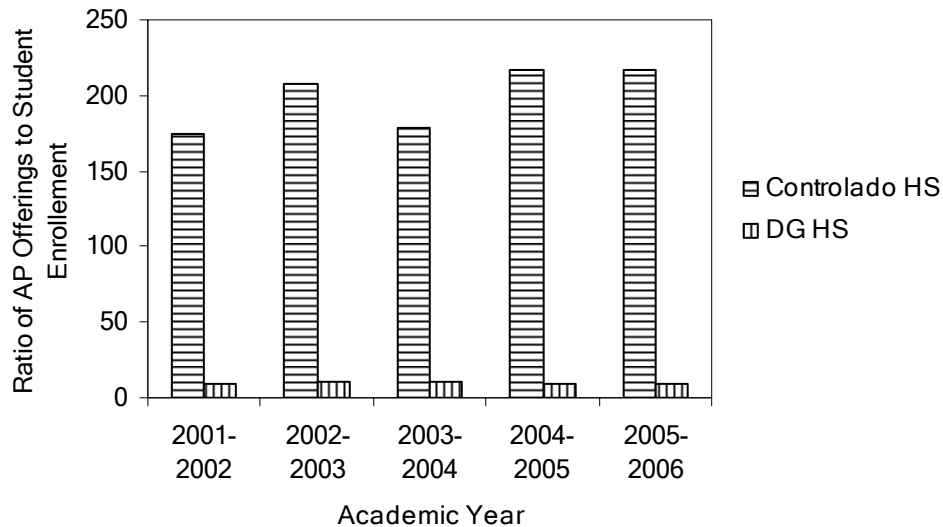
Figure 10. Controlado High and DG High APPI Comparison

[30]Adapted from data from SUSD's Accountability and Research Department

Solórzano and Ornelas argue that the unequal access to advanced placement course places the underserved student at a distinct disadvantage with regard to both college admission and admission to the most selective universities.

The problem herein is SUSD's and Controlado's perpetuation of an educational experience for Chicanas/os that is both inadequate and unequal (Donato, Menchaca & Valencia, 2002; Solórzano & Solórzano, 1995; Solórzano & Yosso, 2000; Valenzuela, 1999). These problems and gaps in access and outcomes within SUSD are rearticulations of the systematic neo-racism that grossly undercuts the potential and encumbers the life chances of Chicano students and other students of color (see Bonillas – Silva, 2005). These problems and gaps born out of injustice and inequality constitute a rearticulation of

racism or a *"new racism"*[31] (Bonillas – Silva, 2005) and form a state of Dysconscious Racism.[32]

The structural makeup of SUSD is 76 elementary schools, 24 middle schools, 12 high schools, 12 alternative schools and two exceptional education schools. SUSD was established in 1867, and today it is the second largest school district in the state. In September of 1978, SUSD was placed under a federal desegregation order, which to date has not been lifted. Currently, the district is trying to demonstrate that it has complied with requirements of the desegregation order by removing all vestiges of racism. The district's attorneys have vehemently argued that advances have been made within the district as they pertain to African American and Mexican American children. The question that must be asked is in comparison to what? It is in comparison to the advances made by whites or in comparison to the subordinated and subjugated status from which students of color started and from where they have not moved too far?

Moreover, what the district does not understand or at least what the district's attorneys have been disinclined to acknowledge is that the most important vestige of this subordinated and subjugated status is the achievement gap. The question that is the most critical is how the district could have reached a state of transformation when in fact the paradigm through which they searched and searching is one of the status quo. There have been very few organic intellectuals sitting at the table when decisions have been made, and even when those organic intellectuals have been present, their voices of been marginalized by traditional intellectuals. The unfortunate reality of this 38-year quest is that rather than truly trying to remedy the problem and therein create a truly egalitarian state for African American and Mexican American children, the district has focused most

of its attention on the impact their actions would have on Anglos within the system (see

Delgado 1991 & 1995). What people fail to realize is that if equality is to come to

fruition, Whites will have to bare the reality of adverse impact. Moreover, this adverse

impact is not reverse discrimination, as most Whites like to claim.

The Chicano community within SUSD is very active. It places great emphasis on

creating a space in which its voice could be heard by those within the school district.

After 29 years of struggle, the community finally won the battle for Chicano Studies

within the district. The key element within this victory was the creation of the Hispanic

Studies Department. The focus of the department was centered upon meeting the

academic needs of Mexicano / Chicano students through the use of culturally and

historically relevant curriculum. In 2003, the voice of the Chicano community was heard

once again when the SUSD school board voted unanimously to change the title of the

department from Hispanic Studies to the community-requested name, Mexican American

/ Raza Studies. The switch from Hispanic to Mexican American / Raza Studies was done

for a number of reasons: "Hispanic" does not bare any cultural and/or historical value, it

is crucial to acknowledge the vast historical contributions made by Mexicanos / Chicanos

in the establishment and advancement of the district; the Mexican American community

is the largest within the district, and the word, Raza is acknowledgement of our

indigenous culture and history, and it is used inclusively as means of connecting all

Chicano communities within the district.

The Mexican American / Raza Studies Department has been extremely effective

in its mission of positively impacting the academic achievement levels of the students

within its programs. In the fall of 2005, on the state-mandated high stakes exit examines,

the students within the Mexican American / Raza Studies Department programs, on average, improved 250 percent more than their classmates in reading, 380 percent more in writing and 400 percent more in math. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of these students, when surveyed, said that their participation in the Mexican American/ Raza Studies courses has led to the improvement of their reading and writing skills; the vast majority of them also say that they go home and talk to a parent or an adult about what they learned and do their homework to ensure that they are able to participate the next day.

Once again, the department's success is due in large part to the Chicano community and its Chicana/o students. In the summer of 2002, both students and community members started picketing governing board meetings, advocating for a $250,000 budget increase for the department which was unanimously granted in July of 2002. This increase allowed the Mexican American/ Raza Studies Department to further spread its model throughout the district.

The department leadership also engaged in a few actions that played a large role in its success. First, it shifted the focus of the teacher institute from solely providing historical content to better preparing teachers to engage students of color. Greater emphasis was placed upon curriculum, pedagogy and the notions of cultural relevance and authentic caring. Second, the department organized a group of teachers, it believed shared the same transformative vision and mission as the department. This group meets on a regular basis to dialog, reflect and reinvent their traditional roles and relationships with students. Third, the Department created what it refers to as, *Ce-Ollin* Parent *Encuentros*, wherein parents, teachers and students get together outside of the school day

to transform their understanding of the traditional school experience and create a space where they can stand together. Fourth, it created a community advisory board to provide direction and political protection. Each of these pieces has been essential to the nurturing of the department.

The Mexican American / Raza Studies Department as a result of the strength of its community advisory board and its partnership with the university, was able to take these positive steps in spite of the lack of support it received from the superintendent, central office administration, and most site administrators. The department was hindered by the fact that despite its budget increase it did not control its budget; from the time of its inception money from the department's budget was used as a "cash cow," which was the case well into the 2004 school year. The department entered into financial agreements and despite the department making the central office administrator in control of the agreement the need follow through by the administrator did not take place. When accountability for the agreement was place on the table the department would left hanging in the wind all by its lonesome. The superintendent by making it known that he wanted to eradicate the department severely hindered the department's ability to build to capacity. Another barrier created by the superintendent was his stated desire to rid the department of its leadership because of its "radical" and "militant" approaches, preferring instead, leadership that would not disrupt the status quo. The impetus behind this lack of support was the surreptitious district reorganization that removed the department's lone, central office advocate and placed her in a marginalized position.

This reorganization ignited the Mexicano / Chicano and the African American communities because they lost their strongest supporters in the upper-level central office

administration. Those removed were two Mexican American area superintendents, the

Mexican American associate superintendent, and an African American area

superintendent (the highest ranking African American in the district). These were the

only top level official impacted by the reorganization, and it is important to note that

initially each was replaced by a white person. The Mexican American community

responded with e-mails and phone calls to board members, emphasizing announcing that

they would pursue recall efforts if the governing board approved the reorganization. At

the special governing board meeting that was scheduled specifically to address the

reorganization there was well over 400 people from throughout the district (primarily

Mexicanos / Chicanos) to protest the reorganization. Despite these efforts, however the

reorganization was approved by a narrow 3-2 margin. From that point, March 2003, until

April 2004, when the superintendent resigned after heavy community and governing

board scrutiny, the department and the Social Justice Education Project operated on a

day-to-day basis, unsure of its status within the district.

<div style="text-align:center">Data Collection</div>

This critical race theory qualitative research study was conducted over the course

of two years, starting in the Fall Semester of 2002. A variety of data collection methods

were used, including informal interviews (unrecorded), two open-ended focus group

interviews, one open-ended interviews that was conducted in-between the focus group

interviews, field notes, personal poetry and surveys.

The research approach within this study was based upon critical race theory

qualitative research methods that generate data from participant observations,

unstructured interviews with open-ended questions and an unstructured focus group

interviews with open-ended questions. This methodology follows the lead offered by proponents of CRT, wherein the words of people of color are viewed as bringing for the new knowledge. Furthermore, these voices are seen as vehicles through which basic material conditions can be examined. In other words, critical race ethnography seeks to engage the multiple ontological categories that give meaning to lived experiences and that provide a counter-narrative for these lived experiences.

The critical race qualitative research study incorporates the traditional methods of research. Field research is conducted at strategic sites, such as the school. It advocates for: numerous site visits to observe and record students' actions, practices, and social relationships through extensive and detailed field notes and unstructured interviews with open-ended questions, and student focus groups. With respect to this study, I visited the classroom at least twice a week and at times four times a week for no less than one hour per visit for two full school years. At times, I would attend class and later in the day return for student meetings. In other cases, I attend student – parent meetings (Ce Ollin parent encuentros explained in chapter eight), family functions, project functions, or simply one-on-one meetings with students. At its essence, the methodological framework within this critical race qualitative research study is the grounded theory (Strauss 1967). A 'grounded,' qualitative approach is one involving close observation and detailed documentation of Chicano students' experiences within schools; it uncovers the day-to-day socio-educational processes shaping their subjectivities, including perspectives about education and their racial identities.

Furthermore, the focus group interview gave me the opportunity to elicit from the participants deep and profound perception regarding their educational experiences and

how racist discourse has impacted them and their educational experiences. The depth created by this type of process is often less accessible than other methods (Delgado-Bernal, 1998). As the facilitator of the focus group interviews, I was able to bring with me deeper sense of theoretical sensitivity (Straus and Corbin, 1990) and cultural intuition (Delgado-Bernal, 1998). Both of these concepts acknowledge the importance of having a certain degree of background knowledge that allows the researcher to find deeper meaning from the data collected.

Furthermore, critical race qualitative research transcend other methodologies because of its focus on the impact and implications of racism (Duncan, 2005), the centering of marginalized voices (Duncan 2005; Pizarro, 1999), and the engagement of research as a tool of survival (Duncan 2005; Pizarro, 1999). Critical race qualitative research affords me, other critical researchers, and *compañeros* within the Chicano/ Mexican Community the opportunity to rethink and reconstruct traditional school policies and practices. This process allowed me to focus upon the insight of those who experience the heaviest burden of educational injustice. CRT and its methodology made, what was once opaque, perfectly lucid, by addressing educational racism from the vantage point of the children who were the products of its intent.

Programmatic Evaluation and Archival Documentation of the Social Justice Education

Project

This study involved a programmatic evaluation and an archival documentation of the SJEP. The foci of this data were student surveys, test scores, informal conversations with SJEP students, and informal conversations with CCI teachers. The evaluations are important because they help create a context through which to establish triangulation.

Interviews

For this study I structured interviews with open-ended questions and an unstructured focus group interviews with open-ended questions. After having had many conversations with students during nearly two years in the project, I decided to approach the interviews from three perspectives: 1. Informal conversations I had with the students, and the reflection notes I made regarding those conversations; 2. The open-ended focus group discussions, based upon questions designed to gain a deeper sense of students' perceptions regarding the impact of racism upon their educational experiences, the resolutions they would offer to eradicate racism within schools, and their perceptions of theories that were implemented into the curriculum during the project; and 3. A semi-structured in-depth interview with each student, in which I took their words to create an individual theme, and I started each question from the point of this theme. I chose two focus group interviews and placed them at the beginning and at the end of this process because I felt that these students' voices were strongest when they were together. It was then that their individualities shone through, while simultaneously fitting into the collective, forming a sense of solidarity and purpose.

Moreover, because of the importance of the topics we covered, I wanted to ensure that each of the students had the opportunity to fully voice him or herself, and that these voices would be carried forward. The topics range from the experiences of their families to their experiences in our community to their experiences in schools. The make-up of this group is addressed in the participant selection of this chapter. Briefly, participation within this study was based on availability and the desire to offer input regarding their educational experiences and the impact racism had on those experiences.

The group discussion offered what I had anticipated it would. The discussion was authentic and organic; deeper understanding and the advancement of knowledge took place as we were sitting together. The students built on the words and ideas of their peers, they debated points, and in general they come to consensus. Their individual voices were strong, but their collective voice was stronger.

The group discussion was tape recorded in order to ensure authenticity and accuracy. Moreover, it gave the opportunity to review the detail within the discussion, which enabled me to elicit the depth and the scope of the student voices. The individual interviews were conducted for to gain a deeper understanding of what individual students have experienced, and they gave students the opportunity to have their stories be the sole focus of this process. These interviews took place after the group discussions and they were scheduled according to the availability of the students. This forced me to prolong the timeframe of the process, but I did not want to move forward without having each student articulate their perceptions.

<div align="center">Community Conversations</div>

Over the course of the study, I had two principle roles that helped me contextualize the ecology (Vigil, 2002) of the students within the study. First, my full-time job gives me the opportunity and privilege to serve Chicana/o student students and their parents and the Chicano community in general. In providing my service, there are lots of opportunities to dialogue. I hear what community members like about our schools, what they don't like about our schools, and how they are treated by central office, site administration, teachers, bus drivers; monitors, etc. Another critical facet of this opportunity is the parents' and students' willingness to share their perceptions with me.

The second role is that of a grassroots political advocate. Over the last eleven years I have spent many weekends during campaign season, walking door-to-door in the Southside and Southwest barrios. Most of the conversations do not start with the issue of education, but as an educator I often find a way to move discussion in that direction. In this role I have had hundreds of opportunities to listen to and dialogue with Raza in the barrios. The strongest common thread that exists from the hundreds of conversation I have had with community members is the belief that schools are still doing a disservice to our children. The vast majority of people articulate the belief that things are not better for Chicana/o students. One Abuelita from Barrio Hollywood summed it up by saying, "No queremos progreso, queremos igualdad."

What I find incredible is the consistent simple, common sense solutions that were offered by people considered on the margins of society. At their core is the desire to be treated as human beings. One middle-aged man, when asked what would make our schools better answered, "Don't give me a fuckin thing! Just do not treat me like a god damn dog. No, you know how some of those white people treat their dogs like their children or they treat them like their people? Fuck, treat me like that, like I am one of your children, treat me like I am human or at least, treat like one those fuckin dogs that they treat like family."

<center>Surveys</center>

The end of the 2004 school year also meant the end of the SJEP (as they knew it) for many of the students. Two weeks before the end, each of the students within the project participated in a survey regarding the impact the project had on him or her. The

sample includes 14 students of Mexicano / Chicana/o decent, one student of Puerto Rican

decent, and one of Tohono O'Odham decent. There are 11 females and five males.

Field Notes

Field notes are another data collecting method I used in this study. After being in

the field or after an interview session, I spent some time reflecting on the experience.

After this reflection time I would sit-down at the computer and give words to those

reflections. As I mentioned in the interview portion of this section, due to the nature of

the project and my job, I had many opportunities to engage in informal dialogue with the

students. Many of the topics of these dialogues where questions that came from my

reflections; moreover, these dialogues where often deep and profound in nature. Topics

ranged from family issues to life issues to school issues etc. At times students were a bit

taken aback by some of my questions. Many times, a question I had for one student led to

me asking the class the same question. This often led to organic and authentic dialogue

regarding the lived perception of the SJEP students. In addition, these questions and

dialogues gave me the opportunity to deeper understanding of how these students

negotiated and mediated their educational and life experiences.

Ensuring Credibility

As a means of ensuring credibility as a qualitative researcher, I took a number of

steps suggested by Ely (1991): member checking, triangulation, and prolonged

engagement in the field. Peer debriefing is a process wherein researchers ask their peers

to look at their work and/or discuss their work as a means of identifying bias within the

work product (Carspecken, 1996). This was difficult for me primarily because I am non-

traditional student, and because I often work late at my full-time job, which is off-

campus. Therefore, it is difficult to say that I actually engaged in peer debriefing. However, I had the luxury and privilege of having conferring with my co-chair, Dr. Julio Cammarota. I would often bounce my thoughts off Dr. Cammarota, and he, in most cases, was willing to offer feedback and direction. Another extension of this process was the opportunity to share some of my findings with the redemptive remembering teacher team, all of whom are also on the path towards critically compassionate intellectualism. This group provided incredibly valuable feedback, and their support was never wavered.

Triangulation occurs at the point when separate pieces of data gathered by different methods or different points in time converge (Ely, 1991). In this study triangulation occurred through the use of the in-depth individual and focus group interviews; group and individual discussions with students and teachers and student surveys; and high stake test data.

In regards to time in the field, I had the opportunity to spend two-years with the students in the Social Justice Education Project. This gave me a great deal of time to observe, listen to, dialogue with, counsel, and advocate for these young people.

Organization and Analysis of the Data

As I entered the data analysis phases of this study, I wanted to ensure that I could articulate and represent the depth, complexity and dynamic nature of the experiences these Chicana/o students encounter in their educational realities. Moreover, I felt compelled to demonstrate the depth of the voices of the students; in fact, we very well may have entered the bottom of the well in order to bring these voices forward. Nevertheless, it is critical that we recognize the riches that exist at the bottom of society's well (Matsuda, 1987; Yosso, 2005). I therefore employed the example used by Marvin

Lynn (2001) in his dissertation, wherein he cited Lightfoot and Hoffman Davis (1997), who articulate the need to clearly define the emergent themes, by meticulously, intense and repetitive review of each transcript (at least four times).

Following Lynn's (2001) example, in the first read I thoroughly reviewed: all the interview transcripts from the in-depth individual interviews and the group discussions, notes from the interviews, notes from the informal conversations, and the observation field notes. As I read, I highlighted key elements of the students' stories and/or words that seemed to define their experiences regarding racism in their educational lives. In many cases, I made notes to myself when the words of the students fell into a specific area within the framework of this study or when they connected to literature. The next step within this first phase was to draft an impressionistic record of each transcript. Lynn (2001) states that Lightfoot and Hoffman Davis (1997) suggest that an impressionistic record be created after each interview; moreover, I, like Lynn (2001), found this process extremely valuable in that it gave me the opportunity to record my thoughts and critically highlight pieces of the data.

Also as Lynn (2001) suggests, after each impressionistic record I drafted an analytical record in which I identified the overall themes and issues that began to emerge. Before entering the second read, I took the information from this process and created a preliminary analytical category scheme. The rationale herein was to establish whether or not these themes would hold up through the next phase of intense scrutiny. The intent of the second read was to fill the gaps within the initial impressionistic record; in essence, it was an effort to concisely summarize the critical findings within the interviews and the observations.

Throughout the review, I looked for repetitive words and thoughts to organize the data according to spheres addressed. I coded the data along these spheres, while maintaining a scope that would allow me to identify new spheres.

In the third read, again much like Lynn (2001), I started the creation of life portraits for each student. In this read I tried to create themes that reflected the intersections of racism, education and life experiences of the students. I also used the codes established from the interviews as a template. In the last step of this read, I started searching for and developing the larger overall themes that best encompassed the students' experiences.

As I enter the final description within this process, it is critical to note that each step thus far was guided by Latino Critical Race Theory. This was done to ensure that I would able reconstruct the lives of these students in a manner that would be reveal a true reflection of the counterstories of their lives, stories that challenge and decenter the master narrative.

In this fourth and final analysis, I reread the transcripts, combed through the impressionistic records, and thoroughly examined the student portraits to find themes that aligned themselves with the objective of uncovering the impact racism has had upon their educational experiences. Latino Critical Race Theory gave me the vision needed to clearly see the subjection to subordination, oppression, and racism that they expressed.

After this step I set-up meetings with each student so that we could evaluate together what I had constructed. This gave us the opportunity to construct an accurate portrayal of their voices and their realities. Again, it was their participation that moved the study forward.

CHAPTER FOUR

Los Estudiantes: Introduction

From the perspective of students in this study, the education system does not appear to value Chicanas/os. It does not provide these children with the resources and experiences necessary to attain academic, economic and life outcomes that are equal to those of their white counterparts (Donato, Menchaca & Valencia, 2002; Duncan, 2005; Valenzuela, 1999). The Social Justice Education Project (SJEP) was created with the intent of countering the educational realities faced by Chicanas/os at Controlado High School. The (SJEP) combines a social justice/critical race theory curriculum (Yosso, 2002) based upon critical pedagogy, critical race theory, cultural relevancy (Menchaca, 2001) and an authentic caring approach (Valenzuela, 1999) as the educational framework it would offer the students in the project.

This on-going project takes place over a two-year period. During year one the students engage in and develop a curriculum that is culturally, socially and historically relevant, with issues of race and racism at its center. During the course of this year students one led through many exercise that help the students contextualize and problem-pose their realities through a lens that is created by the tri-dimensional understanding of their cultural, historical and social realities.

The project is currently working with its fifth cohort of students. The first cohort graduated in 2004, and it was made up of 17 students: 16 Chicanas/os and one Tohono O'Odham student. Nearly all of the students in the project had been labeled "at-risk", and many had already dropped out or were on the verge of dropping out at the start of the project. The students in this study were all members of the SJEP's first cohort. The

succeeding cohorts were made up primarily of Chicana/o students, but in these subsequent cohorts had Anglo, African American and Native American representation. In the fall of 2005, the Mexican American / Raza Studies Department started collecting data for the students who were participants in its SJEP. Similar to the first cohort, many of the students in the ensuing cohorts came to as some of the most marginalized students in the SUSD system. Despite this reality, the students in successive cohorts, like the students from the first cohort experienced an upsurge in their academic outcomes. The students in all SJEP cohorts attribute the rise in their academic outcomes to their development of an academic identity. The academic outcomes for SJEP participants will be highlighted in chapter 10 of this study.

The SJEP is a strong representation of the schizophrenia that exists within the Chicano reality (Gonzales, 1972; Acuña, 1998). While the majority of the students leave the project operating in a transformational resistance[33] orientation, a handful still operated from a conformist resistance orientation. Each of the conformist resistance students was one that came from a position of greater privilege in comparison to their peers within their cohorts. These students, although committed to social change, sought to create changes by altering the behaviors of individuals (Solórzano & Yosso, 2005). One of the strongest examples from these students was the idea that the loss of culture, history and language was part of the sacrifice one must make to became more educationally and economically successful, and what it takes to become an American. However, these students did recognize the social injustice within American society, and three felt sad about not knowing their ancestral language, but they believed that socio-cultural conformity was a part of eradicating injustice.

These students contradicted Ogbu (1987) in that although they perceived educational success as "acting white," they did not see it as being a negative. The most intriguing aspect of this scenario is that these four students did not have a desire to dropout; moreover, they saw the loss of culture and language as a part of academic success. At the same time, none of these students would be considered outstanding students by traditional standards; each of these students had a grade point average that was less than 2.7 on a 4.0 scale.

The vast majority of the SJEP students have made a strong commitment to transformational resistance. These students have a strong critique of the structures of oppression and are motivated toward social justice (Solórzano & Yosso, 2005). An example of their transformational resistance was their participation in the grassroots effort to defeat Arizona's anti-immigrant Proposition 200. These students demonstrated a strong critique of the socio-structural inequality and injustice inherent in this proposition, and they were motivated by the potential abolishment of this racist indictment on people who are already on the margins of society.

Many of the SJEP students had to deal with horrific life realities. These realities ranged from single – parent homes, parents in prison, being a recent arrival, the irrelevance of schooling, and the deportation of love ones. However, by the end of their second-year of the SJEP nearly all of the students have transformed themselves to a state of critical consciousness. In this transformation these students fully understood the necessity to commit themselves to a transformational resistance orientation. The nature and scope of their research and the way they have led their lives are articulations of their commitment to social justice and the dismantling of society's structures of inequality.

The former students in this study were between the ages of 20-21. Each was a member of cohort one and their participation was based on: volunteerism; their willingness to further elaborate upon their educational experiences and participation in the SJEP; and the commitment to social justice. I did not want any former student to feel compelled to take part in the study. If he or she had any reservations about their involvement, I respectfully did not take the recruitment any further.

As for the former students who did participate in this study, I truly believe that each has provided a deep and rich counter-narrative regarding the educational experience of Chicana/o youth. Each offers soulful and thought provoking perspectives that can help transform our ontology, epistemology; and potentially create and recreate knowledge. Their voices can be used to inform the construction of educational experiences for present-day and future generations of Chicana/o students.

<div align="center">Student Profiles</div>

The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to the profiles of the five participants in this study. As I meticulously combed through the focus group interview transcript, the individual interview transcripts, and my field notes, I sought to illuminate the authentic voices and stories of the participants. Passages that addressed my research questions were forwarded and organized in a manner that would lead to the creation of a counter-narrative, which is an accurate representation of their words, thoughts and experiences.

Entering the focus group interview and the individual interviews, I had a list of questions; however, the dialogue within the interviews often went in different, albeit informative directions. The questions from my list delved into the participants'

understanding and beliefs about their families, their life experiences, and their educational experiences. The questions focused racism and its influence on their lives and their educational experiences, the impact of the SJEP upon their education and their lives, and their perception of what should be included in an educational experience that would meet the needs of students like themselves (See Appendix for a list of the interview questions).

As these counter-stories unfold, they will address the importance of education, the importance of identity, the importance of hope and love, and their perspective of how racism in education and society hinders the ability of the Chicana/o student to reach their full potential. Equally important are their perspectives on how the educational system and the people therein should go about the construction of educational experiences that would afford Chicana/o students the opportunity to reach for and grasp the rungs upon which they can fluidly, consciously and intellectually move through their educational experience.

<div align="center">Oliva Guevara</div>

"…school can bring pain when expectations aren't me; it's hurtful." - Oliva

Oliva is a young woman with dark hair and a soul that is filled with hope. Always seeking to make a political statement, her attire appears to be from the late 60's and early 70's, and her shirts are often are splashed with quotes from or images of the likes of Dolores Huerta, Paulo Freire, Che Guevara or Angela Davis. She is one the brightest and insightful students I have ever had. As I have watched her over the last few years, I truly believe that her influence on this community will continue to grow.

On the day of our interview, Oliva was nervous and a bit scared. As she walked into the conference room she said:

Oliva: Mr. Romero I am so nervous and scared.

Romero: Why *mijita*, it is just you and I.

Oliva: Mr. Romero, I really don't want to mess up. I know how important this interview is. What if I can't remember what I want to say or what if I say the wrong things?

Romero: *Mijita* if you speak from the heart everything will work out.

Oliva: It's not my heart I am worried about: I am worried about my memory and my mind.

Romero: Just relax. You and I are going to have a conversation just like the thousands we have had over the last few years. The things we are going to talk about are things you have talked about many, many times. Whatever I conversation is, it will be valuable to me.

Oliva: Okay, I will do my best, but I am still nervous.

In my mind, Oliva's fear and uneasiness demonstrated her commitment to the SJEP. She understood that her words would be used to create a counter-narrative that potentially could be used to influence the education experiences of other Chicana/o students. Her deep intuition and intellect propelled her into a leadership position within the project. She has taken on the role of project coordinator, and as Dr. Cammarota and I believed, she has done an exceptional job.

Oliva is the oldest of her mother's five children. Her mother was raised in Minot, North Dakota and her father was raised in Tucson, Arizona. She has never had a significant relationship with her father, and she has not had a good relationship with her

grandmother on her mother's side because according to Oliva, "…she doesn't really like Mexican people and she doesn't like Puerto Ricans. She really didn't want anything to do with a Mexican American family."

Despite her father's absence, his parents have been supportive of Oliva. Regardless of their support, Oliva and her grandparents have struggled in their relationship; especially, now that Oliva has become more conscientious and more willing to voice her social and political views. Oliva describes her father's parents as having, "… self hate built inside of them. They want to be the good Mexicans. You know the kind that don't want to cause any waves even when they are treated like shit." On numerous occasions, Oliva mentioned that she had been in a political argument with her mother and one of her grandparents (on her father's side). She attributed these arguments to her grandparents' lack of critical education, which she believed led to their lack of social critique and their ambivalence towards racism. She explained her father's parents educational experiences as having:

> ... a really interesting educational experiences because they grew up in Texas and New Mexico and they were going to school in like the 50's, 60's. My grandma could go to school … but could only do like sewing and cooking and stuff like that. My grandpa, when he was in elementary and junior high he could only take auto classes and welding and stuff like that, kind of like training them to be a laborer or a housewife. They didn't really take English or math or anything like that … She (Grandma) finished elementary, junior high, and high school, but it was pretty much basically Home Ec[onomics] and stuff like that …

When talking about her aunts and uncles, she explains that they had the same type of

educational experience as their father, and she touches upon their lack of critical understanding or social critique:

> My grandpa had a different experience because he was really poor and he was the oldest of fourteen and his dad left them when he was eleven. He had skills with automotive so he had to drop out at six grade. Then he got a job at a shop and he stayed working there. He did that ever since he was eleven all the way until maybe like four years ago when he retired …Well my dad has a brother and two sisters and they pretty much had the same experience. They're all pretty close together, they all went to Sunnyside high school, [and] they all grew up here in Tucson. One of them got their GED, and three of them didn't finish school. So very similar experiences in high school, none of them went on to college or further education, and all four of them now are just like job to job. One of my uncles works at WalMart as a stocker and he has really bad knees and one of my aunts was working at a taxi company but now she doesn't have a job, and my other aunt is just a housewife. And my dad, I don't know what he does. He was working for Coca-Cola in a conveyer type warehouse. No one, my mom, any of my grandparents, or my relatives wants to talk about racism. For all of them, this is America and that doesn't exist anymore, but none of them realize that they build different institutions for the different groups. And the greedy racists make money in both the institutions. They build universities and colleges for Whites and they build jails for us.

Despite these struggles, they are insignificant in comparison to the rest Oliva's life. At one point she had to dropout of high school in order to care for her infant brother.

She went without health care; she faced extreme poverty, parental divorce, domestic violence, exclusion, and homelessness. Regardless of the adversity, Oliva remains committed to the SJEP and its mission.

<p style="text-align:center">Cami Nieto</p>

Cami came to the project as a young person looking for a counter-hegemonic outlet through which he could challenge the oppressor group's oppressive ways. When he was a fifth grader, Cami believes he fell prey to this uncaring and repressive system. Cami states:

> … in fifth grade I was arrested. I had an assault charge put on … I actually got hit with the felony charge. It was because the principal was tired of me being at the school … She had a monitor lie about a situation with me and another kid…She had the monitor lie and say that I hit the monitor …They basically had the cops come to the classroom and just handcuff me there and drag me out of the classroom.

Cami admits to being a fighter in his elementary and middle school days; however, he questions a system that would allow students to use racial slurs, teachers and students to tell racially derogatory jokes or make racially derogatory statements, and in which those who stand against inhumane treatment are punished. He states:

> I would always get into a lot of fights with other kids, but that was just mainly because of where I came from, and I didn't really take shit from anyone. Students and sometimes teachers would always call names and say certain things that hurt … If I were to look back on it now, I'd say it was a racial thing, but during the time it never occurred to us because it wasn't a part of our life yet and we weren't

able to understand basically what it was. The Anglo kids that we grew up with would basically start stuff with mainly Mexican cultural background kids and the Yaqui kids. But, if I were to look back on it now, it was like a racial thing. Especially because the White kids never got in trouble; they would be ones to start all this mess, but they never got in trouble.

Cami comes from a family that experienced the same kind of education that he faced throughout his K -12 experiences in SUSD. His mother, father, and many aunts and uncles went through the SUSD system, but not very many of them graduated. He believes that both then and now Chicanos were sent through the system and given only the things that would allow them to assume the same racial, social and political stations as their parents. He States:

So it's like the same thing: they were all taught the same things, to do certain things, to be in the same positions in life … my mom was telling me that they were forced to learn, the women is, they were taught typing classes so that they could move up in the world as secretaries. And, my dad was tracked into auto mechanics. Neither [was] on the college track; they were on a track that the racist system believed was right for them. Like today, my parents, like today's [Chicanos] most … really don't have a chance. Look at our school, look at the ones in the A.P. classes, there are twice as many Chicanos as Whites in our school, but do they have twice as many Chicanos in the A.P. classes?

Over the two years of the project Cami developed a deep understanding of forms and manifestations of racism and other types of oppression. He took the

project to heart and engaged it with complete vigor. His perception of the project

reflects this same level of passion:

> It (SJEP) was very different because we would interact with the teachers and we
>
> were treated as equals. We had some power, sometimes you or Dr. Love would
>
> say "no" but we still had the chance to have a say. Or sometimes you would say,
>
> 'not now, but we will get to that,' and we usually did. So we knew that we were a
>
> part of the class, not just dumb students who you would make smarter. Yeah, we
>
> all got smarter, a lot smarter, but it was because that is what we wanted. I felt like
>
> I need to know these things. I could see why it was important. I could take this
>
> knowledge to the streets. Like you said, 'this knowledge is like our shield and our
>
> bullets.' The more we know, the stronger our shield is, and the more bullets we
>
> have.

Cami's level of intellect and his passion for justice will help him to carve his

place within our community. Moreover, his charisma and outgoing nature, together with

his talents as a performer and an artist, have helped him become a well known member of

the youth community. At this point, Cami is planning to attend design school and to use

his critical consciousness to create a new niche within the design world. While he is not

quite sure how he will accomplish this; I believe that he can and will find a way to create

this dimension.

<div align="center">Blanca Ericera</div>

> I don't recall a certain teacher or a certain someone putting me down, but just like
>
> making others, kids that I went to school with just making them feel like they
>
> really don't have a chance to go to college or do what they want to do. Basically,

> making them feel like they are not able to go to college or that they
>
> don't deserve to go. - Blanca Ericera

Blanca came into the SJEP through the pleading of her friend Oliva Guevara. Blanca, unlike most the SJEP students, was a good student, and her family members had helped place her on the path towards college. Blanca was born in Mexico and came to the United States at an early age to be raised by her maternal grandmother. Blanca would later move to San Diego to live with an aunt, who has been incredibly instrumental in Blanca's life; in order to ensure Blanca's citizenship, she adopted Blanca. Blanca realizes the roadblocks she has been able to avoid because of her aunt's willingness to adopt her, and she attributes her earliest academic motivation to her aunt. Blanca explained that she was close by as her aunts spent many nights and weekends studying to become a nurse. She believes that her aunt helped her to understand that in spite of what teachers and other adults said, she understood that education was something that needed to be part of her life; and like her aunt, Blanca's educational and career pursuits have placed her on a path towards becoming nurse.

Blanca believes that most teachers and the administration have a true lack of understanding of what constitutes a good teacher. In general, the SJEP students believed that the teachers they perceived to be the worst were given greater credence by the administration. Similarly, the teachers that the SJEP students believed were most effective and that offered the deepest sense of authentic caring were not afforded the same level of respect or credibility by the administration. In the following passage Blanca articulates her perceptions about the treatment of teachers she and her SJEP peers viewed as poor teachers versus those they viewed as effective:

Blanca: I mean they treat teachers we think are good like this (with less respect), but the teachers that really are bad to us like Jackson, Dewie, Benedict, Custano and I can't think of her name, Simon? No, that's not it.

Romero**:** Simmons?

Blanca: Yeah that's it; they get everything they want from the school. Everybody [teachers and administrators] talks about them as being the really good teachers, but with us they are really not good; they are bad. They disrespect us, treat us like we don't know anything. A lot of kids get stuck with them, or some students were put into certain classes, [and] because they've been there in those classes, they didn't know how to get out from that (the racial hostility students face in these classes, with these teachers). But, it seems like a lot of teachers don't care; either they say stuff or they let other students say stuff about us. Some are saying like jokes, but they are really not jokes. The things they say hurt, and it's sad, but I think they want to hurt us. It kinds out there, but if they want to hurt us, are they really going to try their best to teach us.

Blanca rearticulates the perspective of violence in schools. Blanca, Tina and Alisa Veliz (student from the third cohort) all rearticulate violence in school as transcending the traditional notions of student-student or even gang-related types of violence. Each has defined the most prevalent violence in their educational experiences to be the violence they face on a nearly daily basis at the hands of their teachers. As Blanca expressed above, "if they want to hurt us, are they really going to try their best to teach us." Whether it is conscious, unconscious, intended or unintended, the reality is that education, much less transformative education, cannot exist in a hostile environment.

Blanca believes that because she had always been a good student, she experienced a significantly lesser amount of this type of violence than did many of her friends who were not as academically proficient as she was.

Blanca has seen the racism and its violent manifestations on a regular basis within her educational experiences, and she thanks her SJEP teachers and the SJEP for helping her develop the courage to engage injustice and for her decision to advocate and fight for justice. Blanca has decided to pursue a career in nursing, and as a nurse she believes that she can serve the pursuit of social justice.

<p style="text-align:center">Rolando Yanez</p>

> It just feels man…ahhgh…It just feels like, you feel, like, ashamed of yourself. I
> don't know, you feel like ashamed of yourself because, like, you're not
> understanding nothing… or like you're not doing nothing, so you're like,
> everybody's   just staring at you as a new kid, as a new Mexican kid in class.
> - Rolando describing his earliest educational experiences in the United States.

Rolando came to Tucson at the age of 15. He came to live with his father who had divorced his mother three days before his birth. Until this time, Rolando's life was without direction, most of his time was spent wandering back and forth between Guyamas and Magdalena. Even though his father took him in, Rolando feels that he has never received any real support from his father beyond this one deed. He is thankful that his father has housed him, but Rolando feels as though there is no real love in this relationship; so much so, that Rolando refuses to call his father "dad" despite his father's request for him to do so.

Much of the conflict between Rolando and his father stems from his father's marriage and the relationship his father has with his wife's children and the children the two have had together. Rolando believes that the offspring of his father's wife are treated much more favorably than he. This lack of support within the home added to the frustrations Rolando experienced in school that stemmed from coming to the United States at the age of 15, and being a monolingual Spanish speaker. Moreover, this reality led to educational neglect that stems from institutional and societal racism. Rolando and other students like him are kids that the system is designed to leave behind or even throw away.

Rolando says that his introduction to American schooling entailed spending most of the day at the back of the room, sitting with nothing to do, without teacher instruction, or assistance; and on occasion, when they were lucky, a person would come into the room and work with him and other students in his same situation:

All I remember was the teacher being, like, in the front of the room, just talking with her book in her hand, and me sitting down. I was in the back, just okay, like me in the back, everyone in the front, everyone doing their homework, their work, and I felt like this sucks, I'm just waiting for something. Hey, you know, "why aren't you doing your homework!?" or something like that, you know.

That's when I kinda realized, you know, that, like, I don't know where I am, like, I like, I know nothing, that was like the first week of school! And I was just like, okay, 'where am I?' … you feel like ashamed of yourself. I don't know, you feel like ashamed of yourself because, like, you're not understanding nothing… or like you're not doing nothing, so you're like, everybody's just

staring at you as a new kid, as a new Mexican kid in class. So, they're just staring at you, like, you know, man, I felt like shit, man! Everybody would just be looking at me, just sitting there, you know, and tears are about to drop … everything is just hard to get, like, humiliated by other people... teachers ignoring you; and [you] sitting in the back seat…because you don't know nothing (anything).

Or like we were there, I would be in class, and the teacher would be teaching, like, the lesson for the day, and I would be in the back; we had a table, and there would be like three or four of us that didn't know English at all, so we would sometimes sit down and wait for a lady that would help us, like a translator lady from English to Spanish or Spanish to English, but a lot of times that lady won't go (this person seldomly was available for support). So, we would spend like the whole time in class doing nothing, and everyone would be looking at us, like, 'you guys are dumb,' 'you're just stupid,' 'what are you guys doing here?'... Then you hear things, kinda like, 'stupid Mexicans,' 'Mexicans don't know anything,' and they'd be pointing at us saying things.

The project helped me with the way it still hurt; a lot of times we couldn't understand the things they were saying, but now I know. It wasn't only the kids, it was the teachers. The teachers didn't think we could know what they were saying. At first I didn't, but a little while later I kinda could understand, but I didn't have the words to say anything, and I was afraid too

The fact that the American educational system has historically neglected and presently neglects the educational needs of English language learners (ELL) (Sanchez, 1997;

Gonzalez, 1997; Spring, 1997; Guerrero, 2002) is a matter of institutional racism that

unapologetically perpetuates the racial order within schools that then serves as the

platform upon which the greater society's racial order is reinforced and advanced.

Rolando believes that because of the SJEP he no longer has to remain silent when

he is confronted by racism. He believes that the SJEP has helped him nurture a voice that

speaks out against injustice:

> The class, the project, I mean, you guys showed the students that we could say
>
> something, we didn't have to be scared. We know that we need to stand up. We
>
> are conscious, and we need to use our conscious (conscience) for justice, and to
>
> fight racism. Damn Mister, this was the best part, one of the best parts!

Rolando's commitment to education was demonstrated by his desire to

finish high school. Much like Tina, Rolando needed extra time to graduate.

Nevertheless, at his summer graduation, this teacher's (as well as that of my

teacher/researcher colleagues in the project) greatest gift was realized when

Rolando threw down a shout out over the p. a. system while on stage receiving his

diploma, "Thanks SJP, Lozano, Romero, Dr. J; Much Love!"

<center>Tina Verdugo</center>

> I don't know, its students like you who make me want to give up
>
> sometimes. I try and try to do something for you guys and later on I know
>
> you're going to be the percentage of this school that doesn't graduate.
>
> Why don't you just do the school a favor and just drop out now? - Tina's
>
> paraphrasing of the words of her Freshman Biology teacher.

Tina was a student who before the SJEP was simply waiting to turn 16 years old

so that she could legally dropout of school. To think that this *dropout wannabe* now uses concepts such as hegemony, racism, social reproduction, ethnocentrism, and microaggressions to articulately describe her educational experiences is incredible. Tina has come a long way from ditching school on nearly an everyday basis, and having no sense of connection to the education process according to her, the only reason she came to school was to make sure she did not miss out on any of the everyday high school drama to the current college student who dreams of being a teacher like one of the three that helped change her life.

Tina grew up in a household that enforced the stereotypical gender roles wherein the male is domineering, macho, and the female is docile and voiceless. These roles never sat right for Tina, but she would often find herself falling into their traps. She knew that this way of being was not right and she stated:

> Tina: This never felt right, but like you said, I now see that family ways are controlling and meant to keep men and women in their place. But that's all whacked. Yeah, it's whacked as a woman, but as a Chicana it's more whacked. How we going to rise if we [women] can't speak or if half of us can't speak? You know if our own try to keep down our voice, they are only hurting us. I know you taught it, but I always knew that in the world or the project there not enough of us, so we need to stand, speak and do things together. Yeah you always talk about racism, but racism don't care of if you [are] a boy, a girl, brown, black, Yaqui or chino.

> Romero: If racism doesn't care, why do these things happen?

Tina: I don't know crabs in a barrel might be right. No that's not what I want to say. Racism attacks us in a lot of ways, and on another conscious level, we do things that we don't realize. I mean we do things that will hurt us and help Whites. I can't think of that word. You said we do things that protect Whites, and sometimes we don't even know it. You said is about Rodriguez.

Romero: Sell-out or *vendido*.

Tina: No, something like that, but not that. Damn, I know this word. It's a keeper.

Romero: Oh, I know.

Tina: I know, gatekeeper. We watch the gate for Whites. Basically, we keep ourselves and our *gente* in check. Like you said, we spend a lot of time fighting our own, and we don't get to fight with the ones we should be fighting. Right?

Tina exemplifies many of the SJEP students who, despite their low grade point averages demonstrate a high level of intellectual capacity. For teachers in the Project, our goal was to help Tina and the other students realize and understand the intellect within them; and how their intellect could be used to create a greater sense of hope within their lives and their communities served by the SJEP.

Tina certainly came to realize her intellect. In many of the SJEP's presentations at national and international conferences, Tina became a leader and a spokesperson for the project. Her experiences formulating her thoughts manifested themselves into her words, and these words invariably pierced right through the hearts and minds of those in the audience, leaving them with a heightened critical consciousness, hope, and the desire to follow her call to action

Tina was one of the students who came into the Project with a limited amount of credits, 5.5 to be exact. This meant that over the next two years Tina would have to accumulate 14.5 credits in order to graduate with her class. By the end of her senior year, Tina was still 2.5 credits short of graduating. She was disappointed, but she immediately took hold of the situation and created a plan of action that allowed her to define success on her own terms. The following is conversation between Tina and her high school counselor, Marti Catalina:

Marti: Don't worry we can get you summer school and weekend academy. You won't even have to come to school.

Tina: I am coming back, and I am going to work on the project. I am not embarrassed; I passed 5 and a half classes in my freshmen and sophomore year. I passed 12 classes in my last two years. I did a lot better, I am going to graduate in December, and I will work with Lozano and you guys.

Ms. Catalina and I just looked at each other, I think we were both a little surprise and also really happy with Tina's attitude.

Tina did not finish school that December because her life, which was always extremely difficult and filled with "total drama," simply got in the way. However, despite its difficulties, her life was not going to keep her down. By the following May, Mr. Lozano and I were proudly in the audience when she walked across the stage, had her name announced, and was handed her high school diploma. After she walked off the stage, she headed in our direction as Mr. Lozano and I were standing with Tina's family. As she approached the two of us, all I can see is Tina's huge smile and the sparkle of her eyes. As we got closer she

literally jumped into Lozano's arms saying, "I made it, I made it, I can't believe it I made it!" She jumped out of Lozano's arms and she gives me the biggest hug. She said, "I am going to cry. Romero, man, without you guys I would have never made it. I could hear you guys in my head, and I knew with that I could get here. I am so happy." That night by far was one of the happiest moments in my life as an educator.

<p style="text-align:center">Augustine Romero</p>

Throughout this entire process I too was a student. I learned more from the students than they could ever learned from me. As a student and a demonstration of cultural intuition (Delgado Bernal, 1998), I believe that it is critical to understand my positionality and the love I have for these blossoming intellectuals.

The Schooling and the Education of One Who Heard the Cries of La Llorona

"Before your class and this project I don't know who I was. It is like I was living outside of myself and just about everybody else. I am now alive; before I do not know what I was." - Oliva Guevara

This quote is an articulation of the unconsciousness or uni-dimensionalization (Freire, 1994) a Chicana/o youth who is the product of schooling in Southern Arizona. As I show throughout this dissertation, the pain, the hopelessness, and the feeling of being beyond love (Delgado, 1996) is the unfortunate reality of many Chicana/o youth, as it is the reality of the Chicana/o youth who participate in the SJEP. Within this reality are intentional neglect and the dysconscious racism that perpetuate the production of an American exploitation group that is overrepresented by Chicanos and other people of color.

Given this reality, my study was driven by the perceptions of Chicana/o youth regarding their educational experiences. The questions that guided this study are as follows: (a) Do Chicana/o students believe that racism has influenced their educational experiences? (b) If so, what do they think can be done to counter the educational racism they face on a daily basis? (c) What influence does an education model that merges critical race theory, critical pedagogy and authentic caring have upon the educational experience of marginalized Chicana/o students?

In this introduction I will start by offering my educational counter-narrative. In the sections: The Schooling and the Education of One Who Heard the Cries of *La Llorona* and Justice and *Xinachtli,* I offer my story (a counter-narrative) in order to create an historical context of the persistence of racism during a period of time when many believe racism to be a thing of the past (Omi and Winant, 1994; Bonilla-Silva, 2003 & 2005), and to position my heightened level of cultural intuition (Delgado Bernal, 1998). In the final section, Latinas/os in American Public Schools*,* I briefly articulate upon the disparate educational outcomes of Chicanas/os and Anglos. This cursory overview looks at the problem from three vantage points: the national level, state level and the district level. This triangulated lens has been initiated to add validity to my problematization of the academic outcomes of Chicanas/os in American schools.

What is most discouraging is that this reality was my experience coming through the same academic system 20 years ago. I know and understand the depth of the pain, hopelessness, and the frustration of feeling beyond love. However, for some of us, the prayers of our parents and our *antepasados* were heard, and in some way answered. For

me, the answer came in the way of two teachers and two coaches who were able to counter the suffering by genuinely caring about me and my future.

While love existed in our fractured home, in most cases the schoolyard gates became the cordon through which love rarely penetrated. My K-12 educational history is filled with experiences of oppression and subordination inflicted upon me by teachers and administrators alike. In fact, in the spring of 2006 the students of the SJEP redefined "school violence" to include the degrading encounters to which I refer. Unlike Lopez et. al (2006), wherein school violence is considered to be student –to – student acts, the SJEP students defined school violence as the violence committed against students by teachers, counselors, and administrators. According to the students, this violence is more insidious because of its psychological orientation. According to the Office of Civil Rights, a racially hostile environment is a, "harassing conduct at the school (whether physical, verbal, graphic, or written) that is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent so as to interfere with or limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities or privileges it provides" (Baca, 2004, p.73). In the cases of the students in this study and those related to the study, a racially hostile environment is created and perpetuated by low-expectations which are exacerbated by racial, cultural, and gender stereotyping; sexual innuendos; and subtractive schooling (Valenzuela, 1999). The result is a space wherein the Chicana/o youth in and related to this study feel: unwelcomed, perilous, violated, and at best invisible (Cammarota, 2006).

Unfortunately, this is same hostile environment I faced when I was a student in the SUSD system. During a senior year, the high school's vice principal told my father that the marine corp. was the only thing that could save me, and during the same meeting,

my counselor told my father that, "The marine corp. will tame Auggie. After a few years [in the marines], maybe he could take a few junior college courses or maybe he will take the high road and make a career of the marine corp." The vice principal interjected with, "Mr. Romero, college is not for every student, and you know that there is honor in labor." My father said, "There is honor in the marines and in laboring for a living, but my son is going to college!" I remember that day as though it was yesterday.

This was not an isolated event in my high school experience. During my junior year, my English teacher said, "I would be surprised if you are not dead within the next two-years." Another event took place after being told by a friend from another barrio that I would be killed at a *quinceañera* I was supposed to attend. After receiving this information, I was scared and unsure what to do. In a state of fear and confusion, I went to the administration for support. However, instead of trying to help me, the administration treated me as though I was the problem. In front of my mother, one of the vice principals said, "These things do not happen for no reason; what did you do to deserve this?" From that point I was treated as though I was the one who would be killing another fifteen year kid on Friday night, to think that any administrator would suggest that a 15-year-old kid deserves to die is appalling.

As far as my classroom experiences are concerned, I was seldom engaged, and the coursework was irrelevant, at best. The vast majority of teachers were without a sense of cultural responsiveness (Gay, 2002) and/or the commitment towards authentic caring (Valenzuela, 1999). I never saw myself in the curriculum, and the likes of Dolores Huerta and/or Cesar Chavez were never mentioned. In fact, I had to wait until my fourth year of college, 1700 miles away from home, before I even realized that I could study my culture

and my history. As a result, I did not spend many of my high school days in the classroom or even in the school. Upon reflection, I more frequently attended only those classes that seemed relevant to me or those in which the teachers created a connection with me; I attended just enough school to keep me eligible participate in baseball and wrestling. I barely made it out of high school, graduating with a 1.61 grade point average and passing only two of six classes during my last high school semester.

However, not all my educational experiences were unfulfilling. In junior high, I had a teacher who believed in my intelligence and my intellect, and who encouraged me to develop these abilities. Ms. Castro repeatedly told me that I could be more than I realized. In fact, as I look back upon those days, I know that I did not have a vision of the future. At that time, my primary focus was which girl I was going to walk to the bus stop after school, or who I was going to have to fight after school, on the way home, or on the weekend.

It was Ms. Castro who helped me realize my athletic and academic talents. She was the very first teacher to say that she believed that I was smart. She was the first to demonstrate that she cared about me. One night the phone rang at my house and my mom answered the phone, as was often the case, so I did not pay attention to the conversation. About 10 minutes later, my mother called me to the dining room. She said that she had just finished talking to Ms. Castro, and that Ms. Castro had told her that it was obvious that I had great athletic ability, but that my educational prowess could be as strong. After telling me what Ms. Castro had said, my mother started to cry. She said, "Mijo, I am so scared for you." My mother knew I was on the wrong path, and she knew getting me on the right path would be extremely difficult.

My mother placed a great deal of faith in Ms. Castro's ability to keep me off the wrong path. For the remainder of that Ms. Castro convinced me of the need to develop all of my academic skills. She helped me understand that I could use my athletic and my academic skills as the means to a better life. For the first time, I actually thought about going to college. I was fourteen years old and in the eighth grade.

Unfortunately, over the next fours years I identified with only three teachers, who I believed took an interest in me and who tried to steer me in the right direction. Had I not had these people, I do not know where I would be. Mr. Dawson, Ms. Row and Coach Romero all played key roles in helping me make my way through high school. As I stated earlier, I barely graduated with my grade point average of 1.61, but if it wasn't for those three people, maybe I would have dropped out, or maybe I would be dead.

Mr. Dawson cared enough about me to call my parents and ask them for a conference. In this conference, he told my parents that I was smart and that I had a creative mind. He said a lot of the same things Ms. Castro had said a few years earlier. Mr. Dawson told my parents that he would watch out for me, and that if I got out of line, he would let them know. Over the next two years, I would see him on campus and he would say, "You know I am watching you." However, despite being out of line most of the time, my parents never received another phone call from Mr. Dawson. Nevertheless, I thank Mr. Dawson because I know that on some level he did care, and that if I needed him, he would have been there for me.

It was during my sophomore year that Ms. Row came into my life. I cannot remember the name of our class, but one day she handed a paper back to me and on that paper was an "A" with the following written in red: "Great paper, you should think about

becoming a lawyer." A few weeks later, my wrestling coach told me that Ms. Row told him that I should be thinking about going to law school. At the time I thought, "What the hell is law school?" The next morning I asked her about law school. She broke down the process for me, and she assured me that it was something I could do. I remember thinking how all of what she explained seemed so far away.

After my sophomore year, I did not have Ms. Row for another class, but every time I saw her, she would offer words of encouragement. Like Mr. Dawson, I felt that if I needed Ms. Row, she would have been there for me. In fact, later in life when I was about to become a teacher, Ms. Row played an instrumental part in securing me a teaching job at my alma mater. Ms. Row is one of those special people that me develop a sense of hope and purpose in my life.

Coach Romero is also my uncle, my dad's brother. During my sophomore year he became our assistant baseball coach. He was my hero, and the person I wanted to be like. In fact, in many ways our lives have taken very similar paths. I will always have a special place in my heart for Coach Romero for trying as hard as he did to pull me off the hopeless path I was on. However, at the time I thought he was trying to infringe on my ability to lead my own life. In my mind, I had been on my own since my dad left the house when I was twelve years old. I also believed that I knew what was best, regardless of the reckless and perilous nature of my actions. Because I had already learned to earn like a man, and because I had already kicked the shit out of many men in the streets, I felt that I was already a man, despite only being fifteen years old.

Deep inside, I knew then, as I know now, that Coach Romero was only showing his love for me. However, as I reflect back on those days, authentic caring was not

something that drew a reaction from me. I was very uni-dimensional, concerned only with the moment, without reflection or a vision of the future (Freire, 1994). This why Ms. Row's conversation about law school seemed like another lifetime away from the life is was simply in.

Whether it was luck or destiny, I made it through high school. And as Ms. Castro predicted, my athletic ability help set me on a path towards a different life. I was fortunate enough to attend a small junior college in western Arizona, and despite the competition of college athletics and academic responsibilities, I was on the path towards a deeper sense of respect and love for myself, my family, my *gente*, and the people I encountered.

As I look back on my K-12 educational experiences, it hits me that over a thirteen year period I can identify only 4 teachers who cared. There was no structure to the caring that was offered. Rather, they were random acts of kindness. In addition, because I had not experienced a teacher who actively engaged in the nurturing of my critical consciousness, I was without a critique of the educational and social structures and systems, let alone a sense of social justice; in fact, I readily engaged in brown on brown violence and brown on black violence. Because of this reality, I did not have the skills needed to mediate and negotiate the racist and hostile environment of the schools. In my mind I knew I was not a fuck-up, but I did do fucked-up things. Why was it that when I resisted the oppressive nature of the educational system, it was I who was hurt in the end? I did not have a space wherein I could be re-directed or even connect myself to something that was real, such as my history, my culture or the social realities of the barrio and all of its peril and beauty. I ask myself two things, "How did I get where I am today?" and

"Where would I be today if it weren't for Ms. Castro, Mr. Dawson, Ms. Row and Coach Romero?" It is my reality coupled with the reality of our present-day Chicana/o students that has led to my commitment to the discovery of educational practices and interactions that nurture a counter-hegemonic transformation within Chicana/o students.

Justice and Xinachtli

The seed of seeking justice was planted early during my childhood. This *Xinachtli*[34] (germinating seed) developed and nurtured a consciousness and understanding of the injustices and inequality that confronted Mexicanos / Chicanos in this land of equality and justice for all. My father told me stories about historic injustices our family faced and some of the discrimination he experienced. Two of the most salient stories were: how our family lost land shortly after the signing of the Treaty of Mesilla, and the overt institutional racism my father faced as a member of the city's fire department. My dad would say, "Mijo I tell you these things so that you are aware of what is in the world, but you have to believe that you can overcome these things. Don't ever believe that things are equal, and don't ever believe that if you give the same effort as a white man, you will be treated the same as a white man. In fact, as a Mexican, you will need to work three or four times harder than a white man."

The examples set by grandfathers and my dad gave me a great deal of hope and resiliency. My grandfathers were the type of men who worked extremely hard to provide for their families. One of my grandfathers once explained to me what it is to be a man:

> There are many out there who say they are men, but to be a man is hard. It is hard getting up early every morning to go to work. It is hard putting a roof over the head of your wife and children; it is hard putting food on the table, and it is hard

paying all the bills on time. It is hard to resist the devil's temptations. It is hard

being honorable and truthful. A man comes home every night to his wife and his

children … every night (he stressed). This is what a man does; as a man, this is

what you need to do.

These words resound deeply within my mind, my soul, and my heart.

These stories were the seeds, and my later experiences at Pacific University and

the University of Arizona (U of A) were the nourishment of my critical consciousness. At

Pacific, Dr. Russ Dondero exposed me to the hypocrisy and injustice in American

politics. Dr. Vernon Bates introduced me to Chicanismo and the beauty and value of my

cultura. Both of these professors helped to fuel the fire of justice that quietly burned

inside of me, and they helped me discover and connect to my social, cultural and

historical roots.

At the U of A, with the help of Dr. Donna Jurich, Dr. Anne Campbell and Dr.

Dionisio de la Viña, I found my voice. Dr. Jurich gave me a copy of Paulo Freire's

Pedagogy of the Oppressed; which changed my life; in fact, it is my educational bible.

Pedagogy of the Oppressed was not required reading for my program, but she felt it was

something that would make sense to me and that would add greater depth to the

perspectives and beliefs I stand on. Dr. Campbell reaffirmed my thoughts and perceptions

regarding the impact of racism upon the American education system. She embraced my

use of CRT within my analysis and within my recommendations for resolution; and she

encouraged me to advance my understanding of its framework and its applications within

education. Dr. de la Viña exposed me to Michel Foucault, Henry Giroux, Joaques

Derrida, and Donald Macedo. Furthermore, Dr. de la Viña pushed my understanding of

critical theory. He pushed me to ask deeper, more profound questions regarding racism. It was through these exercises that I discovered the Freirean notion of the tri-dimensionalization of time (explained later is this paper), which led to my classroom practice of the tri-dimensionalization of reality. These experiences led to and deepened my interest in how racism impacted the interactions and the structure of American society and its education system. These experiences helped me to clearly understand that I wanted to devote my life to the pursuit of justice and the achievement of equality for all students, regardless of background.

I must mention the time frame in between my graduation from Pacific and my enrollment at the U of A. I spent two years as an investigator for the Attorney General's Civil Rights Division. The most imperative lesson I learned while in the Civil Rights Division is the insidious and extremely sophisticated nature of American racism. My understanding of racism, and its intricacies and idiosyncrasies, was enhanced by my mentor, Chief Counsel Richard Martinez. Martinez offered me a new lens through which to see the world. About four days into my new job, Martinez gave me a copy of Derrick Bell's, *Faces at the Bottom of the Well*. As he handed me Bell's book, Martinez said, "Don't read this, examine it. Examine it through the lens of what you know is true, and through lens what should be true. Afterwards, tell me what you learned."

The examination of Bell's book took one weekend. I went to the office the morning after that weekend, ready to talk about the permanence of racism and the need to struggle against racism as a means of articulating that the lives of the oppressed have meaning. However, it has been more than ten years since I read Bell's book, and to this day I have not yet reported to Martinez what I learned from my initial encounter with

Critical Race Theory. I believe that Martinez knew that my actions would be articulations of my thoughts, and through these actions he has seen my commitment to the engagement of racism and to the pursuit of justice. To this day I seek and greatly value Martinez's advice and he is one of those people I hope is proud of the path I have selected.

Watching my dad struggle to advance within his work as a member of the Tucson Fire Department also gave me a strong example of what it is to resist, persevere and prevail. Year after year, my father went through the process for advancement, and despite the fact that on at least five occasions he was number one on the promotion list; he was passed over year after year. I remember my dad spending countless hours studying on the living room floor. My mom would make sure that we were quiet and out of the way so that he could study. I knew my dad worked hard and made sacrifices to secure his advancement; but in many cases that doesn't matter. In many cases, it simply comes down to white versus brown. In fact, in my opinion the true question for affirmative action is, "over the last 200 years plus, how many less qualified white men advanced at the expense of more qualified people of color?"

While watching my father's soul being ripped from his body, I began to understand the roots of inequality and how decisions are made on the basis of race. Seeing the pain and disappointment my father felt, stoked a great deal of anger within me. Yes, I mean anger! What else does one feel when injustice and racism hit them squarely in face? At times this anger took me down the wrong path, placing me in harm's way or in the midst of harming others. Today this anger still burns within me, and it is this deep anger that fuels my commitment to justice and deep desire to challenge racism. It is this anger that pushes me to continue to seek out my utopian dreams.

The experiences of my grandfathers, the experiences of my dad, my experiences as a student and teacher/worker, and the process of understanding these experiences have all nurtured critical race consciousness and my deep desire to fight racism and injustice. They have shaped my identity as a *guerrero de justicia* and they fuel the fire that keeps me fighting for equity and the equality of academic and life outcomes for Chicanas/os.

Las Perspectivas de Los Estudiantes: Racism and Education

In the next three chapters, the questions guiding this research will be answered, and what will be revealed is that regardless of the modern day rhetoric of improved social and educational experiences, the Chicana/o students in this study experienced systematic racial discrimination throughout their educational experiences within SUSD. The students also articulated that racism within schools can be countered by an educational process I call critical compassionate intellectualism.

This is the educational process that these students experienced throughout their participation within the SJEP. The convergence of critical race theory, critical pedagogy and authentic caring within the classroom experience helped them nurture: a stronger racial and academic identity, greater academic proficiency, an elevated sense of self purpose and hope that they connected back to the need to use all within their capacity to give back and serve the needs of their communities. In fact, many believe that this educational experience literally saved their lives. Many of these students stated that without the SJEP, they would more than likely be dead today.

These statements and answers give us a deeper insight into the issues faced by Chicanas/os students. Moreover, these articulations and representations provide us with insight into a process that is liberating, engaging, and academically inspiring for them.

The voices of these students call for an educational process that provides Chicana/o

students with a greater sense of self, purpose and hope.

CHAPTER FIVE

"Do Chicana/o students believe that racism has influenced their educational

experiences?"

> …just like I said, get a position to help all my people that I need to help, La Raza,
>
> you know, because without them we ain't never going to overcome the dominant.
>
> You need your army, and little by little all these kids that we've had involved in
>
> the project, if we all just get it together. . . so many that we've had involved so
>
> far, that will be enough if we just get it together, and there will be a lot of people
>
> wanting to be in charge, wanting to make a difference. That will be enough
>
> people to start making the difference. - Tina Verdugo

Oliva Guevara

Olivia saw the lies regarding education that are socially constructed to perpetuate the

American racial and social order. Moreover, she connected this reality to the colonized

mind-set of self hate and to the notion of hegemony. The following is a response to a

question about racism and inequality within education:

> Like we looked at in the project, people fight to keep things the way they are. You
>
> know, social reproduction and hegemony; schools, they want us to believe that
>
> they are doing things for us or that now things are equal. What are they doing for
>
> us? Just because we get to go to school it does not mean it is good for us. We get
>
> brainwashed and sorted into their compartments. People, ignorant ones, say 'oh
>
> look at that Mexican or that Black, they made [it],' and they think that we all can
>
> make it. People don't understand that some of us have to make it or else things,
>
> racism would be too obvious. Then we have people like (the name of a teacher at

Controlado) and my grandparents who are filled with self-hate. The greedy, the

racist uses these kind of people to keep things in order. They use these people to

spread their message; these people become like those preachers on TV, only in

schools. They look and sound so stupid, but so many people fall into their traps.

My mom is one of those people. I started falling into that trap too. Sometimes the

things they say sound good, and you start trying to rationalize how that is true for

you. Even now I can understand some of it, but then I come to my senses and I

can see through the hegemony. But, like others, not with our kind of education,

they get trapped. For them racism is like common sense, but hegemony does not

let [them] see this.

In regards to the understanding of her educational experiences, Olivia offers the

following articulation of the manifestations of racism within the schools she attended:

School didn't really interest me. I guess just because of everything else that was

going on. School doesn't really help with those kinds of situations, and it seemed

kind of pointless, so I lost interest and started getting like C's and D's and getting

referrals and stuff like that… It was pretty much, fend for yourself, because your

going through it alone, because you really don't have no one Seeing the pain and

disappointment my father felt. to talk to that can relate…. Like it takes teachers

months to learn your name, but then they never really learn much else about you.

This manifestation is the lack of authentic caring that is bestowed upon Chicana/o

students (Valenzuela, 1999). The inability to offer respect for and to place value on the

key social, cultural, and historical aspects Chicana/o students bring to our classrooms is a

manifestation of the subtle and everyday racism that in most cases goes unchecked and

ignored (Lynn & Parker, 2006; Valenzuela, 1999). However, despite its subtlety, this type of racism is another articulation of how Chicana/o students are beyond love (Delgado, 1995; Duncan, 2005). The perpetuation of an environment void of love runs counter to the creation of a nurturing learning environment (Valenzuela, 1999; Darder, 2002; Duncan, 2005). Moreover, this environment is hurtful:

> Well, when we go to school, students are organized. We have seating charts and stuff so that it's easy for the teacher to remember our names, so they can take attendance or call on us in class - but that's pretty much all we are is organized names without identities or issues or feelings. This is kinda of racist; first they organize us so that they can control us, then, second, they don't get most of the names right and they don't even try. Then don't even know my name for months - how valuable am I? I know I am not valuable because nothing about me is in the class, not my life, not my history or culture.

The aforementioned words and the forthcoming words are Oliva's articulation of Valenzuela's (1999) notion that "each weekday, for eight hours a day, teenagers inhabited a world populated by adults who did not care-or at least did not care for them sufficiently" (p.3):

> Well, in every relationship if you care, you kind of become vulnerable, so when you care about the other person or people in the relationship and you have certain expectations, you do certain things for them and you expect certain things back. It's really painful when those expectations aren't met; it's like I give so much to you and you give nothing back, so school and students have that same relationship that two people can share or a family can share in a way that we as students are

expected to give our whole day. Go to school, get up early and spend our whole day there and do a lot of work and a lot of reading and basically give up our minds and become like mindless drones who are just like taking everything in that other people have to say and those people are teachers, administrators, counselors or other students are giving nothing back. They are not giving you feelings or advice or a place to feel safe or an equal opportunity or an advantage in life. They are kind of just filling you up with nothing because it doesn't help later on because it's pointless to know some of the things we learned in school because we are constantly fed the same message from the time we're in kindergarten from [about] pilgrims and Europeans and Europe and Rome and when Rome fell on Jesus and all this western civilization and a whole bunch of lies, so they really don't help us later on in life and they don't tell us how to fix our own issues … Education really doesn't do anything for you, so your expectations aren't really met.

Actions void of authentic caring and love can perpetuate states of emptiness and despair, a state wherein our Chicana/o children are beyond love. It is in this state of being beyond love wherein Chicano/a children are objectified. It is at this point that our children are perceived to be animal-like: uncontrollable, hostile, and disengaged. As objects, the most likely response to this oppression has been death: the death of language, history, culture and, worse, the death of the minds and souls of Chicana/o students.

I don't think love existed in school at all. I think this was like the only love or intimate experience that I ever had at school was this. Just because, like I said earlier, most teachers really don't put any effort into being a teacher at all. It's

sad, but it's like in society it has kind of just become a job. Teachers are

supposed to become teachers because they want to share with students and give to

students and create these people that are going on to society, which is one of the

most important roles because you're supposed to be creating these students'

futures and if they don't do good in school, then we don't really have hope.

Lastly, Oliva gives her perspective on racism in education and society. Her

analysis of religious freedom can be placed upon most societal settings wherein white

privilege is one of the invisible barriers used to maintain society's racial order (McIntosh,

1990; Omni & Winant, 1993; Henze, Lucas & Scott, 1998):

It's kind of like when America became America: everything was based on

individual needs, greed and racism. Like America was founded on, supposedly

they came here for religious freedoms, but they only cared about *their* religious

freedoms. So now, in a way, those same people exist today that existed then, and

those religious freedoms have become just *our* religious freedoms not religious

freedom, not all religion, just that specific religion. So it's kind of become like

greed and racism has kind of caused control because everyone wants to think

about themselves and their issues and what people can do for them and what can

be done for them and are they going to be on top? Are they going to be happy?

Are they going to have enough money? Are they going to have what they need,

are they going to have what they want? Are things going to be their way? Since

that time, those kind of people, white people, have been in control because that's

how it was created for white people. Since white people were the ones that

created this system, those are the people that benefit; so those are the people that

since then have continued to be in positions of control. So education and

everything else in society is based on their interests, their benefit, their need, their

stories, [and] their perspective.

At the end of her statement, Oliva speaks about *whiteness* in relation to racial oppression

and domination (Leonardo, 2002; 2005), the prevalence and persistence of privilege

(Richardson, 2000), the ability to ignore and conceal the racial and historical

backgrounds of Chicanas/os, and the maintenance of the status quo of power, prestige

and privilege (Gollnick & Chin, 1994); she claims that the dominant culture intentionally

and severely limits the power that is realized by Chicanas/os and other people of color

(Yosso, 2006; Duncan Andrade, 2005). Unfortunately, this theme also runs true for the

other four participants in the study.

<div align="center">Cami Nieto</div>

Cami, like Oliva, believes that racism was present throughout his entire

educational experiences. In addition, he believes that because of racism many of his

fellow Yaqui and Chicana/o counterparts were pushed out of school. He comes to

understand that schools need to be safe environments for learning to take place:

Well, I mean, teachers should make you feel safe; you shouldn't feel

uncomfortable, or you shouldn't feel like you have to defend yourself at school. I

mean, school need [to] just be a place for learning, and [a] place where you can

get knowledge that will get you to defeat the things we are facing.

Unfortunately, according to Cami, he and many of his classmates were faced with

an environment in which they believed that there was a need to fight (literally and

figuratively) the system and its teachers as a means of survival. Cami recounts a situation

in third grade wherein his teacher (male) pushed him and pinned him against a locker. This upset four of his classmates, and they attempted to stop the teacher. In the process, the teacher hit one of the girls. He said this really incited the students, and the five of them proceeded to give the teacher a beating. Cami says, "It's kind of weird, third grade students beating up a teacher. Just that would make a student scared."

Being in a racially-hostile school environment did not end in 3rd grade for Cami. In the 5th grade, he believes he was the target of a *push out*. Although admitting that he was mischievous, Cami firm states that he by no means was a bad kid. However, by the 5th grade he believes that his principal and teacher had come to the end of their rope with him. He says that his principal and the school monitor mendaciously turned a verbal altercation into a physical altercation. On this premise, the principal called the police and, according to Cami, "they had the cop come to the classroom and just handcuff me there and drag me out of the classroom." This was a 10 year old that adults believed was better off in the penal system, rather than in a true educational system.

Despite this experience, Cami came back to SUSD wherein he continued to fight. Throughout elementary and middle school, Cami recalls being called racially derogatory names by both students and teachers, and despite his desire to physically challenge the teachers, Cami and his friends chose to focus their challenges upon other students:

> I would always get into a lot of fights with other kids, but that was just mainly because of where I came from, and I didn't really take shit from anyone. Students, and sometimes teachers, would always call names and say certain things that hurt … a couple of people I would hang out with weren't really the type to take the name calling, so we pretty much got into fights all the time … If I were to

look back on it now, I'd say it was a racial thing, but during the time it never

occurred to us because it wasn't a part of our life yet and we weren't able to

understand basically what it was. The Anglo kids that we grew up with would

basically start stuff with mainly Mexican cultural background kids and the Yaqui

kids. We kind of picked on some of the other kids too, so it kind of just all added

up; but, if [I] were to look back on it now, it was like a racial thing. Especially,

because the White kids never got in trouble; they would be ones to start all this

mess, but they never got in trouble.

 Teachers within Cami's experience added another egregious layer by

encouraging students to fight one another. In fact, Cami remembers that some

teachers went as far as telling lies as a means of lighting a fire that would lead to a

fight between students:

I've had teachers, who didn't like me, and there was other students in that class

and [they] would have conflict with me … and the teacher would be like

encouraging us to fight each other. They would even lie to other students to get

[them] even more pissed at me, so that the other students would want to fight me

more. I mean this isn't, these aren't people who care about me or the other

students. They should be talking us out of fighting. They should be teaching us

how to get along or how we can fight racism. Like a lot of times these were

Chicano and Yaqui students that these White teachers were trying to get to fight

me. The project helped us understand that these two groups of people need to

unite; they don't need to be fighting each other. We do not get anything out of it. I

get really mad when I think about this - [back] then I didn't understand it. Now, I

see it like racism. Think about it: the white teacher get[s] two minorities to fight, both minorities get in trouble, get kicked out of school. I would or we minorities would fall behind in school, and we do not get a chance to do good; all this because some White teacher not teaching us the right lessons.

To add to Cami's frustration, his desires to learn and engage in an education were not met. He cites the lack of caring on the behalf of teachers and administrators as one of primary variables in the creation of his educational frustrations. This negligence manifested itself in teachers encouraging students to dropout to disparate treatment by teachers and administrators.

It was hard, teacher didn't care, the principal didn't care; I mean, yeah, they tried to do their job to save their paychecks, but I don't remember being taught anything. I picked some things up, but that seems more like something that happens because things are repeated so much grade after grade. It's like that song you sing and you don't know why you are singing it, and you don't even like that song. Well, it's like that, yeah, I learned something but when and how I don't know.

Once Cami got into high school things did not change: fights continued, the teacher abuse intensified, and the sense of hopelessness became stronger and stronger. Cami's forthcoming words are a counter to the position taken by the likes of Ogbu (1987) and Henry (1994) attribute the lack of academic success on the part of students of color to their unwillingness to assimilate or their lack of self motivation. Rather, given the following, it appears to be more the lack of expectation held for Chicanas/os, and the

societal willingness to place these children on the tracks of exploitation (Delgado, 1999,

Duncan-Andrade, 2005):

> A lot of teachers made me feel like they didn't want me in their classes, so I just
>
> wouldn't show up. I've had the majority of my teachers my whole life tell me 'if
>
> you don't want to work, then get out of this class,' and a lot of the time it was me
>
> trying to get paper so I could work or trying to figure out what the assignment was
>
> from somebody else to actually work. When I went to class I was trying, but they,
>
> the teachers had the label of "bad kid" on me and on a lot of other Mexicans and
>
> Yaquis too. You know, stuff like that happened all the time, prejudice between
>
> teachers to us … I had a teacher that was so prejudice, it wasn't even funny. And
>
> it was weird because she was so nice to all the Anglo students, even the ones that
>
> were just like me, that would sit in the back of the class and throw papers around,
>
> and she was so nice to them … I've had teachers tell me to drop out because I'm
>
> Mexican or … because they feel that I'm not going to learn anything. There's
>
> been teachers who have made me not want to show up to the classes, and times
>
> that I did show up was because we had tests that day, and I aced their tests. I'd
>
> still get the F's in their class because I was never there, but you know I'd show up
>
> and I'd do the work and pass their tests.

In an era in which the rhetoric de jure is no child left behind, we continue to replicate the

historical pattern of pushing children out of the education system (Darling-Hammond,

2006). The theoretical paradigm of American education remains centered upon the racism

of deficit thinking and cultural deficit models (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001a). Cami

believes that within his educational experiences, racism has led to extreme

marginalization of Chicanas/os:

> … a lot of kids got pushed by these teachers, I got lucky because I got into the
>
> project, but a lot people I know, Yaquis and Chicanos, just got like thrown away
>
> because nobody cared about them or took time for them. I would say that is pretty
>
> racist.

Horace Mann's promised that schools would be "the great equalizer of the

conditions of men" (Bowles & Gintis, 1976, p. 28). This is a promise yet to be realized,

and when Cami's words are considered, the question I have is when will we truly give

great effort to the coming to fruition of this promise?

> All the racism that goes on in and out of school, but really to schools; they claim
>
> schools to be equalizers. They're not, not all the schools I went to, especially
>
> when you look at what my schools had and what other ones had, it was not fair.
>
> When you figure what goes on in schools, it even worse, we have to
>
> deal with bad buildings, bathrooms, [and] classrooms. Then you figure
>
> bad books, bad teachers, and bad principals, and they think that we could
>
> do good?

Blanca Ericera

Blanca came to the SJEP with a good academic record. She had taken some

advanced placement courses, and had performed well in them, as well as in her

mainstream courses. Blanca, for the most part in her educational experiences, does not

recall being the focus of racist actions. However, she has witnessed her friends,

classmates and SJEP teachers fall prey to educational racism. The majority of these

situations manifested themselves through words and extremely low expectations on the part of teachers and administrators.

Having lived through this reality, and having an understanding of and commitment to social justice, Blanca articulates the need for the continued struggle against oppression and dehumanization:

I was a good student, and I had family that had experience with education, but what about all the students that don't have experience or family that has experience? These students are the ones we need to fight for … That is why I [took] the class. Oliva and me wanted to fight for these people …they need justice, and if they are taken out of education by racist teachers, that is not justice.

Blanca believes that educational racism destroyed the dreams and hopes of many of her classmates:

I don't recall a certain teacher or a certain someone putting me down, but just like making others, kids that I went to school with, just making them feel like they really don't have a chance to go to college or do what they want to do. Basically, making them feel like they are not able to go to college or that they don't deserve to go [to college]. Because I remember. . . you know so many kids have dreams and ambitions because like that's how we are as human beings, and we want to do stuff, but there's always teachers bringing us down and like: 'oh no that's not realistic;' 'you think you're going to college, I don't think so;' 'just be happy if you graduate from high school,' and one teacher said, 'I was going to say you should get to know Mr. [Molina, the auto shop teacher], but fixing cars might be too good for you. I wish I could send you to someone at McDonald's.' I don't

think I've ever been told 'that's not very realistic,' until I was older, and it's just like, I learned to just brush it off because I had learned from them that it really does affect you, the way you want to go about school and just someone telling you that you can't really do that because it's not within your reach, because your parents didn't go to college or because your sister is working at McDonald's or something and you don't really have a chance out there. So seeing them not going on to college and letting other racist people control their dreams and what they can be. Our classes helped us see this …I don't let it get to me, and racist people need to keep down, they need to keep us out of education so that they can keep power. They need to keep society the way it is, they do what they can to keep repeating the way society is.

Blanca touches upon notions of social reproduction, and within this reproduction is the need to keep certain peoples in certain racial and social positions (Bell, 1992; Delgado, 1995). Moreover, Blanca articulates the understanding that in order to maintain the status quo, certain people must be constructed as unequal and undeserving (Delgado, 1999). In essence, she believes that the hopes and dreams of many of her classmates were destroyed intentionally as a means of maintaining the racial and social status quo. In her next quote, Blanca demonstrated her understanding that in order to perpetuate the status quo the oppressor group must incorporate people from within the oppressed group to use as agents or gatekeepers of the oppressor group's status quo (Delgado & Stefancic, 1998):

Romero: *Mijita,* when you say they, you mean?

Blanca: Yeah, basically the teachers, the white teachers and the Hispanic teachers who want to be white. They are racist towards us.

Blanca goes on to say:

…it seems like a lot of teachers don't care, either they say stuff or they let other students say stuff about us. Some are saying like jokes, but they are really not jokes. The things they say hurt, and it's sad, but I think they want to hurt us. It's kinda out there, but if they want to hurt us, are they really going to try their best to teach us?

Blanca expanded upon educational racism to include the hostile environment faced by not only students, but also liberatory teachers:

Yeah, I think yeah, of course there was racism at Controlado. Just the way where some classes are located … really cool teachers, like Mr. Lozano and that Mr. M are way in the back … and just like the really white people were in the pods [nicer part of school] more. I mean they treat teachers we think are good like this (bad), but the teachers that really bad like: Mr. R, Ms. H, Mr. A, Ms. S and I can't think of her name is Ms. S… they get everything they want from the school. Everybody [teachers and administrators] talks about them being the really good teachers, but with us they are really not good, they are bad. They disrespect us, treat us like we don't know anything … the racism [towards us], and how teachers look down or talk down on us. They don't treat us like humans, they dehumanize us. Like, they are not trying to grow our intelligence. They are not trying to get us to be people who are going to change things so that they are better for us and everybody else.

In regards to liberatory teachers Blanca states:

Then the other thing, like Lovano has to fight for everything. They won't copy

stuff for him, he doesn't have paper or pencils, and he gets crap from the other

teachers because of us or the things he is teaching us. I mean Lovano and you

guys are really the best teachers we ever had. But, nobody tells him or you guys

'great job' or even a little 'thank you.' I know other teachers hate you. It just

doesn't make sense.

Blanca voices the culture of white of oppression that permeates the American education

system. She helps us understand how this reality affected her educational experiences,

especially those at Controlado.

The interview with Blanca (the same with all the others) was very emotional at

times she took long pauses to let her mind catch up with her emotions, or to just get her

multitude of thoughts in order. One of the most striking lessons I learned through the

interview process was the depth and the severity of their negative school experiences. In

fact, for me it was obvious that emotional wounds created by these experiences were so

deep and severe that even two years after leaving Controlado, these wounds were still

open and in need of attention. I also came to realize the emotional investment each

student needed to make in order to offer his or her thoughts and reflections.

While Blanca addressed the question of racism in schools, the deeper meaning for

me came from the emotion she demonstrates in her response:

Blanca: Yeah, of course, they don't have anything for us. (Pause) It's been a long

time since I really thought about all this. I see this (racism) in the world everyday,

but when you think about it, because it happens to you, it's really different. (Pause)

I, people hope that it doesn't happen, but it does, and it hurts because it happens to

me and people like me; it means we really don't get the same chances. (Pause).

Romero: *Mija,* if you want to take a break we can.

Blanca: No, I just need to get my thoughts together. I have a lot going through my

head … I mean this (racism) happened a lot to all of us (Chicanas/os). Why did it

happen? I know it is still happening to people like me. Then nothing happens to

them. They make the rules and change the rules whenever they want, and they

make us believe that we cannot do, achieve major things. They want us [in]

certain lower roles, and then when we almost get there, they try to change the

rules or make the rules harder for us. No, but they can break the rules or have no

rules, but when we come up, all of a sudden there is this rule or they say we don't

deserve it … it was only really meant for them (pause).

<div align="center">Rolando Yanez</div>

According to Rolando the SJEP has helped him develop a sensitivity towards racism,

and more importantly it has helped him develop the understanding that racism must and

can be confronted:

I don't know, I try to do something about it (racism); like now that I'm,

you know, now that I've graduated (from Controlado), now that I know

more English than before, you know, I speak now. I say something, I

speak about it. Once I see something, you know racist, man some shit goes

down right there.

Rolando acknowledge the presence of racism in his daily life, as well as in his

educational life:

A lot of people say that racism doesn't exist, people say, 'Oh, racism just

does not exist ...there's no more racism.' There's racism everyday, every

fricken day, either you see it on TV, you see it at schools, you hear it on

the radios, you know, man everybody is like, 'who cares, once you're at

the top, who cares about the rest;' you're at the top already, you know,

why look back, you made it. Racism, man, it just pisses me off. A lot of

people are racist man, a lot of people are racist, you know now with the

border. The president's speech … people protesting, and those people

burning Mexican flags, man. Racism is just everyday life. We go through

it everyday, so I guess we have to live with it, unless you do something

about it. Unless you raise your voice, speak your mind, do something

about it.

Rolando hits upon the breadth of racism and its present-day racial rearticulation.[35]
In regard to racism in schools, Rolando believes that racism from teachers to students is a
common occurrence. In addition, he has identified his status as a recent arriver and as a
monolingual Spanish speaker as the motive for the racism he faced. These racist actions
had a devastating effect upon Rolando. He experienced moments of self-hate, which led
to emotional and psychological distress:

It just feels, man…ahhgh…It just feels like, you feel like ashamed of

yourself …you feel like ashamed of yourself because like, you're not

understanding nothing… or like you're not doing nothing, so you're like,

everybody's just staring at you as a new kid, as a new Mexican kid in

class. I felt like shit man …and tears are about to drop.

Rolando's status as an English language learner placed him in a, *you don't bother me, I won't bother you* [italics added] category. This is a situation wherein teachers feel that as long as students are not disruptive and do not ask for much the teacher will allow the student to languish in English oblivion:

Like teachers ignoring [me], and [I'm] sitting in the back seat…because the teacher thinks [I] know nothing …I would be in class and the teacher would be teaching like the lesson for the day and I would be in the back … we had a table and there would be like three or four of us that didn't know English at all, so we would wait for a lady that would help us, like a translator lady … but a lot of times that lady won't go. So, we would spend like the whole time in class doing nothing.

This lack of attention on the part of Rolando's teacher also led to other forms of hostilities. Neither the teachers nor the system addressed Rolando's needs as an English language learner. In fact, it appears to me that the teachers and the SUSD system were prepared and willing to designate Rolando a *throw away kid*, a student that they would not invest in, and hence, about whom they did not care whether or not he succeeded or failed. This lack of caring manifested itself through racist name calling, and low expectations, leaving students like Rolando to contend with the pain that is created by these hurtful experiences. The following is Rolando's recounting of these experiences:

I think [I was] in a Social Studies class and we were in there, and we had no idea, no clue of what we are talking about … So he asks us some questions, so we're in the back, like, 'Ah okay, why is the whole class

looking at us? Why is the teacher like stop talking?' And like I don't

know, at least [I thought] he would try to come and help us, but he didn't!

He got mad and he took us outside and sent us to clean outside, to pick up

garbage outside.

Rather than coming to class, this teacher assigned Rolando to pick up garbage during

class time. This continued for a few days, until Rolando had the courage to ask one of his

other teachers about whether or not this action was appropriate:

He (the teacher) was like, you know, [trying to] keep me away from my

education, instead of helping me, he took me outside and [to] pick up

garbage. Like the whole class, like picking up garbage. I was like, 'Wow!'

I just couldn't believe it. I got like really sad about it. I spoke to my other

teacher, and my other teacher did something about it. He was like, 'You

know, we got to go to the office right now.'

Rolando was taken out of the teacher's class. However, according to Rolando this

teacher was not disciplined because the principal believed that the teacher meant

this action to be nothing more than a "funny joke."

Unfortunately, this was not the end of the racism that Rolando faced in

school. Throughout his middle school and high school years Rolando was openly

mocked and ridiculed by teachers and students:

It wasn't only the kids, it was the teachers. The teachers didn't think we

could know what they were saying … 'I don't know why the office, they

send me these stupid Mexicans … what are you doing here? You're not

good enough, so what are you doing in my class?' At first I didn't, but a

little while later I kinda could understand, but I didn't have the words to say anything, and I was afraid too. I was afraid to say something, I wanted to say something, but I couldn't. Shit man, I wanted to say a lot of things.

As other participants have mentioned, they believe that they were fortunate to have participated in the project. Rolando, like the other students, believed that the project saved them from the education system and the position it had assigned them. Moreover, it gave them a space wherein they could begin to mend the wounds that had been created by racism. In this state of healing the students could also find the voice they needed to raise themselves above the oppression:

…The project helped me with the way it (ridicule and mockery) still hurt. At the time we couldn't understand the things they were saying, but now I know. The class, the project, I mean you guys showed the students that we could say something; we didn't have to be scared. We know that we need to stand up. We are conscious, and we need to use our conscience for justice, and to fight racism. Damn Mister, this was the best part, one of the best parts.

Rolando and students like him face what Richard Delgado (1999) refers to as the inequality of language. He states, "if you're of a different hue or origin or prefer to speak a different language, you can't insist on equal treatment" (p. 19). The system, many of the site administrators, and many of the teachers viewed and treated Rolando as though he was undeserving of the same rights as an average white student. He and students like

him are easy prey for those with agendas that do not include an *authentic caring* (Valenzuela, 1999) of children regardless of their hue or native language.

Tina Verdugo

Tina, a student who at one point came to school to attend lunch so that she could socialize with her friends, believes that racism has the capacity to articulate and rearticulate itself into many different forms (Omi & Winant, 1994), giving it the ability to engage society on many levels and in many places:

> Tina: Racism attacks us in a lot of ways, and on another conscious level we do things that we don't realize. I mean we do things that will hurt us and help Whites. You said we do things that protect Whites (White Oppression)[36], and sometimes we don't even know it. You said this about Escalante (pseudonym).
>
> Romero: Sellout or *vendido.*
>
> Tina: No, something like that, but not that. Damn, I know this word. It's a keeper.
>
> Romero: Oh, I know.
>
> Tina: I know, gatekeeper. [They] watch the gate for Whites (White Oppression). Basically, we keep ourselves and our gente in check. Like you said, we spend a lot time fighting our own, and we don't get to fight with the ones we should be fighting. Right?
>
> Romero: We taught you well.
>
> Tina: I'm not saying this because you taught us, [these] things are true. Man, I see them all the time. Everywhere I go, see something that I

learned in the project. It feels like I went all the way to the 10th grade and I really didn't learn much, and then in two years I learned so much.

Racism articulates itself through low expectations and the disparate treatment of Chicana/o students. According to Tina, teachers directly expressed that she should consider dropping out of school or that she would not amount to anything in life. Tina also refers to the notion of microaggressions,[37] but these experiences transcend microaggressions. Tina's experiences were overt, direct and deliberate acts of racism:

> My freshman year at Controlado, I had a teacher, she was actually my biology teacher … she was just like 'I don't know, its students like you who make me want to give up sometimes. I try and try to do something for you guys and later on I know you're going to be the percentage of this school that doesn't graduate. Why don't you just do the school a favor and just drop out?' It just added and built up from those other microaggressions I had building up from other teachers talking down, saying that I wasn't going to amount to nothing and I should just do my family a favor [dropout] and get a job.

We must understand that comments like those above made by teachers are a form of psychological violence.

As Tina explains, our children face a double jeopardy in that not only are they exposed to psychological violence, but are left by themselves to try and make sense of this violence. When the students cannot negotiate the psychological violence and respond in a manner that counters those who believe in the system's perception of what is appropriate, the supports of the system blames our children for our failures:

Yeah, why do these kind[s] of things happen . . . like racism and racist teacher remarks? They (microaggressions) just build up and you know that's when you see … a student blow up on a teacher and the teacher writes a referral. [It's] because of all the other microaggressions that he's (the student) had from the past, it took that last one just to make him explode. Nobody helps these students get over the microaggressions, and when they (students) blow up they (teachers and administrators) say it's because we don't care about school, but school doesn't care about us. Schools and teachers don't care about Chicano students, and we are the ones facing all the microaggressions they put on us. I know that at one point, I did care about school. I don't know when I stopped, but I know that I had this anger in me, and I was always frustrated, but I didn't know why. When you and Lozano talked about microaggressions, man that hit me; I am like, hell yeah, that's what it is. All the little bullshit they gave left thousands of little nicks or cuts in my mind and in my corazón, until final they all created this big - ass cut. This big - ass cut hurt, it hurt a lot. It caused my frustration and my anger, but I know that it was all racism causing all these little cuts. I didn't know what this was until the project.

Unlike Bourdieu's (2002) symbolic violence that is often implicit and subtle, the psychological violence faced by Tina and her Chicana/o peers, is explicit and pointed. Like her colleagues, Tina is articulating the manner in which racism has entered into their school experiences, and similar to the others she makes it clear the these acts of racism are painful and that they perpetuate a reality that is filled

with intentional adverse impacts that are meant to ensure the maintenance of the

present racial and social order (Delgado, 1999).

These hostile acts or adverse impacts construct an environment that can be

perceived as unwelcoming and/or hostile. For students, like the ones in this study,

this hostile environment is filled with comments like the ones thrown at Tina:

"Why don't you just dropout, and get a job washing dishes at some Mexican

restaurant?" Tina like others in this study was confused and hurt by these

comments:

It just always seemed to pinpoint, hit my heart . . . I don't know, it was just

a weird situation. It happened to my classmates. Students from different

periods mentioning the same thing that she would say 'why are you

wasting your time here, why?' I just didn't understand why … it just

didn't make sense.

Despite the fact that the reason or rationale for these acts did not make

sense to Tina, she was clear in her response as to how she was made to feel by

these acts of hostility:

Tina: Yeah, but different, like you don't feel good about what is

happening to you. You feel kinda bad, kinda like something bad happened

to you, and then they blame you and say it's our fault. It's like no matter

what you do nothing changes, you keep that feeling, and they keep digging

that feeling deeper into you. Then you feel, ah... you feel really bad, and

you start feeling like you shouldn't go back, like you need to stay away.

Even though it's not good to not be in school, at least when you are not

there you don't have that feeling, but then you start feeling guilty because

you know you need education for a better life.

Romero: Is there one word that you think defines this feeling?

Tina: Damn, that's hard … (silence) the only word I guess is violated. I

guess it could be like when women are raped, something is taken from

them. In school they take our minds and our souls; they violate us with the

way they try to give us school.

In the latter commentary, Tina communicates the intensity of the hostility that can

be created within the Chicana/o educational experience. This racism manifested

or rearticulated into hostility she equated with being raped. The depth of this

statement is profoundly bothersome for me. Moreover, I believe that we are naïve

if we believe that Tina's educational experiences are only case wherein this type

of an environment has been created.

Tina goes on to explain how these acts are used to reproduce society's racial order

(Harris 2001; Coates, 2003; Morris, 2005). This racial order positions Chicanos and

people of color at the bottom of the socio-racial well, while simultaneously producing

and reproducing an order that place white at the top of that well (Bell, 1992):

Tina: Not very many people actually care about us. A lot say they care, but

they end up treating us like crap. They have their roles, and it feels like the

roles are to keep [us] down … society keeps itself in the same role or in

the same way. Racism is a part of this, they use racism to make decisions

that a lot of times hurts us … it still keeps us in our roles and them in their

roles. Higher and lower roles … If you don't have education, you don't

have nothing. But it needs to be different because now it isn't right. It

isn't fair because of racism. We still need to fight the racism.

It is shame that one system that people believe to be the *great equalizer*[38] is for

the most part, the system that is used to maintain the unequal and inequitable

status quo within the America's social and racial order.

The question that I was attempting to answer within this chapter was: Do

Chicana/o students believe that racism has influenced their educational

experiences? At least in the experiences of the participants in this study, racism

was a prevalent reality within their educational experiences. Whether it be racism

through the hegemonic perpetuation of white oppression, racism through the lack

of social, cultural and/or historical pedagogical and curricular relevance, racism

through banking education, racism through low expectations, racism through the

lens of language as a problem (Ruiz, 1984),[39] or the racism that prohibits one's

understanding of diversity as a resource,[40] racism was an extremely negative

reality for the youth in this study. Furthermore, in my role as an administrator

who views his primary goal to be the advocacy of children of color in the same

district attended by the participants in this study, I can tell you that the racism

within SUSD extends far beyond the experiences of the participants. Racism in

this district is alive at the conscious, dysconscious and the subconscious level. As

I attempt to understand the nature of racism within this district, it is critical to

understand the racial structure (Bonilla – Silva & Lewis, 1997)[41] of the district

and the degree of balance that is created by racism in SUSD. An understanding of

the structure of racism, and the balance it creates within any given institution,

system, or society, allows for a greater understanding of the most effective

remedy or remedies.

CHAPTER SIX

"If so, what do they think can be done to counter the educational racism?"

> The Project helps with this because we learned a new way of thinking. We took the pill (laughing). Now we can't go back, but this is better because now we see the matrix. They can't fool us; sometimes it (critical consciousness) hurts more because we can see everything, well now we can fight it (racism) too. Before, we were fighting the wrong way …Education is the key tool in life. If you don't have education, you don't have nothing. But it needs to be different because it isn't right; it isn't fair because of racism. We still need to fight the racism. - Tina Verdugo

Oliva Guevara

Oliva's first response to the questions about what can be done about racism they face on a daily basis was the SJEP. However, beyond the SJEP, Oliva was advocating for a pedagogical shift within SUSD and, by extension, the educational experiences of students like her. At the center of this shift would be the notion of problem-posing. Problem-posing education has the capacity to transform the student-teacher relationships through the requirement that both participants engage the world around them Problem-posing develops within students and teachers the capacity and power to examine and critically understand the world they live in, and which simultaneously thrust them, into the learning process. For students and teachers, the world moves from the motionless to a world that is in motion and in need of critical transformation (Freire, 1974).

Oliva understands this movement and the necessity for transformation; moreover, in her understanding she targets racism and the need to engage racism as a means to

overcome the products of its creation, e.g. segregation, and inequity and inequality within education:

> Aug: What would have been the opposite of that (racist and oppressive education?
>
> Oliva: You know our classes were the opposite. I mean we weren't afraid to look at racism. We labeled racism in our school, in our community and lives. I know some people didn't like it, but you know we gotta be able to understand it if we are going to fight it. I learned that from you, and I believe it. They want us not to look at it so that we cannot know it or then fight it. We would be like them, lost in their own minds.

Because of the dialogical relationship that exists within problem-posing education and the CCI model, teacher and students have the capacity to communicate with one another in a truer intellectualized discourse that gives them the opportunity to transcend a previously defined world. This transcendence comes to fruition in the dialogue wherein students and teachers describe their world and the actions that are needed for its transformation. It is in this reflection and articulation, and the later transformative actions that teachers and students realize their humanization (Freire, 1974):

> We need more dialogue instead of book work because it was just like go in take roll and assign a chapter out of a book. So we never really got to speak to each other about things that are real, like racism. I mean a lot time we weren't allowed to speak to the other students. So maybe if there was more talking in class we would learn about other people like their ideas and what they think about certain issues and what they think about

what we're learning … That is what we did, and we talked about our lives because that was the assignment. It made it all real; it wasn't some book, it was our life. I mean why wouldn't we want to be part of that?

Oliva points out the social relevance of the CCI educational experience and the fact that it heightened her level of engagement. In addition, she acknowledges that the relevance inherent within CCI is significant for youth. Furthermore, problem-posing racism in the context of American society brings teachers and students closer to fully understanding the nature and scope of oppression that exist in the United States and its educational system.

Cami Nieto

Cami explains how his educational experience prior to the SJEP was racist, and that the SJEP was the only anti-racist educational experience he encountered during his years in SUSD. In addition, he explains that the SJEP helped him and the other students understand racism, it helped them take a stand against the racism they faced during their school day and in their lives outside school.

When asked about racism in his educational experiences, Cami responded with the following. In addition, he offers the SJEP as the model for anti-racist and social justice education:

Hell yeah! I mean, think about my whole education until I met you guys. That was all racism. Now I got to have an education that wasn't racist. I didn't have teachers who were trying to kick me out for no reason. Shit, the project is all about racism and justice. This should be the model for

facing and fighting racism in schools. Shit, if it can save my life, it can

save the lives of other kids like me.

The project for Cami was real and just; not did it offer him tools to engage and counter

racism, but it gave him a place where he felt safe, a place free of prejudice and

discrimination:

You guys interacted with us on a friend level, we could relate to you guys,

we could come to you and talk to you about anything. Students should

feel like that with every teacher. They should be able to come to their

teachers and talk and get things off their chest. Just that in general will

make you want to show up to class everyday … The best thing about the

project was the interaction between the teachers and the students and the

curriculum that we were faced with. It was basically the first time anyone

has ever done that for us, so that was the best part about it.

… it had that much of an impact because before our teachers really

didn't care about us, before they would just be there to make their money.

I've had teachers tell me to drop out like four times in my life. It was

different to have a teacher say 'so what do you think? Do you guys have

anything to add to what I'm saying here?'

In regards to engaging and countering racism, Cami valued the opportunity to

gain a deeper understanding through the curriculum that was built around his life and the

lives of the other students:

…the things we studied and talked about was the shit we faced in our

lives. That was a lot of racism. That is what we studied and learned about.

The project was about racism in our lives, and what made it real was [when] you guys said, 'what are you going to do about it.' We did take the challenge, and we did something. Yeah, just the fact that we could actually collect this research and actually put it together in a video, that in itself should be able to fight any inequality in this world. The main thing about that is that we need to get it to the right people, and the right people need to be willing to listen. But the products that we've created are strongly based opinions that we felt.

Cami felt that it was important that the teachers in the project were unafraid to take on the racism within schools and society:

Some teachers won't go the distance …We weren't afraid to throw it out there, and you guys weren't afraid to bring it. It's like you came in throwing bombs and we were waiting for that. I guess they say that is radical, but it helped me and the other students figure out racism. Like I said earlier, the project helped us get the bullets and the shields we needed to fight racism. I think we did a really good [job], and we did a hell of a lot better than everybody thought we could ever do.

Lastly, Cami believes that the SJEP has fostered within him the capacity to struggle against racism. It has helped him discover and implement a positive method by which he can engage this struggle:

Yeah, it gave me the idea of change. So just knowing that we can make a difference, and just knowing that we have that voice now or that we've had that voice ever since. It gives me all the ability to overcome racism,

and I just have to apply myself to do it and do it in the right way and not in

the worst way … It gives you the idea to overcome in a lot of different

ways. I feel that we all have that now.

<div align="center">Blanca Ericera</div>

Blanca articulates that the project offered her and the other students the

opportunity to engage the issues of oppression within their schools and their

communities. It also helped her develop a critical consciousness and an understanding of

the need to take action:

> It [the experiences within the project] just meant, just that you can do anything. . .
>
> that you can think the way you can and its okay because there are other people out
>
> there that think the same way as you do. Our minds were opened for the first time
>
> because we were actually supposed to think about fixing problems, and not just
>
> any problem, but problems in our school and neighborhoods.

In addition to fighting racism and building consciousness, Blanca believed that

the project gave her a deeper appreciation for her colleagues and their experiences. She

appreciated the selflessness and solidarity of her peers, and the experience in its entirety

gave Blanca a deeper sense of hope:

> We tried to say some things so that hopefully things would get better. Nobody
>
> said let's focus on this, so that things could be better for them. We focused on
>
> things that could make things better for our people. We really appreciated each
>
> other for that. You know, you just appreciate people more because of what they
>
> go through and what they've gone through, and you kind of want to help people
>
> out more. And make Tucson, for now, and the world a better place for kids.

Blanca echoes the same sentiments regarding the relevance of the curriculum and its

ability to connect with students as they struggle for understanding and purpose:

> That stays with me. Like I said, it wasn't just like another class where we just sit
>
> in class and there's a teacher in front and the whole banking education. … It was
>
> more interaction and more like student and teacher. We got to know the teacher
>
> more, you got to know their life, and we got the chance to fight for a better life;
>
> that usually doesn't happen.
>
> Blanca adds:
>
> Because of this, when you guys would gives assignments it was cool they are
>
> giving something that is going to help with our lives right now or help to
>
> understand what is going on in the community so that we can find a way to help.
>
> That was really different because usually we get assignments that don't make
>
> sense or you can't figure out why it is important.

The relevance of the project helped create a greater sense of relevance in the other

courses Blanca was taking during her time she was a member of the SJEP:

> Yeah, it helped me relate to education more. It helped me grow stronger in my
>
> other classes because I wanted to do something that would help. I felt like doing
>
> the work in the other classes would give me a chance to do more for people, it
>
> gave a chance to do more help. I mean, the more I knew, the more I could help.
>
> Like you said, the things we learned would become our weapons because our
>
> mind and our words would be stronger. And, it was just easier for me to think 'ok
>
> I can go to the U of A and I can get a degree in something that I like, I'm very
>
> interested in, and something that I can help people.'

Blanca's articulates that the project's focus of a socially and culturally relevant curriculum and the nurturing of critical consciousness were critical to her success within the program. Moreover, these tools helped her in her ability to engage and counter racism within her school experience and within her community. Blanca's last point above overlaps with the question in the next chapter. Blanca believes that the project helped her see the relevance of her other courses, even if this was nurtured from the perspective of using what she learned to change the things that those coming after her would learn.

<div align="center">Rolando Yanez</div>

Rolando believes that despite what some teacher and administrators had to say, the SJEP was critical to his understanding of racism, and his understanding of the need to engage racism. According to Rolando, many teachers believed that the SJEP students were too young to be exposed to an educational experience that centered upon the investigation of racism. However, Rolando believed that the SJEP and its focus on race and racism were critical to the development of his critical consciousness:

> It (the SJEP) like shows us the different ways of racism. Like how can we see racism, you know, people are trying to cover it … a lot of people took it like, 'No, you guys are too young. You guys can't handle the truth.' It did help us understand this (the SJEP), the truth …It helped us to see the truth, and did help us to see racism.

Rolando, like other SJEP students, talked about how the SJEP helped to open their eyes to the world, and that this opening of the eyes helped to nurture a critical consciousness and the commitment to the pursuit of social justice. Moreover, this

consciousness and the SJEP bring the questions of justice, injustice and racism front and center:

> It's a good, you know what…man! It's just weird, man. I was okay, like I was okay, but not good, I don't know, I was just like, whatever. And after this, it just like opens your eyes. You start noticing all this stuff now. I was like, "What the heck!" Like all this stuff is happening that I didn't know about … how come no one teaches this (critical consciousness) to our kids in the school? You know, like [a] basic class. You (Chicanas/os) need to take a Social Justice class! And um, this project you know, helped us see the truth … We took this project and it took us way [beyond anything before], it's just another level of thinking, a level of seeing things different now.

For Rolando, the SJEP took him beyond thinking about and talking about social justice and the engagement of racism, it helped him develop a true sense of critical praxis. He entered a state wherein he is committed to not only the dialogue about injustice and racism in his world, but also to the actions that are needed to engage, counter and even overcome racism:

> Like it did open my eyes, but like, damn, now that I did this, I want to do something now. Like I don't know…now when I get up in the morning I got to do something. Now I get up wanting to do something positive, something good. Before I was like, 'I don't know about this. I don't know about another day at school,' you know, stuff like that. Now you know the truth. Why be afraid, you know, why be afraid? And now, thanks to all this, I work now, I have good job. I get to speak with others. I'm in charge of my own crew now. I'm in charge of

people now. Now I talk to people in suits and everything. Now I use my knowledge that I've learned, all this new stuff that I learned. I take all this into my life. This helps me a lot; it's just feels like a 360° change in my life.

In his life today, Rolando is committed to social justice and the engagement of racism. According to him, the SJEP helped him develop the voice and the spirit that is needed to take on the fight of social justice and counter-racism. Rolando believes that he now has the right voice for this pursuit and he now pursues this journey without fear. Moreover, this clarity and commitment was achieved through his ability to heal from the wounds inflicted upon him by the injustices of American society and its education system (Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000):

The project helped me with the way it still hurt; a lot of times at the time we couldn't understand the things they were saying, but now I know. It wasn't only the kids, it was the teachers. The teachers didn't think we could know what they were saying. At first I didn't, but a little while later I kinda could understand, but I didn't have the words to say anything, and I was afraid too. I was afraid to say something. I wanted to say something, but I couldn't. Shit, man, I wanted to say a lot of things. The class, the project, I mean you guys showed the students that we could say something; we didn't have to be scared. We today know that we need to stand up. We are conscious, and we need to use our consciousness for justice, and to fight racism. Damn Mister, this was the best part, one of the best parts.

As this section of this chapter come to its end, I believe the following quote, like the last sentence of the previous quotes, speaks volumes to the impact the SJEP has had

upon student's consciousness and the understanding of racism developed by Rolando and

his camaradas in the SJEP:

> Like for example, um… like when we barely started that class … you and Lozano
>
> showed a book. And you guys told us society tells you to learn this and this side
>
> only, but what you guys did is you showed us different history and problems from
>
> all sides, you know. The injustice in history and, you know the power of the
>
> community and stuff like that from a different perspective than everybody else.
>
> The racism we see, but they pretend they can't see. Oh, you know, we have to see
>
> it because that is how we make things betters. But, they do not want these things
>
> better, because it means that maybe like, you know we might have more than
>
> before and they have less. That makes them afraid.

<p align="center">Tina Verdugo</p>

Tina articulates the notion that the project helped develop a racial consciousness, and

this consciousness was an awakening for her and her classmates. She voices that the

project pushed her into a totally different trajectory, a trajectory that is now heading

towards a college education. Tina speaks to the idea that the SJEP was counter-racist in

that it shifted the intended racialized outcomes that she believes were for her and her

classmates:

> We could have never done that if it wasn't for you guys. Not only that, we, a lot
>
> of us, probably all us, wouldn't have graduated. Even though a lot of teachers
>
> called you guys racist because of the books we were reading and the way we were
>
> looking at things. Shit, because you helped us see and understand racism, we were
>
> able to change our lives and our education. The truth, they were the racists,

because in their eyes, I was supposed to drop out. Antonio and Rolando were

supposed to drop out; fuck all of us were supposed to drop out! I am going to

college, that wasn't supposed to happen. I was supposed to be a dishwasher or

something. If you think about it, all this shit is racist. And, it's crazy because they

want us to come to school for this racist stuff (curriculum, pedagogy, and the

interpersonal interactions). And when we can't take it, they call us losers. That's

fucked up, but we all proved all of them wrong.

I offer this quote as a means of demonstrating the consciousness that can be nurtured

through an educational experience that is orientated in anti-racist / social justice pursuits.

Moreover, Tina further expounds upon counter-racism outcomes that she and her

classmates realized as a participant in the SJEP.

Among these outcomes is a deeper understanding of the impact upon their lives.

In a demonstration of this understanding, Tina strongly points to the microagressions that

took place in her educational experience as being a significant form of racism that she

was forced to face if she was going remain in school. She referred to the racist statements

that were couched or covered by humor. These microaggressions cut into her heart and

soul, and these psychological wounds negatively impacted her educational experiences

and those of many of her classmates. Tina is critical of the education system's inability to

help students mediate, negotiate or cope with the racism within its system. In fact, as she

articulated in the previous chapter, she believed that the education inherently is a space

filled with racial microaggressions that force Chicana\o students into constant state of

volatility**.** Moreover, Tina argues that the volatility of Chicana\o students as a result of all

the microaggressions is misread by teachers and administrators as indifference. This misunderstanding becomes the primary point of reference for administrators and teachers.

Tina realizes that in the vast majority of case, she and other Chicanas\os are not to blame; but rather, it is the education system's unwillingness to offer an educational experience that was free of racism and that operates from a state of authentic caring. She says it loud and clear when she states that, "school doesn't care about us." Despite the rhetoric of SUSD and districts across the country, school systems do not care about Chicana/o students and/or poor students (Valenzuela, 1999; Noguera, 2003).

Some, especially those in my district, may say that this statement is not true; however, the initiative through the district has committed itself to confront racism and white privilege, is not considered important enough to fund. Therefore, in its rhetoric it is committed to becoming an anti-racist district, but, this message has been forwarded without the commitment of any fiscal resources.

Despite this lack of caring, the SJEP was blessed by Dr. Rebecca Montano, who at the time was the deputy superintendent of SUSD and one of the few people that I believe actually cared about the academic success of Chicana\o students. With her help we were able to convince the administration at Controlado to give the project a chance. This presents the opportunity for our students to experience education that is liberatory and transformational.

The following is a recounting of Tina's thoughts and feelings regarding the liberation and transformation she has gone through as a result of the anti-racist education she experienced in the SJEP. I can feel the sense of hope and purpose

she now carries with her as she embraces life and the world:

> Well, the project, that was uh. . . actually I can say that that was one of the best things that happened to me …After I met you guys, you and Mr. Lozano, and then I met Dr. J, my visual image of education got completely turned around, it got turned upside down. Because I had it all upside down, I thought education was 'whatever' … I really didn't care for school, it wasn't that important for me . . . The project is just unique like, it offers a lot of things. It makes you sit there and think. Its education, but in a fun way. You would use the curriculum in a way so that it would interest us and in a way so that we could assert ourselves 110% towards whatever it was you guys were trying to teach us because it related to us; it was interesting, it was fun. Not like the regular curriculum where you open your text book to page 108 and answer and answer questions 1-59. It wasn't like that: we sat around, we conversated (dialogued), we had open discussions, everybody had open opinions, and it didn't matter what you had to say, you were never wrong, you were asserting yourself and your opinion; so that's what counted, and it didn't matter if you were right or if you were wrong, and if you were wrong you were corrected in a professional way. You guys brought us in[to] the curriculum. You brought our history and culture to us, and it was education. You let us be critical of our lives, and it was (our) education. Yes, we had to come up with answers, and that was hard, but that was all education. We were down with it! You guys don't know how far you pulled some of us.

Education was real; it wasn't something that happened to someone else at some other time. Education was in our neighborhoods, down our *caminos*, and in our school. I didn't realize that it was all around. It doesn't have to happen in a seat, with a book, in some classroom. You taught us that, yeah through some hard books, but it was the way those books connected to us, to our life, to our world. We could see the books in our lives; shoot our lives were better than the books. We could express our lives in our poetry and in our assignment and that was considered education. You guys also taught us to express ourselves in a unique way, and now when I express myself to my mom, like if we're at the store, I'll tell her 'did you see that?' And I'll just start talking, and my mom would be like 'what are you talking about,' and I gotta break it down so that she understands, and then once I tell her, she's like 'who are you?' She always tells me 'I don't understand how you change from not caring about school to being all about visualizing and seeing thing in the outside world and saying 'that's wrong and it's not supposed to be like that.' Now, as far as education, I want to do something like. . . I didn't want to go to college, I didn't even want to finish high school, and now I went on. I dropped out of school for a while and I went back to school and I graduated. I graduated at 19, but I graduated and I got it over with. Like I said, I put in for financial aid, I want to go to Pima College, take all my basic classes, and then from there

hopefully that will help me decide what part of education I want to take

on, what I want to do as far as for a career. Before the project, that didn't

interest me, college was never even in the picture.

This quote overlap with the responses in the next chapter, but I believe Tina

expresses the need for these types of educational experiences, especially for

students like herself and her classmate, all of whom had been marginalized by

the educational system and its racist pursuits (Yosso, 2006).

The intent of this chapter is to reveal what the participants believe could

be done to counter the racist education they faced in SUSD schools. Each of the

students expressed that an educational opportunity similar to the one they

experienced in the SJEP would be extremely beneficial to Chicanas/os and other

marginalized youth.

Moreover, this chapter is an articulation of the critical consciousness that

can be nurtured within a CCI type experience. The type of consciousness that is

developed within the SJEP and the CCI helped guide these students and the

overwhelming vast majority of their peers towards transformational resistance

wherein they not only have a critique of the oppressive nature of their social

reality, but they are also motivated to action actions that are centered in the

notion and pursuit of social justice (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001).

Most important is the impact the SJEP had upon the ability of the students

to negotiate, mediate and engage the racist nature of their educational

experiences. In fact, the epistemological impact of CCI and the SJEP had upon

these students led to the transformation of their historical, social, and futuristic

reality. CCI and the SJEP had a tri-dimensional impact on how these students

will forever engage the world as agents of social justice.

CHAPTER SEVEN

"What influence does an education model that merges critical race theory, critical

pedagogy and authentic caring have upon the educational experience of marginalized

Chicana/o students?"

> I think it's[the project] more critical because it was about what we thought and we
>
> put in our ideas that maybe the teachers didn't know about and they didn't just
>
> brush it off and go on to the next subject, they talked to us about it and let us
>
> explain why we thought that and believed. It was more like we were working as a
>
> group better than student listening to teacher. - Unidentified SJEP Student

Oliva Guevara

Oliva believed that the convergence of critical race theory, critical pedagogy and

authentic caring (the CCI model) led to a greater sense of relevance, a stronger critically

racial consciousness, and a deeper sense of education that is built upon hope, family and

love. This experience is different from the text-driven, silent, lifeless, and artificial

classroom experiences that had filled her education life prior to the SJEP and the CCI

model.

Oliva believed that the CCI model gave students the opportunity to dialogue, to learn

about one another, to learn about the worlds within their worlds, and to center themselves

within their education: "… we talked about and researched our lives because that was the

assignment. It made it all real, it wasn't some book, it was our life. I mean why wouldn't

we want to be part of that?"

Beyond the investigation of their social realities, Oliva also articulated upon the

importance of a curriculum that is socially, culturally and historically relevant (Cruz, 2007; Gay, 2000 & 2002; Duncan-Andrade, 2005; Herrero, 2006; Hooks, 1996). For Oliva this type of curriculum is a connection between school, her life, and her community. Moreover, it is an opportunity to construct the praxis she would use to engage herself in the pursuit of social justice:

> With school we read, but we just kind of take it in for a short amount of time so we just regurgitate it on a test or on a homework assignment. And with this particular thing, we would actually read things that interested us and we'd want to keep it with us for our lives. Like we would relate to the stories and the poetry and the books that we would read and the movies we would see. The hardest part was retraining our minds to not take it in for a short amount of time because we would need it again. Regular school was, like, you get it and you give it away right away and you don't remember it years later. And with this, we knew that we would need it for the rest of our lives because it wasn't just history, it wasn't just math, it wasn't just English, it was actually talking about our lives, our experiences and people similar to us, and everything that we read and wrote and watched, had to do with our lives and we could use it later. So in a way we were kind of building a survival kit with all this information, and we had to actually participate in it, and when we read something we didn't just write a summary on it or answer five questions on it, we actually talked about it and how we related to it, and were there any experiences that were similar to experiences we had?

Oliva's words speak to the nurturing of a critical consciousness; the nurturing of a critical consciousness is one the primary objectives of the CCI model. I believed that

investing time towards this pursuit would be the greatest education we could offer. In addition to the above, Oliva offered her perspective on the path towards critical consciousness and the weight of the social responsibility that comes with this awakening:

> It was hard to deal with when it was like "oh my God, this is happening to us," but when it was put into a broader scope or a broader *you* or something, you start realizing that this is happening to everyone everywhere, so it's a lot to take in; it's kind of like unbelievable, it's like surreal, like they let you in on this secret but it's not really a secret because it's happening everywhere, but only a few people know, and a lot of the people that know pretend like they don't.

The other of the CCI model's primary objectives is academic achievement. I believed that the connections created within Freire's tri-dimensionalization process would lead to greater socio-educational relevance that would scaffold back into the historical relevance, and this newly created space (the connection between the social/present-day to the historical) would lead to challenges of the hegemony, epistemology and ontology subscribed to by the students. In addition, within this challenge is my belief that the SJEP students would begin the shift away from a magical or naïve consciousness towards a critical consciousness. Because of the social and historical relevance of this process (curriculum, pedagogy and interactions), I believed that the engagement level for SJEP students would be greater in our class than any of their other classes at that time or prior.

Furthermore, I also knew given previous experience that this bi-dimensionally created relevance and engagement would foster a deeper sense of identity, purpose and hope within the SJEP and it is herein that the tri-dimensionalization is achieved. Through

the nurturing of a critically conscious identity, the depth a purpose becomes deeper (see the statement above by Oliva); our students realized a greater sense of agency[42]connected to their new level of consciousness and purpose, which elevated their sense of hope. This new sense of identity, purpose and hope led to the establishment of connections that transcended the here and now. These new connections led to innovative thoughts, plans and ties to the future. It is in this tri-dimensionalized state that our SJEP students started to experience greater academic success, and it is therein that our student developed their academic identities. It is in this space that our Oliva began to think about education in a different manner:

> Your class got me really interested in learning and like education because, like before, I probably wouldn't have graduated on time because I was already really behind … I had a lot of family problems and I ended up not going to school for a whole year. After I became involved with the project, I had a lot of motivation to get finished, and, like the class, really made on impression on me that without education, without a high school diploma and going on to college, you really wouldn't be successful in life. I did better in all my classes; I think I knew that if I could do all the college assignments in our class, I could do the other BS stuff in my other class. I realized that I wanted an education.

In thinking about her experiences and the experiences of her SJEP classmates, Oliva expounded upon the shared reality of the SJEP and the CCI as being critical components to their development of a new understanding of themselves and the system from which they were being schooled while in search of an authentic education[43]:

I would say that some of the things that we read, watched and wrote were hard at first because it was at a high academic level and most of us were labeled like the not so good student or lazy or dumb … I think almost everyone in that class had a 2.0 or less; it was kind of unbelievable that we were actually doing this type of work when we were typically the students who didn't do our homework, ditching class, and weren't good students and had a bad transcript …., but because we were so interested in it, that's why it got so easy for us … I think that most of us excelled in the work because it was interest to us and related to us and it was kind of like our stories.

Oliva at the end of her interview passionately explains the project's unique educational impact. She expresses appreciation, depth of understanding, and a passion for social justice:

This experience help me gain interest and confidence in school and made me realize that it was important … project was not just hard because of the realization that everything is messed up but because we were not used to reading and writing so much and then thinking about it, which was probably the hardest part, taking it in and dissecting it and then choosing what you want to take from that. Another plus for me, [I am] a better person, so I guess like for my experience, I was just like an average, regular person before. After this [experience] I kind of like learned to be a better person, to think about everything that's going on around me, like to be critical about everything, not just education, but like your actions and everything else. So, you know, just think about everything that you do and like the outcome of it, so I guess, like, think before you talk and think before you act.

Just like everything has a reaction, everything has a consequence; everything that you do is gonna effect your life and the lives of people in our community and in the schools. You just like always [need to] be thinking about that.

In Olivia's final statement she talks about her new found perception of education:

For a lot of us the project made a lot of changes in our life. Um… maybe some of us just small changes, but for some of us really big changes. For me the project helped me in a lot of different aspects of life, like that I was having a lot of trouble with, I guess you would say. And that, you know, it made me think that I need an education, high school and college… It [the educational experience] motivated me that I have to finish, I have to finish on time, I have to work hard, and I have to walk to school; and even if it isn't always relevant to me, it doesn't matter because education is relevant to the world and it's something that you have to have.

Cami Nieto

For Cami the greatest impact was a previously unfounded connection to education. For the first time ever he was astonished by how meaningful the experiences were that he was having within the SJEP through the CCI model. In fact, the course work were so relevant and real to time that he actually took ownership of the SJEP and the impact it was trying to make within the community:

I would say that I did care when I was younger and in the project, but it was different. When I was younger, I made trouble because I was frustrated and didn't know what else to do. In the project, I get frustrated because I care about what happens. I mean, me and Oliva, we care about the project. I mean. it saved my

life. You know, when something is important to you, you know it means more. I
mean the project meant a lot, and [when] things don't go right or when the other
people don't try, I get pissed.

The CCI process helped Cami develop a deeper level of engagement. The
curriculum and the opportunity to think critically offered Cami an educational experience
that he referred to as "amazing." However, the most critical aspect for Cami is the
understanding that the SJEP and its CCI model saved his life:

The class was the best classes that I ever had in my whole life. I learned more in
two years than I had in all my other years. Once we got into the project I started
learning other types of American history. [We were] thinking critically about
civil rights, Martin Luther King, and Cesar Chavez, and how they would have
these marches in protest of dehumanizing things that were being done. Basically
a critical look at injustice in history, and those same things we were facing in our
lives, and in our schools. Once we started covering everything after the Civil War,
that pretty much said, 'look, we're learning more about our American history
now,' other than just like the colonial times and just the European based
information. I was blown away by some of the things we learned, like Mendez [v.
Westminster], Brown vs. Board of Education, and Ferguson vs. Plessy, all that
stuff just kind of hit home. The class in general was amazing to me, and I know it
saved my life.

This resuscitating reality for Cami is realized through the hope and purpose that is
created by a curricular-pedagogical-interaction intersectionality that is deliberate in its
intent to nurture a consciousness that is emancipatory and driven by hope:

Well, in a way it (curriculum) kind of made me angry learning about some of the

stuff and how people could actually do stuff to human beings like that, so in terms

of relating that to my history and my education process, it's kind of similar

because I had friends and relatives being kicked out of their schools just because

of who they were. I mean, that happened to me too. The oppression, you know, I

said earlier, I was getting into that Che and other stuff that was trying to fight

oppression. I could not believe that we were talking and learning about this in

school. You figure you get this stuff underground, or in circles out of school, but,

we were doing this in school. A total trip, so, yeah, it was relevant and real; and it

help me become more critical conscious. The project and our class gave a chance

to do something about oppression and racism.

Through the lived reality of this emancipatory intersectionality is the path towards

an academic identity. For Cami the experiences within the SJEP and through CCI led to

the nurturing of identity that helped him understand that he could have success in school,

and that he carried knowledge within himself:

The class makes you aware about your own knowledge about everything, about

what you've learned in the past, about what you're learning in other classes in

other classes right now. It kind of puts you in your own place, pretty much; I

mean, if you could do well in this class, why couldn't you do well in other

classes? It makes you feel smarter, just taking this class and gaining this

knowledge; I mean, if you look at some of the curriculum you guys give us, it's a

lot of information to take in, but all of the students can get it, they got it down …

because of the way it relates to them. It's real; it's our history and our life. That is

real education. I mean, when you feel like you are learning, you want more of this; I mean, part of my problem was I didn't want to leave the class. I'll admit sometimes that is the only class I would go to. The other classes were all bullshit, everything for a grade and no real meaning. That shit gets old; I was tired of it in 5th grade. After a while, I did have more confidence in my other classes. I mean, if I could do this stuff (SJEP and CCI), I could do the other stuff. We all kinda got like that. Look at Ansenia, I never thought she would make it, but she did. Without this experience, this class or doing things this way, I know she wouldn't've made it. So, I mean, when it comes to that, students can actually apply the stuff we learned from this experience [to] other subjects they're taking in school.

It is important to mention the relationship that is developed between teacher – student and student - teacher. A mistake that I have made when teachers, even colleagues of mine, are implementing critical pedagogy or Freirean pedagogy is the false idea that children can and should be left alone to make their own decisions. We must remember that Freire was working with adults, and, in many cases, we are working with children, and even the youth that participated in the SJEP and that experienced the CCI model were in my eyes still on edge of childhood moving into adulthood. So while, I did give the students space to make decisions, I heard the word of Professor Luis Moll as he cites Vygotsky, "we are not the all knowing, but in many cases we are the more knowing." In the CCI and SJEP space that is created by the students and myself, I honored the agency that they carried, and through careful guidance I helped them realize and/or further

develop their level of agency. The following is a good example of this relationship held

between the students and myself, and the impact of that relationship:

> You would come in and you would give us these ideas, and we would elaborate
>
> on them, or you would come in and you'd show us some of the curriculum you
>
> were doing and we'd have a say as to what we wanted to learn more about.

Cami went on talked about how the project offered him a sense of ownership within his

education, how because authenticity I and the other teachers demonstrated, he for the first

was willing to invest in the educational process. In reference to the impact of the

relationships that we develop in the project, Cami believed that he and other students

developed greater intellectual capacity, and they realized that their intellect, their words

and their actions were the greatest weapon that they could possess in the pursuit of social

justice.

Cami further articulates upon the relationships that were developed between the

students and me, and him and me. He talks about how the course, the relationships, and

the culturally responsive high expectations impacted the academic performance of his

classmates and himself:

> You believed that we weren't dumb or stupid; you gave us more and made us
>
> work harder then we ever worked before, and we did it. We knew that you were
>
> real and that you were really trying to help be conscious about our lives. The best
>
> part about the research was it was about us, and the next best thing is that we did
>
> it the same way they do it at the university. You believed that we could do college
>
> work, even if we didn't have college GPAs (grade point averages). You thought
>
> high of us, and you didn't limit us to only certain ideas because we all had all

these great ideas, and then we had ideas from you. I don't think any of the

students had ever produced that much information. I mean we had students who

probably never did a research paper or even read a book. Now they are reading

CRT (*Critical Race Theory*), *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, you know, college

stuff. We did it and we liked almost all of it. Sometimes I wasn't into it, but it was

not because of you guys or the class. It, I guess, was just stupid teenager stuff, not

even racist stuff or injustice stuff, just teenage stuff. But, I think the way we did it,

that was the best way to do it.

The CCI model provided Cami the opportunity to complete the tri-

dimensionalization of his reality. Not only did the model help him name the oppressions

within his life, it offered a space through which he could engage oppression. It gave him

the opportunity to transform his ontology and, in turn, he was able to transform the

process through which he engaged his world. Through this transformation, Cami moved

through the world with true resolve and stepped upon a path that allowed him to move to

and from the past and future into his social reality or the reality of the time. Moreover, he

developed a clear understanding of how one would problematize his/her reality in an

attempt to answer or re-answer questions that our society has failed to recognize or to

which it has failed to offer an equitable response:

Well, the class basically taught us how to present ourselves, rather than just

scream or yell about it. It's kind of like teaching us how to control our emotions

and how to put them out there in a professional manner, rather than radicalness,

and we also get to keep our radical edge. I mean, we can still be radical, but we,

people, hear our message instead of focusing on our anger. We are all angry, but I

think it helps a lot when you give people solutions to the problem. A lot of people just bitch and bitch, but if you can't give answers then it just another bitch. We gave answers, and I think that really helped. Like you would tell us, 'we learned to use their tools against them.' I guess we [were] even smarter than them because we did find a way to win their game; we went all the way to DC with our message and we are growing … now I'm more knowledgeable about some of the things that I had already thought about. Before it was kind of like a spark, and now it's like a flame building. The project pretty much opened the door for me to become who I am today, to be able to have a voice without it being ignorant. There are a lot of people, who would like to speak out, and when they do, there is more ignorance or arrogance coming out than actual knowledge; I mean, it kind of put that knowledge there for me. It (the class) gave me my shield (critical consciousness) and my bullets (words and actions).

<center>Blanca Ericera</center>

One of the areas of impact for Blanca is the understanding of the agency she possesses and how that agency can be used in the pursuit of social justice. In explaining the impact and understanding she gained from the class, Blanca explained that she now knows that she could help, "provide a change … to help kids, to help other students see that there are options out there and that we could better our community, to better ourselves." This sense of critical consciousness and organic intellectualism are the two strands within Blanca's voicing of the impact that the CCI model had upon her.

Another area that Blanca focused upon is the idea of engagement created by the social relevance of the class and the CCI model. She states that this relevance created a stronger sense of connectedness to the overall experience of the class:

"It was very interesting. I just enjoyed going to your class and seeing what experience they [would] have to say about their life. It was an eye opener … it was so relevant to our thinking and our lives."

The relevance and connectedness of the curriculum and pedagogy fostered our ability to offer a college prep curriculum and, in many cases, a college-level curriculum. Moreover, the social relevance embedded in the CCI pedagogy, curriculum and interactions nurtured organic intellectualism and critical consciousness within the SJEP students. Blanca explains that the environment that is created in our classroom is a true learning environment:

It was more of like a learning thing, like everyone is going to learn something …You would come in and the energy would be strong. You always asked us questions that made us think. You would challenge us to write deeper.

I remember you talking about writing deeper. You said that it was bullshit just to write something to write something, and you said for us to use our words as weapons. One day you read the poem by Marcos. It was about using words as weapons. You said that they will not expect us to use English words to win this fight. You said for us to write like we were in a fight, and in order to win we needed the best words. That stays with me.

Like I said, it wasn't just like another class where we just sit in class and there's a teacher in front, and the whole banking education where they just go on

and on, and the whole text book and homework, and another day and homework is due. It was more interaction, and more like student with teacher. We got to know the teacher more; you got to know their life, and we got the chance to fight for a better life. That usually that doesn't happen.

In the following quote, Blanca mentions the notion of rigor and relevance. From my perspective, the notion of rigor is often constructed around the values and culture of the oppressor group. This means that rigor is like knowledge, defined by those in power, and, in many cases, it is supposed to be offered to only those with power (Foucault, 1980). In this case, rigor is defined by a curriculum that is college level. However, this curriculum, despite its presence in some universities and colleges, is outside of the cultural canon of SUSD (and most other school districts for that matter).

Given my previous experiences with students that the system has labeled as "at risk;" I knew that we could go deep (rigorous) with a curriculum that is both socio-culturally and ethnic-culturally relevant. This type of curriculum, matched with an emancipatory pedagogy and authentic interactions, helped guide these marginalized students to an intellectual space that neither they nor others believe they could possibly reach:

I thought the curriculum was really good. It worked good for us. Oh, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was hard, but it was really good. Now, I really understand the difference between banking education and critical education. The project was the only class that was not banking education. In our class everyone got involved; everyone even read all those really hard college books: *Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Critical Race Theory*, *Subtractive Schools* [*Schooling*] and the other

ones we read. Everybody read those books: Ramiro, Rolando, Ansenia, Cami, everybody. It was really hard, harder than my AP classes. Oh, then it was funny because no one believed that we read them. Everybody thought that you guys were telling us to say we read the books and that you guys were telling us what say and doing all the research for us. I read those books, it was hard, and I was not going to let anyone say we didn't read them!

Blanca's desire to make it clear that she read all of the difficult college level books within the CCI curriculum is a demonstration of the academic identity that can be nurtured through CCI. The connections built through the tri-dimensionalization process inherent within CCI students have the potential to develop not only an academic identity and greater academic proficiency, but they also have the opportunity to recreate the manner in which students engage the world both presently and in the future:

Yeah, the project helped me develop it (an academic identity) more because I didn't have my tía saying 'did you do your homework?' I was on my own. It helped me say 'you're doing this for yourself, for your dad, and your grandmother, and everyone else who struggled with you, and now it's your turn and you have to carry on.'

In her explanation of the impact CCI had upon her, it is obvious that the academic identity and academic proficiency that is nurtured within Blanca helped her in her development of her critical consciousness and her sense of organic intellectualism. Her organic intellectualism is evident by her desire to learn more and more as a means of advancing her community:

Yeah, it (CCI) helped me relate to education more. It helped grow stronger in my

other classes because I wanted to do something that would help. I felt like doing

the work in the other classes would give me a chance to do more for the people; it

gave a chance to do more, to help more. I mean, the more I knew, the more I

could help. Like you said, the things we learned would become our weapons

because our mind and our words would be stronger.

When the SJEP was created, the primary intent was not to foster academic

proficiency or an academic identity, but, rather, the primary focus is to help students

develop their critical consciousness and, through this process, we would attempt to help

the students develop a strong sense of organic intellectualism. I believed that through

construction and reconstruction of consciousness and identity, our students would move

themselves towards stronger academic identities and higher degrees of academic

proficiency.

Very seldom, if ever, did we dialogue about doing better in this class, much less

other classes. The same is true about the notion of academic identity; the dialogue

regarding identity is that of the social, cultural and historic self. In essence we discussed

who the students are, where they come from, and what this means in the present day

context, as well as how this understanding could transform their lives and help them

engage their epistemology today and transform the ontology they will carry into

tomorrow.

<center>Rolando Yanez</center>

For Rolando CCI was a totally new experience. His educational experiences, like

those of the others in this study, had come from the banking education perspective.

According to Rolando, students were not expected to think, they were only expected to do and believe those things that had been canonized by the oppressor group.

However, Rolando commented on his CCI experience as being, "awesome," "incredible," and "life changing" among other positive words and thoughts. For Rolando, the most important aspects of his CCI experience were our invitation to have him think for himself, to challenge all that he believed, and to have him think about and question how he came to know what he knows. When I asked him about the impact CCI had upon him, he responded with the following:

> The thought of thinking jacked me up. I can think about thinking, or when you asked us to think about the things we were thinking, I thought 'what the hell is he talking about?' Then you introduced us to *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. I was like, 'Man, who is this guy? Man this is some confusing shit!'
>
> That's how I met [was introduced to the writings of] Paulo Freire. Then I started thinking, 'What's his purpose?' That's when I started to think about thinking, you know, like you asked us to. I would be in bed in the dark thinking about thinking, I mean all the time. One time I figured it out: 'This is the project - you want us to think, but not think; you want us to figure out how to think; you want us not to be lazy; you want us to fight lazy thoughts, the thoughts that everybody wants us to have.'
>
> I figured it out. You were trying to get us to understand that thinking could, *'tu sabes, los libera* (you know set us free).' And this is like the thinking, like us, we're inside the project…thinking and writing all this shit because our minds were free.

In a further explanation of the impact of CCI, I will use a discussion that took place during a focus group interview. This is a portion of that interview, which took place between Rolando, Cami and Ansenia. Their dialogue centers on how students involved their parents in their CCI learning, and at the end Rolando remarks on how CCI engaged him in the educational process:

> Rolando: It (the CCI experience) was awesome [laughs]. It was just…it was a new experience … It was a chance to speak, a chance to express myself. But, it was really hard, all the readings, you know, the college stuff, and all the research; man, it was really hard, but it opened our eyes. It was just great, man! This is real man, this is real!
>
> Ansenia: I liked the class [be]cause they helped a lot … they made me realize that I really need school … If I didn't have the class I would probably be at home being a dropout couch potato. Like now I realize I need to go to college, and if I really want to change and help people and stuff, I need to go to college. Um…even my family started to realize that. After the Encuentros they started to, like, see, see things a little different. When I talked about change and how fucked up things are, they started listening to me. Before, they would just blow me off. We know these things because the project and the things we study, we know not to ignore these things. And people see them, but what can they do? The media, what's that word?
>
> Cami: Hegemony.
>
> Ansenia: Yeah, that word. It prevents people from believing that things can change. People are scared to speak because they think if they make noise or shine

the light, someone will get them. But after awhile my family, even my mom, started to be different. Anyways, my family and me now see things different, and, yeah, I'm going to be somebody, but somebody who helps. I don't know how to explain it. Just that. That's all I have to say.

Rolando: Yeah. First of all it was fun man. It was fun; that was like the main thing you know. It was a different class; different [from] everything you know, a different environment … I would get up in the morning and be like 'yes you know I'm going to that class.' But before it was like, 'Whatever, you know oh man, I don't want to go to school.' But, I would think about it, think about going to our class, and I was actually learning, learning stuff that was important, stuff that I could use in life, real things. It was just an environment that made me and everybody want to come to school. The other classes all sucked, but we knew that is was part of it (going to school and participating in the project and CCI), you know we knew we had to do that. But, the main thing was get[ting] to our class. All day I would think about our class. I would go home and talk about the class. My parents were happy that I was getting into to school, but I was tripping them out. My little sister was down with me, and she would get my back. It was a great experience man.

The idea that the class is real is created by the three components of CCI: its relevant curriculum, its emancipatory pedagogy, and the interaction between teacher and students that were centered on the notion of authentic caring. Ansenia voiced how the CCI experience helped her realize that she needed education, and that this education would be used to help others. Again, it speaks to her understanding of organic

intellectualism. In addition, her analysis of the impact of hegemony is an articulation of her critical consciousness. Ansenia also touches upon the impact that her CCI experience has had upon her family, and the consciousness that has been developed within her home.

Rolando's perception of the SJEP as "our class" for me speaks volumes about the depth of the opportunities and experiences that were created for him and the other CCI participants, especially when one considers where he and even Ansenia were when they came into the SJEP. Both Ansenia and Rolando were on the verge of dropping out, neither felt as though school had anything to offer them, and both were in a uni-dimensional space wherein the methods of resistance were self-defeating. At the end of the CCI experience, both had started down the path towards high school graduation and adult experiences that would contribute to other social justice projects.

Tina Verdugo

Tina describes the vast majority of her high school experiences as being irrelevant and uninteresting: "Those I could say were the worst years of my life … school wasn't interesting for me. It didn't relate to me. It just didn't interest me." However, her CCI experiences provided with a space that helped her develop a critical consciousness; it gave her the opportunity to cultivate a sense of organic intellectualism, and it helped her foster academic identity that aided the maturation of her level of academic proficiency. CCI helped her develop an understanding of the difference between self-defeating resistance[44] and transformational resistance:

> Like me not coming to school, not doing the work, ditching, causing trouble in
> class, talking in class, listening to headphones. Well, sometimes that's not bad.
> Ah, sleeping in class or just putting your head down…I guess that's all. Thinking

that I was fighting the teacher or the school, when I did this, but I was only hurting myself.

The Project (CCI) helps us because we learned a new way of thinking. We took the pill[45] (laughing). Now we can't go back, but this is better because now we see the matrix. They can't fool us. Sometimes it hurts more because we can see everything, well now we can fight it too. Before, we were fighting the wrong way.

You guys made us to learn to live and love life. You guys taught us that, and from now on I'm going to carry those intellectual weapons, like you say, and all the things that I learned from the project to help me succeed in life like I said and to have that top position in office someday in a position to help people …La Raza, you know, because without them we ain't never going to overcome the dominant.

I love the project, it was great, and it helped me feel smarter and know that I could challenge the teachers, and the project gave the idea that I could help my community, and that is what I am going to do with my life.

The project, while helping Tina nurture her critical understanding of resistance, helped her develop a deeper knowledge of how she had the power to transcend the moment, and to deepen her grasp of the impact of the moment through her ability to tri-dimensionalize the essence of that moment. This is especially true when the actions created from this reflective process utilized her newly founded sense of organic intellectualism. Moreover, this process helped her develop a deeper understanding of how

she could engage and transform her epistemology and ontology, while simultaneously developing her academic identity:

> The project is exactly what helped me. It made me feel like, you know. . . we were being taught way advanced curriculum that you guys would teach at a university, and we were juniors and seniors in high school and reading out of critical race theory books, Paulo Freire. Looking at our own history and culture was really important, it gives you pride and makes you feel like you belong.

> It also helped us become Chicanas or Chicanos, the way we see (understand) things was really important. I really liked that stuff, but the critical [pedagogy] stuff was the stuff that really opened my eyes. It helps you to have a deeper understanding, and makes you see through the surface. It helps you ask questions, and helps connect this stuff to right now, our history, and like it helped us connect those things to the future. That is what made it real, like nothing ever before. This made more sense. It helped us understand the fucked up shit we did, *pero* it helped us understand that we could fuck them up if we studied our shit.

> If our shit (culturally relevant course work, critical course work and research) was tight, they could not stop us. Yeah, we had to play some of their game, but like you said, nothing is better than beating them at their own game. Look at us now, we won. Look at where we started, and look at me, us, now. Shit, so many of my teachers told me to just dropout. You know they actually told me to drop out, and they told it to Rolando, Ramiro, Ansenia - I mean all of us they told to drop out. The class helped us understand that we could fight them, and it taught us that doing good in school and graduating was the way we could win.

But, Romero, it taught us that the way to really win is when we make changes in our community or in our school.

The understanding of authentic caring was another impact of CCI upon which Tina remarked. In her articulation she describes her experiences in the class as being filled with love and a sense of security that is developed by the cultural and social understanding that is constantly present in the classroom. This sense of security and understanding created a safe space for Tina. She felt secure in the sense that she could be herself, that she could express herself, and that she believed that actions taken by myself and the other teachers would be derived solely by love:

> Better teachers [are the ones that] really care about the kids. They care about their families and what their life is like. I know we are suppose to talk about teaching and what we were taught, but the most important was how you guys cared about us. Even now we are still like family. I made it through because that is what I wanted, but I could hear you, Lozano, and Dr. Love telling me things. I wanted it because you guys helped [me] know that I could make it and that I could be somebody to help other people. I know I have people who care about me, that made it easier.

> You guys were like our tíos … like my dad even. There was that love, there was that cariño, there was that touch; you guys could relate to us, it was a relief. Finally, somebody that understood where we were coming from; we didn't have to make this big 'ol explanation to try to make you understand us.

> You guys understood us and … we had a lot of love for each other, like one big family, we were a big family. . . It just built, you know, a big, big

relationship and just one big happy family when we were together. There was

still that type of security and it was there and a lot of love, a lot of love for all of

us to you guys and from you guys to us because you guys show it to us how much

you guys went through for us. You guys did . . . *hicieron lo imposible* (did the

impossible). . . to make us get back on our feet and to make us want something

out of life.

Tina's final statement during her interview centered on the principles within

organic intellectualism in that she connected the development of her intellectualism to the

development of community and responding to those who are in need:

You guys made us learn to live and love life. You guys taught us that and from

now on I'm going to carry those intellectual weapons, like you say, and all the

things that I learned from the project to help me succeed in life and to help others.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Curriculum, Pedagogy and Interactions: An Introduction to *Critically Compassionate*

Intellectualism

Teachers must have an historical and present-day (social) understanding of the

students and community they serve. This historical and social viewpoint must transcend a

chronological perspective of date, time and place. Teachers must understand the history

of epistemology, critical thinking and the consciousness of the students they serve.

Teachers must develop a relationship with these past and present-day realities, especially

if transformation of oneself, the community, and society as a whole are among the

primary focuses of this transformational educational process. In the insectionality of these

understandings a community space can be created. This community space is the ground

on which teachers, students and parents can stand and create education together in

solidarity.

A teacher with an understanding of both historical consciousness and the cultural

history of his or her students possesses what Delgado Bernal (1998) refers to as a

Chicana/o epistemology. Delgado Bernal (1998) argues that a Chicana/o epistemology

reflects the unique history that arises from the social, political, and cultural conditions

that Chicanos faced and still face. Employing a Chicana/o epistemology in the

classrooms, and other educational settings helps students to resist institutionalized racism

and to recover untold histories (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Scheurich & Young, 1997).

A Chicana/o epistemology presents the CCI teacher with an understanding of how

schools replicate the social and political structures needed to sustain the White power

structure that operates from a White capitalist perspective in which the Chicana/o

experience is ignored and devalued (Delgado Bernal, 1998, Bowles & Gintis, 1976). As educators seek guidance from critical education, we are faced with studies created through a White epistemology (MacLeod, 1987; Parker & Stovall, 2004). In contrast, as the SJEP, through a CCI perspective, conducts teacher education forums referred to as "redemptive rememberings,"[46] I realize that much of the cognitive development theory espoused in many teacher education programs is still normed on the behaviors and epistemologies of White middle-class students.

CCI guides teachers to a self-reflective space in which an understanding is created; it is an understanding that allows teachers to come to the school with the intent of serving Chicana/o students using pedagogy that has been created through a Chicana/o epistemological perspective. This Chicana/o epistemology has given CCI teachers the ability to view the students' home culture as a culture of wealth (Yosso, 2005), thus creating the opportunity to build a curriculum based upon Chicana/o history and culture. In addition, through what the SJEP refers to as *Ce-Ollin* Parent *Encuentros*, Chicana/o students (Delgado Bernal, 2002) and parents are viewed as constructors of knowledge. In the dialogue between students – parents – teachers, new knowledge is constructed and acquired by all. In this praxis-orientated engagement, the CCI teacher can successfully engage students, parents and him or herself in a collective struggle against the injustice that prevails within the status quo of American society and its educational system.

A Chicana/o epistemology invokes a sense of cultural intuition within CCI teachers. Delgado Bernal (1998) introduces the concept of cultural intuition as a framework through which research should be conducted. Through cultural intuition, Delgado Bernal (1998) has expanded upon the work of Strauss and Corbin (1990) and
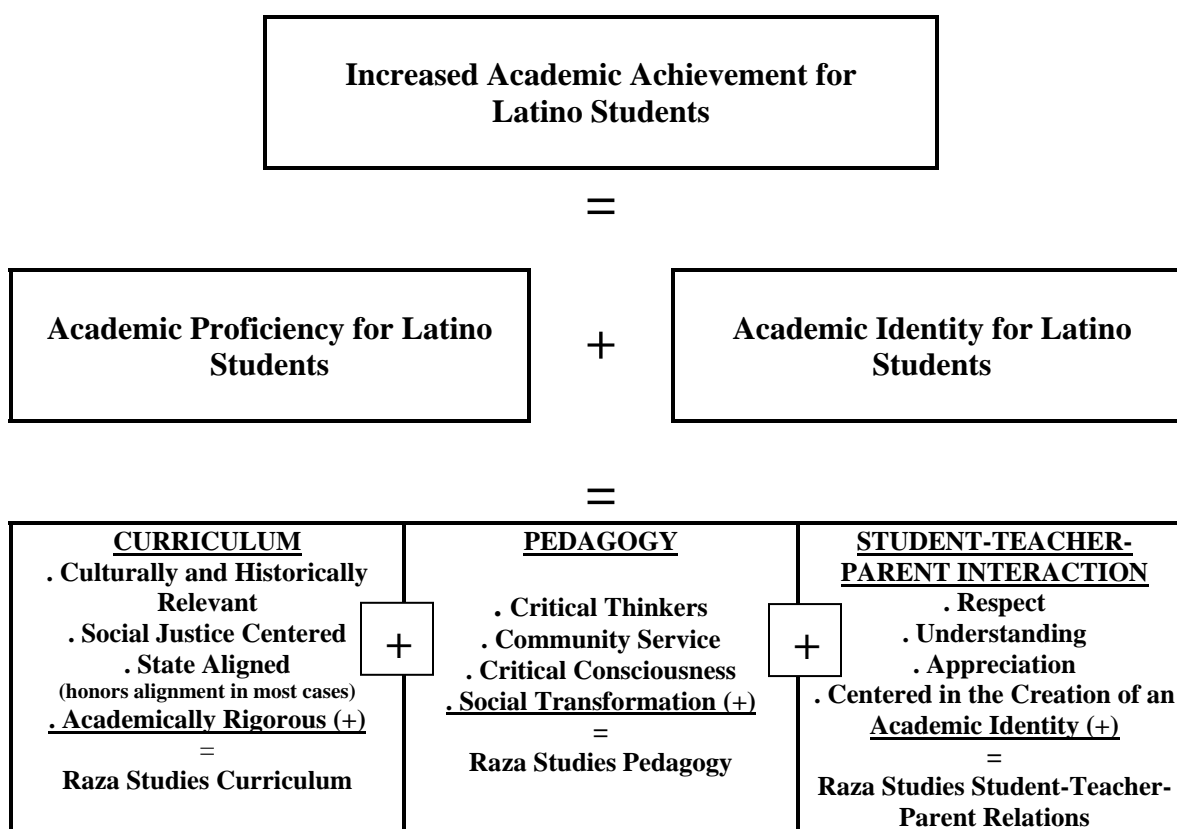
their concept of theoretical sensitivity, which they define as the researcher having the ability to give contextual meaning to data. However, Delgado Bernal's (1998) concept of cultural intuition differs from theoretical sensitivity in the sense that it requires one to extend his or her personal experience to include collective experience and community memory, and it gives importance to the participant's engagement in the analysis of data.

Delgado Bernal (1998) uses cultural intuition as a framework for research; however, I scaffold an expansion of cultural intuition to the daily process of creating and re-creating an emancipatory classroom. I agree with Delgado Bernal's (1998) notion that through past experiences, researchers/teachers acquire an understanding of the why, what and how of particular educational and social situations. It is this knowledge that helps CCI teachers become more confident and proficient than if they did not bring this knowledge into their praxis (Delgado Bernal, 1998).

For the CCI teacher, the process of engaging students in the analysis of data is critical. The students and parents have the opportunity to problematize the data in ways that are uncommon to the conventional accountability process. In the CCI process, students and, at times parents, problematize current educational experiences. Through a Chicana/o epistemology and a sense of cultural intuition, the CCI teacher, along with students and parents, has a greater capacity to create an authentic caring educational environment that is constructed upon appreciation and respect for the Chicana/o community, its culture, and its historic struggle for educational equality (Duncan Andrade, 2005; Gonzalez, 1997; Sanchez, 1997; Spring, 1997; Valencia, 2002, 2005; Yosso, 2006).

Unfortunately, the CCI experience is not typical, and, like most of our students,

teachers are socialized and educated to conform to and perpetuate White oppression (Berlak & Moyenda, 2001; Deyhle, 1995; Kailin, 1999; Parker & Stovall, 2004; Solomon & Levine-Rasky, 1996). CCI is important to students, parents and teachers alike because of its transformative capacity. CCI gives students, parents and teachers the opportunity to problematize and engage the inequalities and injustices of our society and its educational system. The intent is an elevated state of consciousness that fosters a social and educational praxis through which to advance social justices at all levels of American society.

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+-----------------------------------------------+
|      Increased Academic Achievement for       |
|               Latino Students                 |
+-----------------------------------------------+

                       =

+-----------------------------+     +-----------------------------+
| Academic Proficiency for    |  +  | Academic Identity for Latino|
|      Latino Students        |     |         Students            |
+-----------------------------+     +-----------------------------+

                       =

+------------------------+------------------------+------------------------+
|      CURRICULUM        |       PEDAGOGY         |   STUDENT-TEACHER-      |
| . Culturally and       |                        |   PARENT INTERACTION    |
|   Historically         |   . Critical Thinkers  |      . Respect          |
|   Relevant             |   . Community Service  |    . Understanding       |
| . Social Justice       |   . Critical           |    . Appreciation        |
|   Centered        +    |     Consciousness   +  | . Centered in the       |
| . State Aligned        | . Social Transformation|   Creation of an        |
| (honors alignment in   |          (+)           |   Academic Identity (+) |
|   most cases)          |           =            |           =             |
| . Academically         |  Raza Studies Pedagogy |  Raza Studies Student-  |
|   Rigorous (+)         |                        |  Teacher-Parent         |
|          =             |                        |  Relations              |
| Raza Studies Curriculum|                        |                         |
+------------------------+------------------------+------------------------+
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Figure 11. Critically Compassionate Intellectualism Model of Transformative Education.

[47] From "A *Critically Compassionate Intellectualism* for Latina/o Students: Raising Voices Above the Silencing in Our Schools," by J. Cammarota and A. Romero, 2006, *Multicultural Education, 14*(2), p. 16. Copyright 2006 by *Multicultural Education*. Adapted with permission of the author.

Curriculum: Historically and Culturally Relevant, Racism Conscious, Social Justice

Orientation, Rigor and State Alignment

The curriculum created for the CCI classroom must be constructed through a

Chicana/o epistemology and a Chicana/o cultural intuition. This curriculum is counter-

hegemonic due to its transcendence of the upper middle class Anglo-centric perspective

(White oppression) that is inherent within the traditional curriculum (Apple, 1995;

Giroux, 1992; Giroux & McLaren, 1994; Giroux, 1995). Through this curriculum

students can achieve cultural/historical/social awareness, which leads to self-

empowerment (Aviles, Guerrero, Howarth, Barajas, & Glenn, 1999; Duncan Andrade,

2005a; Torres, 1996).

When I created the preliminary CCI curriculum for the SJEP, I deliberately

attempted to create a curricular experience that would counter the oppressively

reproductive nature of traditional curriculum. This conscious political decision is based

on three perspectives: (1) Jules Henry's (1968) notion that the traditional curriculum

fostered stupidity in students when it came to issues of race, labor, economics, poverty

and war; (2) Frances Fitzgerald's (1979) notion that the traditional curriculum is intended

for the rich as a means of maintaining the status quo within the social and political order

of American society; and (3) Sonia Nieto's (1999) belief that the curriculum is

inadequately designed to serve, much less, build upon the cultural and social strengths of

Chicana/o students (students of color).

Fitzgerald's argument is similar to Foucault's (1980) notion that knowledge is

power. However, the essence of Foucault's argument is that knowledge belonged to the

powerful. Foucault (1980) added that knowledge is created and canonized as a means of

perpetuating the powerful by ensuring two things: knowledge would be held by the powerful, and only the powerful would be given knowledge. All of these factors lead to a curriculum that is disempowering, unjust and deprives subordinated students, in this case Chicana/o students of their social and cultural capital (Apple, 1979; Freire, 1985; Giroux, 1981).

The CCI curriculum is created and re-created as a means of constructing a curriculum that is structured upon the social, historical and cultural realities of the students. Beyond creating a relevant curriculum that is engaging, the primary intent is to construct a curriculum that is empowering, counter-hegemonic and that fosters the development of a critical consciousness. This presents the opportunity for true learning due to the connections that are built, not only between the home and the school, but the connection between the community and the educational experiences of our students (Nieto, 1999; Dewey, 1916).

Racism-conscious Curriculum

A racism-conscious curriculum exposes and challenges the present-day manifestations of racial inequality, which are rationalized as outcomes of neutral and objective structures, processes, and discourses inherent within American schools and traditional curriculum (Yosso, 2002). This curriculum is a counter to and an exposure of the deficit discourse used within traditional curriculum in regards to the historical and present-day experiences of Chicanas/os. Furthermore, a racism-conscious curriculum presents students and teachers with the opportunity to name and subsequently tear down the white privilege and oppression that is inherent in American schools (Banks & Banks, 1997; Branch, 2003; Howard, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2003, Yosso, 2002; Yosso &

Solórzano, 2005).

This type of curriculum compliments the cultural/historical/social relevance orientation of curriculum in the sense that it, too, is informed by the experiences of the community, the students (Delgado Bernal, 2001) and the funds of knowledge that exist within their homes (Gonzalez, et al, 1995).

According to Yosso (2002), a critical race theory curriculum, which I refer to as a racism-conscious curriculum would be structured and constructed upon the following tenets: 1) the intersectionality of race and racism with gender, class, sexuality and other forms of subordination in maintaining educational inequality; 2) the challenges of the dominant ideology regarding culture and intelligence, language and capability, meritocracy and objectivity; 3) the commitment to social justice and the Freirean notion of critical consciousness; 4) the centrality of experiential knowledge through the use of counter-story telling, counter-narratives, life histories and other forms of telling and validating the lived experiences that Chicana/o students bring into the classroom ; and 5) the utilization of any and all interdisciplinary approaches that analyze and articulate the linkage between social inequality and schooling (Yosso, 2002). This curriculum exposes the "oppressive and marginalizing power of schools, and challenges school curriculum to emancipate and empower" (Yosso, 2002, p. 103).

Social Justice Orientation

Another strand within the CCI curriculum is its social justice orientation. CCI's social justice curriculum exposes racial and social injustices as a means of fostering a shift in perceptions and understanding of our students. It is a means of engaging students in a praxis that is committed to creating educational and social equality.

CCI's social justice curriculum makes the visible the invisible through the understanding that students are not ahistorical or acultural. The mistake that has been made by most teachers is the narrowing of the nature and scope of history and culture. We must understand that history and culture are both alive, and they are created and recreated in the present moment. The social justice curriculum within CCI places the lived experiences of the students and the cultural values of the community at the center of curriculum (Duncan-Andrade, 2005b; Gay, 2005, Lin, 2001).

The CCI social justice curriculum breathes life into the historical knowledge of the Chicana/o experience through its understanding that our students, regardless of their political orientation or their level of consciousness, do come to us as cultural and historical beings. Therefore, by connecting the historical knowledge of the Chicana/o experience to the knowledge and experiences that have been created in recent moments or that are being created in the present moment, our students have been able to recontextualize their understanding of the future. In this recontextualization, our students have a new sense of hope, which has helped them recreate their visions of the future – a future wherein they stand on the paths of their *antepasados* and for the first time believe that they can and will contribute to societal transformation (see table 28).

A CCI social justice curriculum strand is created on the premise that a student's race, culture, ethnicity and/or parent income are not obstacles to the acquisition (Solórzano & Solórzano, 1995) or creation (Delgado Bernal, 2002) of knowledge. Moreover, the CCI social justice curriculum strand is a tool for the students to use as a means of acquiring the academic skills and foundations needed for the pursuit of academic achievement and engagement in systematic transformation.

A social justice curriculum provides students with the opportunity to critically analyze racism, subordination, and power through the lenses of their social, cultural, historical and political positions. All in all, CCI's social justice curricular orientation intends to help our students create the knowledge and understanding that will help them nurture the praxis that is needed to counter the present-day articulations of the United States paradigm of White domination.

Academically Rigorous

As I have already stated, the CCI curriculum is constructed so that it is relevant to the lives of the students we serve. As I construct our socially, culturally and historically relevant curriculum, the issue of rigor is also at the front of my thoughts. Yosso (2002) argues that because of the deficit-based practices inherent in the present-day K -12 American educational system, children of color are denied "college bound" knowledge. Yosso is speaking primarily to the issue of advanced placement courses, and the lack of access that students of color have to those courses. Therefore, it is my belief that the curriculum must be rigorous. With this in mind, I intentionally incorporated many of the of Arizona state honors standards into our curriculum, making our courses *de facto* honors courses.

I intentionally incorporated upper-level college and graduate-level texts as part of the CCI curriculum. These texts include the following: Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*; Antonio Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*; Rudolfo Acuña's *Occupied America*; Angela Valenzuela's *Subtractive Schooling*; Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic's *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*; Edward Said's *Representation of Intellectuals*; and Omi and Winant's *Racial formation in the United States,* et al. It has been my

experience that Chicana/o students who have been labeled "at risk" respond well, and, in fact, flourish in environments where the curriculum is relevant and challenging. Engaging pedagogy and challenging curriculum for Chicana/o student incorporates scaffolding strategies, such as repeating tasks with variation, the encouragement of exploration and risk-taking in safe and supportive environments, collective scaffolding, and the adjustment of task and procedures to meet the students' strengths (Moll et al, 1990).

In addition, the students in this study (as well as other students) have stated that the curriculum is the most difficult they have ever experienced, but, because of its relevance to their lives, they pushed themselves to stay engaged, to keep up with the readings, and to complete their in-class assignments, as well as their homework assignments. Responding to her experiences reading Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Oliva Guevara stated:

I had to read page 1 eight times, and it took me a week to read the first chapter. It was so hard, harder than anything else; but, I did not put it down, I kept reading. I kept reading because I could feel myself in that book. I kept reading because Paulo Freire was using my thoughts, and I knew that at the end of this book, I would understand the world, and I would understand myself.

In the past, when Oliva encountered a text that was not relevant and tough to read, she would simply shut down and stop reading. "If books were hard to read, I would try a little, but if I did not get it I would not finish. I would tell myself that it [reading the book] was boring, but really I did not push myself because it [the book] didn't mean anything to me … it was just another assignment."

Through the use of the necessary academic scaffolds, CCI's curriculum is

constructed to present students with "college bound" knowledge and materials and exercises that are relevant to the lives of the students it serves.

State Aligned Curriculum

As is the case in the development of the other orientations or strands within the curriculum, the decision to align the curriculum with the state standards is purely political. At the time of the writing of the dissertation, social studies is not a subject tested within the state's high-stakes exit exam. However, that day will come within the next two or three years, and at that point the exploitative nature of the curriculum will have reached another high point. The state standards for social studies as they exist at the time of this study, like other educational standards, are Eurocentric and exclusive to the point of intentionally barring the voices and experiences of people of color. The state standards for education are another example of overt racism that has been normalized and accepted by the masses.

However, this is not the worst part. It is my belief that once social studies does become part of the state's high stake exit exam, the spaces used to create socio-cultural relevance will close, thus widening "relevance gaps" and increasing not only the gap in achievement, but the gaps of critical consciousness.. Nevertheless, the CCI teacher will find a way to counter the forthcoming rearticulation of educational and political racism that will continue the oppressor group's efforts to maintain its power and its position of privilege (Omi & Winant; Delgado, 1999).

On the positive side, this study has demonstrated on a small scale that a CCI curriculum can lead to the eradication of the achievement gaps between Chicanas/os and Anglos (see chapter 10). I have presented the curriculum in its separate orientations as a

means of illuminating these strands. As one can tell, there is overlap within the orientation or strands. The CCI curriculum is a fabric that is simultaneously made of all these orientations, which is why its design is so effective. Due to its nature, scope and success with those whom the system has slated for exploitation and placed at the bottom of American society (Bell, 1992), this curriculum is an overt challenge to the methods used to create a system of "academic apartheid" (Padilla & Chavez, 1995), "apartheid of knowledge" (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002) or intellectual apartheid (McLaren & Gutierrez, 1995). These systems have been used as part of the White oppression group's construction of Americanization (Sanchez, 1993) to advance the status quo within America's racial and social order.

The CCI curriculum is intended for all Chicanas/os, regardless of their level of academic success. Gay (2005) informs us that even academically successful students need a social justice curriculum. She argues that because these students are excluded from academic injustice, it is important that these students experience this curriculum to have the opportunity to develop the skills that will help them negotiate and mediate the racism and injustices they are facing, have faced, or will face.

The CCI curriculum presents history, culture and the social reality of the students in a manner that affords them the opportunity to develop their cultural and intellectual potential. By kindling the desire to correct the injustices that have been forced upon them and their communities, the curriculum encourages students to struggle to create their own paths and to redefine their destinies.

Pedagogy

A curriculum by itself in most cases is not enough for students. In order to

increase the level of effectiveness and consciousness – building, pedagogy is critical to this process (Gay, 2002). With this understanding, the CCI model has incorporated a pedagogical component. In order to explain it fully, I will once again illuminate the orientations or strands within the pedagogical component.

The primary pedagogical orientation is the critical pedagogy strand that was developed from the work of Paulo Freire (1994; 1998; 2004). Freire's critical pedagogy is a social justice project that announces the role of the oppressed (Chicanas/os and other people of color). Freire 1994 states:

> This, then, is the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well. The oppressors, who oppress, exploit and rape by virtue of their power, cannot find in this power the strength to liberate either the oppressed or themselves. Only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both…in order for this struggle to have meaning, the oppressed must not, in seeking to regain their humanity (which is a way to recreate it), becomes in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but rather the restorers of the humanity of both (p.26).

CCI's pedagogy centers on the lived experiences of the students, and it promotes the literacy of these experiences. In this approach, CCI, like Freire and Macedo (1987), advocate for a "the reading of the word and the world." As is the case with the curriculum, this critical literacy builds upon the cultural literacies / cultural reality or the funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al. 1995) that the students carry with them as they enter the classroom doors. The CCI teacher helps student build their literacy skills through the

reading of their world.

As the CCI students read their world, the CCI teacher and students engage the problem posing process (Freire, 1970; 1994). The four phases of the problem posing process are: (1) naming/identifying the problem; (2) analyzing causes of the problem; (3) finding solutions to the problem; and (4) reflecting on the process (Freire, 1970; 1994). The naming process involves a dialogue between students and teachers that is intended to identify and name of the problems within the students social reality. The analysis phase entails the student's description and analysis of the causes of the problem. In the solution phase, students and teachers collaborate to find and carry out solutions to the problem. In the reflection phase, students and teachers reflect upon the process and outcomes, and begin to rename and/or name the problem: this restarts the entire problem posing process (Yosso, 2006).
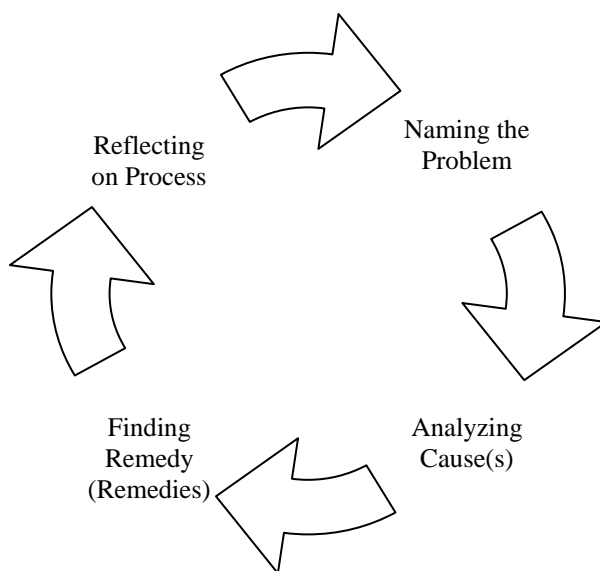
Figure 12. Problem-Posing Methodology.

[48] From T, Yosso, *Critical Race Counterstories Along the Chicana/o Educational Pipeline*, 2006, p.29.
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This type of pedagogy, as is the case with the curriculum, is living. In the dialectical relationship of teaching and learning, both teachers and students are simultaneously engaged in the dynamic process of learning and unlearning, which leads to the creation and re-creation of epistemologies. These epistemologies foster the creation and re-creation of curriculum and pedagogy, and more importantly the creation and re-creation of what is considered curriculum and pedagogy. Within these processes, the CCI teacher and the student constantly frame these actions within the pursuit of social justice. In this context social justice is pursued from a variety of perspectives, which leads to a variety of outcomes that advance social justice.

Organic Intellectuals

By the virtue of a praxis that engages the structural inequality and pursues social justice (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001), the students and teacher became organic intellectuals. Organic intellectuals use their pedagogical and political skills to nurture social understanding as a means of engaging the racially and socially oppressed in a collective struggle to rearticulate the hegemony of White oppression. Furthermore, the organic intellectual contextualizes social reality through the cultural and social experiences of the racial and socially oppressed (Gramsci, 1999). The students and teacher transform themselves into intellectuals who are "of the people", and who are using all of their faculties to serve the people. As a result of this student and teacher transformation, CCI seeks to nurture intellectuals that Said (1994) articulates as constituting "a clerisy…since what they uphold are eternal standards of truth and justice that are precisely not of this world." (p. 5) CCI in its praxis seeks to nurture intellectuals that are products of the oppressed groups, and who use, for these oppressed groups, all of

their skills and power to engage and transform the oppressor group's hegemony. In this engagement is the potential of untested feasibility,[49] or the truth or justice that may exist just beyond the walls of our consciousness.

CCI uses the Gramscian (1999) term *Organic Intellectuals* to refer to these individuals. Other terms for these types and similar types of intellectuals are: *Universal Intellectuals* (Foucault, 1980), *Amateur Intellectuals* (Said, 1994), Transformative Intellectuals (Giroux, 1988) and *Committed Intellectuals* (McLaren, 2000). These are the intellectuals who have been fostered and nurtured by inequality and oppression within their social and educational experiences. It is they who have experienced the duality of American society, and it is they who have a capacity to transform our society by creating a hegemony that addresses the needs of oppressed people, while avoiding the oppression of their oppressors.

The pursuit of organic intellectualism is the means by which CCI students and teaches transcend the liberal notion of being something to everyone, wherein we are nothing to anyone, much less, something for ourselves. Organic intellectualism is the means by which the oppressed do for themselves, for our own good. In this process, intellectuals from the barrios, the ghettos and the reservations are nurtured through the lens of CCI with the objective being the attainment of organic intellectualism. Within this process, social and political reality is problematized and racismized through the exercise of praxis, and with the intent of fostering self, social, and structural transformation (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001).

Often within the SUSD system the CCI model is viewed as a special treatment for the students in our courses. Many times, it has been said, "Why do those kids get that

material, why don't they simply get what all the others kids get? Why do these kids get special treatment? The way we have done things for years has been good for plenty of kids." (Quote from a SUSD social studies department chair). Furthermore, on May 12, 2006, the state's superintendent of public instruction, during a press conference, stated that the CCI Model being used in SUSD should be abolished because of its pedagogy and curriculum. It is his belief that the CCI curriculum and pedagogy do not fit into America's vision of education.

In response to whether CCI is special treatment, the answer is *yes* and *no*. Yes, in the sense that as a matter eradicating the achievement gaps between Chicanas/os and Anglos, an equality based approach will simply perpetuate the state of inequality. An equitable approach is needed to eradicate the achievement and opportunity gaps, therefore offering marginalized and underserved Chicana/o student what they need (something special) is appropriate. At the same time there is the *no response* and the notion of the Anglo relevant pedagogy and curriculum that promotes greater academic success for Anglos. Is the Anglo relevant pedagogy and curriculum considered special? If not, the same consideration should be given to a Chicana/o relevant pedagogy and curriculum.

<div align="center">*Rearticulating Freirean Pedagogy*</div>

Another constructive critic, CCI is an attempt to transform and reinvent Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy. CCI is a counter to Pearl's (2002) critique of critical pedagogy. Pearl (2002) claims that critical pedagogy is: (a) absent from the classrooms it wants change, (b) its language is inaccessible, (c) elitist, (d) it is imprecise and distorts schooling, (e) democratic without explaining democracy, (f) rhetoric not action,

(g) oppressive because it subscribes to a form deficit thinking. CCI counters each of

Pearl's (2002) critiques: (a) CCI exists and is created in the classroom; (b) Because it is

created in the classroom by students, its language is that of the students; (c) Parker and

Stovall (2004) make the same claim regarding the White male dominant frame of

reference within critical pedagogy. However, CCI is created from the voices of the

students, and it continues to be recreated by the students; (d) CCI is used to critique and

counter the oppressive nature of schools; while simultaneously engaging the

emancipatory capacity of education. CCI teachers understand that schools can be and are

sites of subordination and liberation (Shor & Freire, 1987). However, given the reality of

the gaps in opportunity and achievement between Chicanas/os and Anglos, it would be

naïve and irresponsible not to engage and transform these inequalities and injustices; (e)

CCI does not claim to be a democratic project, but it *is* a social justice project. CCI

recognizes that democracy is a doctrine of the equality paradigm. Democracy within the

social reality of the students in the SJEP does not have the equitable capacity needed to

transform environments of inequality and injustice. Within these realities; however,

democracy becomes the sword of tyranny (Cline, Necochea, & Rios, 2004; Gould, 2000).

(f) Again, CCI is created and is practiced *on the ground*[50] with students. The practice of

CCI is orientated in praxis, which means that a balance of dialogue and reflection need to

take place along with the action(s) that are a product of the dialogue and reflection. Freire

(1999) has helped educators and students understand that action without reflection is

simply activism; a process falls short of true praxis that leaves students in an unauthentic

state. (g) Pearl (2000) states "emancipatory intellectuals" operate on the notion that they

must inform the oppressed of their struggle because the oppressed are not smart enough

to understand their condition. I find Pearl's argument to be shortsighted and a result of deficit thinking. First of all, most marginalized youth do not need anyone to explain their conditions; they are more than capable of explaining their own stories. In fact, many of our students come to realize the counter hegemonic nature of their stories. These students come to realize that as Delgado (1989) said, the stories from the margins are the stories that counter the "majoritarian story." Rolando Yanez states:

> The readings and the writing were really hard, but we did it … We knew it was about us, we knew this would help us. We were looking at ways we could explain our real stories. And we were giving people ways to change the bad things we faced at school and in our *barrios* and *communidades*. This made the class [project] really interesting and it made it really really important. We were changing things; and its funny [laugh] because we changed.

The voices and the actions of the CCI students are the primary avenue through which to acquire and maintain a state of equality (Freire, 1994; Yosso, 2006). Secondly, CCI operates on the knowledge that, in most cases, Chicana/o youth will not allow an outsider to come into their world and explain to them how it is. This type of person is usually discredited and labeled as *falsa*, which means that the students do not place value on who the outsider is and what she or he brings to the students. In essence, they can identify the unauthentic ways in which the outsider has attempted to engage them. Freire (1994) refers to this outsider as a cultural invader, someone who "superimposes" himself or herself onto the students and uses their world as the frame of reference, rather than the students themselves. CCI places value on the intellectual wealth held by Chicana/o students, which creates the foundation upon which CCI operates and upon which the

students create and recreate this foundation.

I appreciate Pearl's critique of critical pedagogy. It gave me another lens through which I establish how CCI is different from critical pedagogy and how it is an attempt to create a transformative education model that meets the needs of Chicana/o students. Furthermore, Pearl's critique may have been directed at the Ivory Tower Critical Pedagogues who are not on ground with the students. In this respect, I agree with Pearl (2002). However, CCI was founded on the praxis of transformation and emancipation, and it's *on the ground praxis* [italics added]*,* makes it a product of the students' world.

As I close this section, it is important to note that when both curriculum and pedagogy are relevant to the student's social/cultural/historical experiences, there is almost no difference between the two. In fact, the CCI pedagogy and curriculum, if placed on a Venn diagram, would have a significant amount of overlap. When these two are placed congruently on the same path, they become the mind and soul of transformation and emancipation. One without the other is an incomplete, disjointed process that leaves the student without a strong foundation upon which to understand and act upon his or her social reality and its historical conditions.

CCI pedagogy and curriculum help our students acquire, create, and recreate knowledge. The CCI pedagogy and curriculum occupy much of the same space in that they each seek to empower students, and through this empowerment each guides students towards critical consciousness. The curriculum and the pedagogy simultaneously engage students in critical praxis. It is critical praxis that helps guide students to a critical consciousness and the perpetuation of critical praxis within their daily lives.
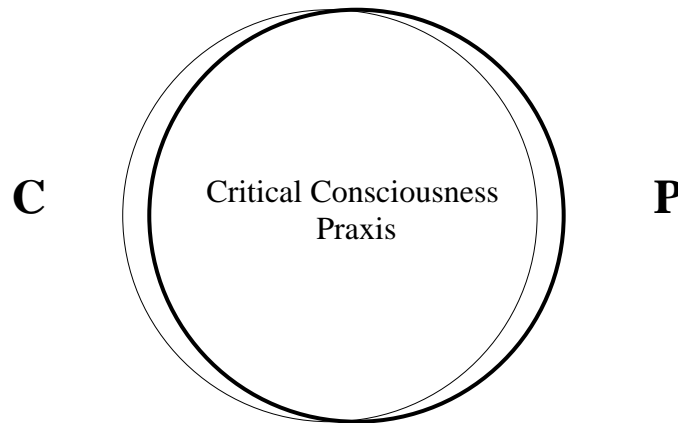
Figure 13. CCI's Pedagogy and Curriculum. The CCI teacher must construct and offer a curriculum and pedagogy that are synchronized and concurrently liberatory.

[51] Figure conceptualized by author

Liberatory and emancipatory education should create spaces where students have the freedom to critically examine and understand their world and how they understand their world. For CCI this pursuit goes beyond an epistemological relationship to reality. Shor (1996) explains the epistemological relationship to reality as, "being a critical examiner of your experience, questioning and interpreting your life and education rather than merely walking through them" (p.31). CCI engages students in this process; moreover, it goes beyond in that it required students to critique their epistemology.

A CCI teacher asks students to not only have a connection to and understanding of their reality, but also students are asked to examine and analyze their connections and understandings. A CCI's pedagogy and curriculum chart portrays, pedagogy and curriculum significantly overlap one another. More accurately, CCI pedagogy and

curriculum support and build upon each other. A CCI pedagogy and curriculum problematize the present day and historical political, educational and social oppression of Chicanas/os. This problematization calls into question all that our students understand. This is critical in that most of what our students learn is created and reproduced through the hegemonic lens of White oppression. Moreover, problematization as both pedagogical and curricular is critical because it opens the door for student voice and student action. It gives students the opportunity to become agents of transformation wherein they claim and nurture their humanity; our students become aware of the need to engage others in the transformation towards critical consciousness and humanization. Tina Verdugo states:

> We go to school and we don't think. We even get in trouble or people get mad when we think critically. All those teachers were mad about the video we made about the school. Ha, we help make it better, you go there now the water works, the bathrooms are nicer, the gym is fixed, they gave the special ed kids a new room.
>
> We could have never done that if it wasn't for you guys. We, a lot of us, probably all us wouldn't have graduated. Even though a lot of teachers called you guys racist because of the books we were reading and the way we were looking at things. Shit, because you helped [us] understand racism, we were able to change our lives and our education. The truth, they were the racist, because in there eyes, I was suppose to drop out. Ramiro and Rolando were [supposed] to drop out; fuck all of us were suppose to drop out!
>
> I am going to college, that wasn't supposed to happen to me. I was supposed to be a dishwasher or something. If you think about it, all this shit is

racist. And it's crazy because they want us to come to school for this racist stuff.

And when we can't take it, they call us losers. That's fucked up; but we all,

proved all of them wrong!

Within CCI curriculum and pedagogy become the educational experiences through which students develop and nurture an understanding of and commitment to social justice. The experience affords our students the opportunity to construct and adapt their roles as organic intellectuals (Gramsci, 1999) or transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1988).

<div align="center">Student – Teacher – Parent Interactions</div>

CCI engenders compassion and humanity within the relationships that are nurtured with the children we serve. Compassion encompasses educational assets, such as empathy, concern, kindness, and, again love. Humanity encompasses other educational assets, such as civility, solidarity, graciousness, and benevolence. These assets are the foundation of the creation and nurturing of authentically caring relationships between not only students and teachers, but also between teachers and parents.

<div align="center">*Student – Teacher Relationships*</div>

With regard to students, relationships are created through the understanding that students come to us with cultural assets that can be used as learning tools. Having an understanding (see Delgado Bernal's 1998 cultural intuition) of these cultural assets are critical to establishment of strong student –teacher relationships. Identifying and building upon these cultural assets is the next step. Each of the students in this study stated that he or she had a significantly greater appreciation for his or her experiences in the SJEP because the teachers in the project related to the student and loved them for all that they

were. The experiences were relevant and engaging for the students in this study because experiences both inside and outside the project were centered upon their lives. Olvia Guevara said, "For the first time in my life, I was important; for the first time, who I was; and where I came from was important."

The relationships developed within the SJEP and through the CCI model were started by a demonstration of humanity and solidarity. This is a form of praxis that I used in my classes prior to the SJEP, which was widely appreciated by numerous previous students. This praxis involves what I refer to as the *revealing of our hearts and souls.* The revealing of teachers' hearts and souls transcends the dialogical method (Freire, 1994) in that love becomes the foundation on which dialogical relationships are built and upon where critical praxis is nurtured. In this praxis, the teacher demonstrates risk taking, the sharing of trust, and the realism of her/his humanity. It is CCI's belief that before we as teachers can expect our students to take risks, trust us, and claim, reclaim or nurture their humanity, we must demonstrate that the space for these critical elements exists in their classroom.

It is important to note that the revealing of the heart and soul is not a one time occurrence. Because development of consciousness is an on-going process, the revealing of the heart and soul for both teachers and students is also an on-going process. This evolution, then, becomes more like Freire's dialogical methodology which denounces the banking method, or the *stand and deliver method*[52] of education for one that is centered on a critical dialogue between student and teachers that nurtures a critical consciousness. In this dialogue, our students discover or rediscover their voices, which are fundamental to the progression of humanistic liberation (Aronowitz, 1996).

What I discovered prior to SJEP, and what has been confirmed through SJEP and this study, is that when teachers engage in the revealing of their heart and soul, the students almost always will do the same. To engage in activities that attempt to invoke greater critical consciousness and critical praxis, teachers must establish strong relationships built upon trust and understanding. This will allow teachers to move past the uncertainty or defensiveness students often display when issues of consciousness (Samuels, 2004) or racism are the focus of discussions, activities or readings. Regarding her experiences with issues of caring and how this was demonstrated by CCI / SJEP teachers, Olvia Guevara states:

> Well in every relationship, if you care, you kind of become vulnerable. So when you care about the other person or people in the relationship, and you have certain expectations, you do certain things for them and you expect certain things back. It's really painful when those expectations aren't met; it's like, I give so much to you and you give nothing back. So school and students have that same relationship, that two people can share or a family can share, in [such] a way that we as students are expected to give. Go to school, get up early and spend our whole day there … Do a lot of work and a lot of reading; and basically give up our minds, and become like mindless drones who are just like taking everything in that other people have to say. Those people are: teachers, administrators, counselors, [who are] giving nothing back. They are not giving you feelings, or advice, or a place to feel safe, or an equal opportunity.

The CCI model seeks to counter this educational reality. Olvia Guevara offered the following about the level of caring within her experiences in the SJEP and its use of the CCI model:

We didn't share with our parents or our friends or our boyfriends or girlfriends … This was the only place that we made our selves vulnerable and for these teachers … They were teachers to a lot of students, not just us, so they had to give up a lot and they also had to work a lot harder than we did to do this, and I think that a lot of the students realized that.

This was the most important thing going on in everyone's life at that time, and we all kind of knew that. So knowing that, of course we're all going to love each other, because it was like 'this is the most important to us, and this is the most important to you [me].

So you know that we love you, and we know that you love us. We're all going through this together, and it's what everyone put their heart into at the time. So it was definitely apparent that the teachers cared about us and loved us because they also shared personal things about them[selves]. The teachers created *I am* poems and shared personal things about themselves; and told us about their educational experiences; and their family experiences; and their relationship experiences; and also they were there during lunch and after school and on the weekends; and gave us their cell phone numbers. Whenever we had an issue or needed to talk, they were there, they were playing the role that every teacher should play, which was like a second parent because school is like a second home.

The Authentic Caring Classroom

A few of the primary exercises used in CCI classrooms are as follows: My History[53], Four-Tables[54], and I Am poems[55].   The My History is usually offered during the second or third week of school, after some SJEP context has been built and after student – teacher relations have had time to materialize. This exercise consists of five sections: The History of My Life, My Family's History, My History at High School, My Views of My Community and the World, and, My Future. Each section includes a series of questions from which students choose what to address. It is explained that the sections and the questions are simply a template, that because these are their stories, each student should tell their own story in there own. This is often the introduction to the notion of counter-narratives or counterstorytelling (Delgado, 1989)

Throughout this exercise and all others, students are repeatedly encouraged to humbly and passionately present their voices and they are continuously informed about the importance of their voices and stories. We as educators must realize the importance of students' voice, perception and understanding; to not give their voices the attention and capital they deserve, could very likely place us on a course leading back to the status quo.

 During the second or third day of the My History project, CCI teachers explain the value of and need for counter-narratives. Counter-narratives can be defined as the narratives of the marginalized people, the narratives that are excluded from the uncritical, white privilege based stories of America. Counter-narratives challenge the racism, hypocrisy, and complacency of the narratives of the status quo (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002b). The CCI counter-narrative is more than a response to the narrative of white oppression; however, to exclusively respond to this narrative perpetuates its position

(Ikemoto, 1997). CCI perpetuates counter-narratives as imperative tools for the survival and emancipation of students who have been subordinated by the American social and educational structure (Delgado, 1989).

The My History exercise provides students with the opportunity to engage in the tri-dimensionalization of their reality. A full description of Paulo Freire's (1994) tri-dimensionalization and how it is used in a CCI classroom is forthcoming in this chapter. Briefly, the tri-dimensionalization of a student's reality is a process wherein students connect their understanding and their contextualization of the present to a critical understanding and critical contextualization of their personal past and the historical past of Chicanos. Throughout the different processes within the CCI classroom, students have the opportunity to recontextualize their past, their understanding of history and culture, and their social reality. Through this recontextualization of the past and the present, students have the opportunity to reconstruct their future and contribute towards the creation and evolution of a society that is just.

I Am poems present another opportunity to nurture greater critical consciousness and to engage in critical praxis. These poems offer teachers and student the opportunity for self-reflection and self-discovery. I Am poems also provide another opportunity for teachers and students to utilize the tri-dimensionalization process by asking them to explore and analyze the past and present conditions that have helped construct who they are at that moment, as well as what they presently see in their futures. After all I Am poems have been completed, each poem is presented and read in class. Equally important, CCI teachers share their poems with students, which is another opportunity for teachers to reveal their hearts and souls. The reciprocation of thoughts, concerns, fears, desires etc.

presents an opportunity for both teachers and students to establish greater connections, and it provides teachers with the opportunity to gain interpersonal capital with the students.

The expansion of humanistic, social and cultural capital is experienced during I Am poems. When I say humanistic capital, I am talking about the capital that is held by students. If students see their teachers as human beings, they are more likely to invest their humanistic capital in that teacher. And, as I have stated, once this humanistic capital has been gained by the teacher, the relationship between teacher and student can become a reciprocating, authentic relationship (Valenzuela, 1999). Social capital and cultural capital are gained from the teachers' understanding and appreciation of the social and cultural assets students bring with them from the homes, barrios, and communities (Gonzales et al. 1995; Yosso, 2005). The incorporation of these assets into the daily functions of the classroom helps create a scenario in which students can invest greater humanistic capital into their teacher. As a result, the authentic relationship between teacher and student is intensified.

I used I Am poems in my classrooms prior to the projects, and given the high level of engagement created by the poems, I continued to use them a couple of different times each year. However, I had not had a deep conversation about *I Am* poems until the first year of the SJEP. The project coordinators and a few of the students were looking for a way to add another level of connectedness between the students and the coordinators. The following is an excerpt from our talking circle in which the latter is the topic:

Olvia: Do you remember when you did those *I Am* poems in class last year?

Romero: Yes, I do them every year.

Olvia: Do you know how much the other students really like doing those?

Romero**:** I have a good idea that the students like them.

Olvia: Some would complain because, even though they seem simple, they are real hard.

Romero: I think that most students have difficulty with the idea that they have to read them in class.

Lozano: Yeah, students do not like that.

Olvia: But, it was a lot different in our class because you (AR) read your poem in front of everybody. The part when you were talking about your Dad and you got tears in your eyes really changed everything. You were not this perfect- fake teacher, you were real, you were human. After that day me and a lot of students took our poems home and really thought about what we were going to say. In other classes your students were talking about their poems; I know people were working on their poems in other (classes outside my class) classes.

Romero: I did not realize that.

Dr. Love: So Olvia, what are you saying?

Olvia: We need to *I Am* poems, but you guys need to do them too, and you need to read them in class in front of all the students. Like with Mr. Romero, after you show your human side, the students will have an easier

time opening their human side to you and the whole class. For me and

other students, that was when we knew that you were different than other

teachers, almost all teachers except for Juarez and Lozano. Other than you

guys, everyone else is the same. Me and a lot of other students knew that

we could be real in you guys' classes, and we could see how the class

work was important and how it was about our lives and people like us.

Basically, we knew that you guys really cared about us as people; you

guys wanted what was best for us without judging us, and that helped me

and other students to open our eyes and minds to what you were saying

and how you were trying to guide us to have more consciousness. This

meant a lot to students; they were always talking about Romero's class.

Even the students that were on Rodriguez's side talked about Romero's

class; you made them think, and yeah, Rodriguez would shape them back

to the way he wanted them to think, but you still had them thinking. Even

though these students were on Rodriguez's side, they all knew he was

afraid of you, and they knew that you talked the truth. I think it was just

too hard for them to actually admit it, and with Rodriguez it made it even

harder. I know those students respected you, and the students that were on

your side, well, we loved you. Just like the students love Lozano and

Juarez because they teach the same way as you.

Oliva was right, the I Am slam we had in class was a hit; especially, the poem by

Dr. Love; the students went nuts during his reading. As Olvia predicted, after that point

our dialogues within the classroom, in the field, at conferences, and our private

conversation were deeply and authentically humanistic. Put simply, we engaged each other at a truly personal level. Our students knew that we were their strongest and most true advocates and allies.

Once the SJEP students realized that we were wholeheartedly behind them as people and as students, the dynamic between teacher and student changed dramatically. At this point, the students were willing to invest themselves in us as teachers-advocates:

Cami: Not many teachers really care about us; you guys do. That is important; it gives more importance to what you say, and what you ask us to do.

Tina: You make us feel important, so if this work is for us and you believe that, then it must be important, so I do it.

Olvia: I agree, but you have also helped us understand why this class, this project and school are important to us, our families and our communities. I agree with Tina and Cami, but I know that they (pointing to the other students) and me also do this work for our families and our community.

Teacher – Parent – Student Relationships

The primary method used by the SJEP to enhance its relationships with parents is the *Ce-Ollin Parent Encuentro*. Ce-Ollin in Nahua, the native language of the Nahua Mexica or the Aztecs, translates to Ce=one, Ollin=movement or One Movement. Encuentro is Spanish for encounter, so the complete English translation is One Movement Parent Encounters. The *Ce-Ollin Parent Encuentros* have been incredible tools of empowerment and understanding for parents, students and teachers. Before I explain the nature of empowerment and understanding fostered within the Encuentros, I

will explain the dynamics within the Encuentros. The SJEP coordinators broke the Encuentros into two phases. Phase One is the called the Presentations of Blossoming Intellectuals. In this phase our students present their works to their parents. In these presentations our students explain to their parents what they have been studying, and later in the year, students present the results of their social action research. In Phase Two, the SJEP educates parents in the area of engagement: the engagement of teachers, site administrators, and central office personnel. The impetus for Phase Two is an occurrence that has taken place in one of the SJEP schools specifically or in one of the district schools wherein an occurrence has great relevance to all children or to Chicanas\os directly. The basis of these encounters is helping parents shift their frame of reference in regards to their position within the educational hierarchy. Many, in fact nearly every one of our parents operated on the notion that the educational system and the administrators and teachers within the system could not be questioned or should not be questioned. The SJEP turned that way of understanding on its head by proclaiming that parents have every right to question and critique the schools, the administrators, the teachers and the staff. This right is guaranteed by the fact that they as taxpayers provide the fiscal resources by which the district, the schools and the staffs are able to operate. In essence, our parents pay the salaries of the administrators, the teachers, and the staff, which, by virtue of this relationship, makes parents "the boss." After all, if someone is being paid to perform a task, the payer is the one who set the parameters and establishes the expected outcomes. Therefore, it is our parents who possess the power, or as Richard Ruiz (1997) articulates our parents must understand that they have the voice and the agency to *say*. This ability to say manifests itself in the Chicana/o parents' ability to define the nature of the

educational experiences offered to their children within the school and in each and every classroom (Ruiz, 1997).

Phase one is incredibly relevant to the current point of this paper. Through the articulation, presentation and representation of their work, students have the ability to express their voices. In these expressions, students offer their perceptions of the importance of their work and their studies, and they offer an explanation or vision of where their work is taking them or where it should help take their community. This often creates a new frame of reference or way of understanding for our parents. Many parents say, "I wish I would have had a course like this when I was in high school" or "Why didn't anyone teach me these things while I was in school?" Often the conversation moves to "How do we ensure that there are more classes like this one (SJEP) in the schools?"

These thoughts and questions have led parents to the point of being critical of their own educational experiences. Parents often articulate their experiences within SUSD and are dismayed by the reality that their children are facing the same discriminatory, unequal and inequitable experiences they faced 20 -30 years ago. It is at this point that we often move naturally into Phase two.

Phase two is not an ultra-sophisticated model of parent empowerment. We approach this process much like we approach our classrooms. We understand that this experience must be constructed in the same manner as our classrooms. This translates to *Encuentros* that are contextualized and constructed upon the social realities and the epistemologies of parents and students. The *Encuentros* are an educational space, and as educators we can foster and nurture the empowerment of parents. We must help parents develop the skills

and the understanding that is needed to engage teachers, site administrators, and central office administrators. Moreover, we understand this process needs to be based upon trust in self and others, the development of institutional understanding, the acquisition of social capital and a heightened sense of purpose and responsibility to the pursuit of social justice (Shepard & Rose, 1995).

Given this understanding, we take parents through an expedited problematization process. An example of this process is a situation in which our parents from THS were recruited by their children to confront the counselors at THS for inflammatory remarks that the counselors made about our courses at their school. When the parents arrived we went through an involved process of naming the problem, analyzing the causes, and identifying and implementing remedies. After this meeting the parents implemented their plan of action. We met two-weeks later to evaluate the process and implement a new course of action (if needed).

The meeting was attended by the school's principal, who assured the parents that he had remedied the problem, and that such problems would not resurface. However, the parents and students were not satisfied with stepping away from the situation, and they recommended that the counselors and the high school's teacher core attend professional developments that would be based upon the critical compassionate intellectualism model that their teachers use in their SJEP and Raza Studies courses. Furthermore, these professional developments would be facilitated by the students and their SJEP and Raza Studies teachers.

In Phase two both parents and students were able to voice and implement change at THS. Parents and students that understand that they hold power, who understand and can

articulate the root and the ancillary issue of a problem, and who seek social justice, can and do transform structures within the system; the key is helping parents and students see, understand and transcend the hegemony of white oppression that has and is the foundation of much of the social construction within their life experiences (Delgado, 2000).

After creating an understanding of the *Ce-Ollin* Parent *Encuentros*, we realized that the SJEP and its work help to create the impetus by which we could introduce critical epistemologies and counter-hegemonic thoughts to students. This opened the door to the offering of the same dialogue and exercises to the parents. Much like our students, most of the parents developed their own critical lens through which they, like their children, became agents of change. However, without the SJEP, I am not certain how much, if any of these transformations would have occurred.

This understanding is grounded in the understanding that authentic educational transformation must start with strong *barrio* and *familia* based organic movements that counter the formation of the oppressor group's political and racial hegemony inherent within schools. In essence, the *Ce-Ollin* Parent *Encuentros* were created from the notion that assimilation or acquiescence to the status quo is not a necessary function of educational transformation (Carter, 2007; Foley, 1989; 1990; Trujillo, 1998). It is my belief that transformation of education through the eyes of both parents and students need to be approached through the pursuit of social justice, and a tri-dimensionalized understanding of education. I believe that a social justice approach to educational transformation and its inherent component of parent empowerment are nurtured and advanced when parents and students are able to establish or re-establish a since of hope

(Delgado-Gaitan 1996) through the construction and in some cases the reconstruction of identity and purpose. Delgado – Gaitan states, "Parents changed their view of self, they changed the way they saw each other, and they acted to change conditions" (1996, p.61). Educational transformation must be created through organic and grassroots movements that are driven by the needs, understandings, and visions of the students and parents who seek equitable, relevant, and valuable educational experiences.

Envisioning educational practices and programs that eliminate the achievement and opportunity gaps entails creating educational environments that centers around hope and possibility, that are transformative, and that begin with the students, families, and communities. Such practices must nurture active world citizens, who not only survive and engage racism, but also offer their own visions of the world. This vision is a radical shift from educational reform that is motivated by the oppressor group's efforts to control and indoctrinate Chicana/o students through the construction of prison-like environments and severe disciplinary measures (Noguera, 1995). In sharp contrast, Noguera (1995) contends that the most productive way to address educational transformation is by creating environments of humanization that are fostered by truly caring relationships that lead the transformation of self and the role one take towards to humanization of others. Moreover, understanding and engagement must be reciprocated by schools, teachers, parents, students and the community. This experience must be committed to the contextualization of the social reality of all engaged in the service of education and the history of this constructed reality. Through this process a more inclusive and equitable tomorrow is possible.

CHAPTER NINE

Transformative Interactions: True Words, and the Tri-Dimensionalization of Reality

For this study, I have defined transformative actions as the type of interactions that nurture and foster within students, parents and teachers the courage and understanding needed to change the racial and social order inherent within the United States educational system, and its society. Through the use of true words these transformative interactions were used as mechanisms to create a war of position and to inspire a strong sense of organic intellectualism within the students, the parents, and the teachers.

In this chapter, I will further breakdown the student-parent-teacher interactions that took place during the course of this study. I refer to these interactions as transformative interactions, and I define transformative actions as the type of interactions that nurture and foster within students, parents and teachers the courage and understanding needed to change the racial and social order inherent within SUSD's educational structure and the communities in which they live. These transformative interactions are critical because according to the students in the study, these transformative interactions helped to place the students, many of their parents, and the teachers in the project in a space wherein they were prepared to engage in a war of position; and equally important they inspired a strong sense of organic intellectualism within the students, parents, and teachers.

Moreover, in an attempt to foster a mini-educational revolution, I believed that it is critical to have a full understanding of the influence held within the interactions between students-parents-teachers. Therefore, it is critical that these interactions be

expounded upon in this section as a means of creating the context and understanding needed to fully explain the essence of the CCI model. As with the CCI model, transformative interactions are experienced through the curriculum, pedagogy and true words.

Transformative Interactions

I approached all interactions with the belief and understanding that educational revolution starts on the ground. Therefore, as I conceptualized and operationalized the CCI model, it is important to center the voices of the students and parents within this process. As I reflected upon the voices of the students, it is clear that our true words influenced their ability to find their true words, and through their true words they were able to influence the true words of their parents. Moreover, in a number of cases the parents, students and teachers created true words through conflict or through an evolution of understanding that opened the door for the creation and recreation of true words.

> Ansenia Valenz: I liked the class cuz they helped a lot because like they
> made me realize that I really need school because if I didn't have the class
> I would probably be at home being a couch potato. Like now I realize I
> need to go to college and if I really want to change and help people and
> stuff I need to become somebody. Um…even my family started to realize
> that. After the Encuentros they started to like see, see things a little
> different. When I talked about change and how fucked up things are, they
> started listening to me. They would just blow me off [before]. We know
> these things because the project and the things we study; we know not to
> ignore these things. And people see them, but what can they do? The

media, the, what's that word? I can't say it.

Cami Nieto: Hegemony?

Ansenia Valenz: Yeah, that word. It prevents people from believing that things can change. People are scared to speak because they think if they make noise or shine the light someone will get them. But after awhile my family, even my mom started to be different. Anyways, my family and I now see things different, and yeah I'm going to be somebody, but somebody who helps.

It is important to note that these transformative parent-student-teacher interactions were based upon the following beliefs: A. Chicana/o parents' value education as much or more than white parents (Immerwahr & Foleno, 2000); B. The "funds of knowledge" held by our parents are valued, centered, and built upon (Moll et al., 1992; Velez – Ibanez & Greenburg, 1992); C. Informed parents participate and their children perform at a higher academic level (Tatto, 2001); and D. If education revolution is to take place, it needs to start on the ground, and the parents need to be heavily involved (Foley, 1989, 1990; Villenas & Foley, 2002) By the end of the project, the students, Mr. Lozano, Dr. Love and I actively and consciously, through our true words, created an environment of trust that respected and valued the stories, the experiences and the perceptions of the students, parents and teachers (Delgado, 1998). This environment is built on trust, a trust that is intensified through the stories and experiences that were shared and valued within this space (Delgado, 1998). As I look back upon this process, I now understand that in the process we created and recreated new spaces

as we demonstrated an appreciation for each of the stories and experiences that

were shared by students, parents and teachers alike.

Parents   Teachers

True
Words

Students
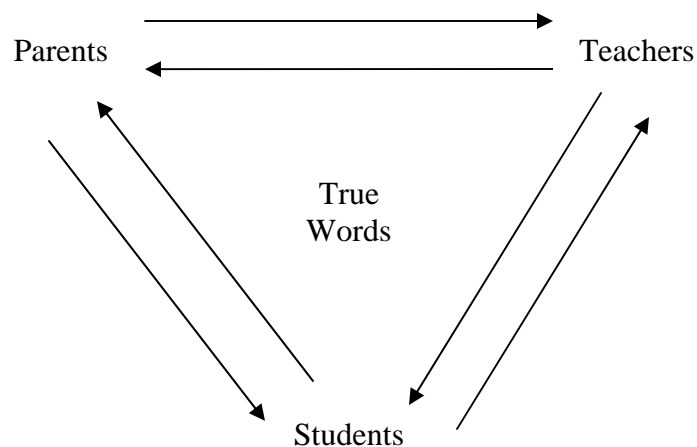
Figure 14. Transformative Interactions. The creation of transformative interactions must be constructed on the Freirean notion of true words that I have interpreted to mean the actions that are informed by a high level of reflection that take places through a lens of respect and love.

[56] Figure conceptualized by author

In essence, our student – parent – teacher space is humanized by us: the students,

parents, and teachers. I realized that in order to construct an environment of educational

liberation, all of our voices must be heard and represented. During our *Ce Ollin* Parent

Encuentros parents, students and CCI teachers come with and shared a wealth of

knowledge that I construct into curriculum and classroom exercises (González et al.,

1995). This issue of curriculum is critical given the present emphasis on high-stakes

standardized tests and the belief that curriculum and classroom activity must focus on

these tests (Luxia, 2005; McNeil, 2000; Erickson, 1986). It is assumed that standardized

tests and their narrow scope are mandated at the national, state and local levels with the

intent of boosting the level of academic achievement (Shohamy et, al., 1996). However,

I have never been convinced of this rhetoric. I am convinced that a high academic achievement can be attained through the use of curriculum and pedagogy that is authentic and organic in nature (Vasquez et al., 1994; Valenzuela, 1999; Gay, 2002; Yosso, 2002). These issues are extremely important to this study, and they will have a greater focus in later chapters.

The academic advancement of Chicana/o students does not required that these students assimilate or acquiesce to the oppressor group's notions and beliefs of education and academic success (Noguera, Cammarota & Ginwright , 2006; Foley, 1989; 1990). Likewise, the involvement of Chicana/o parents should transcend the euro-American notions of parent involvement. Unlike other school experiences our students stated that the transformative nature of the project and its process led to the hope and an elevated sense of social responsibility (Noguera, 1995). The transformation of our students had additional forms; according to our students their transformation also took the form of a newly-found sense of academic proficiency, hope and social responsibility. Moreover, these transformations ultimately led to students' desire to have their parents involved in the project and our Encuentros. Our students were demanding that their parents attend our Encuentros; one parent stated, "Ansenia was literally pushing us out the door." Ansenia Valenz' mother said she had never seen her this way, especially when it comes to school. 'She has never wanted me at school. All week she was telling me not to forget about Saturday. Not to forget about Saturday over and over."

The transformation of students helps lead to the transformation of parents and families; our students were going home and talking to parents and/or other adult family about the liberatory education they were receiving in the SJEP class. In many cases these

parents and family members were opposed to our counter-hegemonic curriculum and pedagogy. In a few cases, parents asked to meet with us to discuss "the bullshit that is taking place in our classroom." However, in nearly every case, our *Ce – Ollin* Parent *Encuentros* helped our parents becomes advocates of the SJEP, the curriculum we offered, the pedagogy we used, and for the *Encuentros* themselves. Following are a few examples of parent remarks: "What can we do to ensure that this project continues?" "Why didn't I get this type of education when I came to this school?" "I hope my little sister can participate next year." "Let us know if we need to fight for you guys!" And from a father who at one time wanted his daughter to exit the project, "I thought this stuff, racism was over with. I wanted to believe it was over; I guess I have always seen it, but I tried to ignore it. It's true, racism is everywhere, I do see it … Let me know how I can help you guys."

We fully understand that teachers must also take part of this evolutionary process. Through Raza Studies' Redemptive Rememberings, educators have the opportunity to become proficient Critical Compassionate pedagogues. After Peter McLaren and Tomaz Tadeu da Silva (1993), I have called this educational space, "Redemptive Rememberings." Many of our CCI teachers have referred to Redemptive Rememberings as "spiritual," "healing," "rejuvenating," "enlightening," and "humanizing." CCI Teacher Cariña Delora said,

> For me the Redemptive Rememberings have been spiritual experiences.
> After the Rememberings my soul feels whole and pure, and when I return
> to our students I am better able to help them heal their souls. For me the
> [education] system tears away at our [teacher and Chicano/a students]

souls; we are both left in need healing. The most amazing thing is that often neither one of us realizes how our souls are being torn apart. In fact, it was not until I started these Rememberings that I realized how much of my soul I had lost. Coming here helps me, and it helps me to be a better servant of our students.

CCI Teacher Olevanzo Edil said:

I look forward to our Rememberings. It gives a chance to reconnect to the revolution. When I leave hear my spirit is strong, I am clear in our focus, and I am a stronger warrior. Here I can reflect on my strengths and my weaknesses, and as I listen to our Raza (team members) I can rethink, recreate or just strengthen the things I am doing with our students. It gives clarity in what I am doing and why I am doing it.

CCI Teacher Austin Cortina said:

Our Rememberings refuel me, and they relight the fire within me. They give me a place where I can ask questions, share my understandings, and where I grow as a teacher and a person. This is a place where we can dialogue about revolution and people understand what we are talking about. It is a place that we can gain a deeper understanding of the transformations within this revolution.

CCI teacher Redemptive Rememberings have given them the opportunity to experience a setting where true words are part of the construction and the perpetuation of a foundation that has been built through the commitment to critical self and critical structural transformation.

I view this process as an interdependent evolutionary type of praxis. In this process, it must be understood that advancement is dependent upon the inclusion of the praxis of students, teachers and parents. Each group must have membership within the creation and usage of true words.

True Words and the Tri-Dimensionalization of Reality

Both true words and the tri-dimensionalizing of time are centered within the notion of praxis, and because of the redemptive powers they have fostered within SJEP students and CCI teachers, I used it as one of the foundational pieces of the CCI classroom experience. Both are seamlessly interwoven within every layer of the CCI process. Through the exercise of true words, the SJEP students have been able to tri-dimensionalize their realities. The students have gone from a state of uni-dimensionalism, wherein nihilism prevails, to a state of tri-dimensionalism in which hope prevails and dreams of tomorrow are had for the first time.

As the SJEP students began to move towards transformation, I find them struggling with ability to the express themselves in a manner that is beyond the here and now. Their words were reactive, and their actions ranged from self-defeating resistance to reactionary behavior[57] (Solórzano & Delgado-Bernal, 2001). As the students referred to themselves or as they responded to one another, the students used words that from my perspective did not reflect who they were: bitch, hoe, gangsta, baller, *baboso*, *pendejo*, stupid, idiot, etc. According to the students these words are part of the world. Cami Nieto said:

> We are the words that I hear everywhere I go: school (students), the
>
> neighborhood, with friends, in the media, and even teachers use some of

them. But, teachers use them different than we do. We use them in playing

around, I know that you say they are bad even when we are playing, and I

understand that and even kinda agree, but, teachers use them to hurt. They

have used them on me every since I can remember. I think for teachers it's

a power trip; they know they are teaching us or connecting with us, but are

not going to blame themselves for not doing their job, so they use these

words on us. Some teachers use words like stupid, idiot, dumb, lazy, slow,

and mentally challenged. Others do the same, but not in words, they say

them in their actions. These teachers are the SSR teachers (sit down, shut

up and read). Their classes are so boring, and when you ask them for help

they give you some half-ass response or they flat-out ignore us.

Sometimes this neglect leads us to take action, and a lot of times

these actions are not positive. A lot of times we just don't know how to

come back at teachers or principals when they hurt us. I know at times I

have lashed out in ways that got me kicked out of school. But, that was the

only way I knew, and I needed to do fuckin something. I mean they break

you and then they wonder why you responded the way you did. We

respond because we can't take it any more. And how do you tell a teacher

that they are not doing their job, and even if you do, how will [they]

listen?

As Cami explains, the psychology pain teachers caused for Cami and his peer led to self-

defeating types of action that had negative outcomes: suspensions, being kicked out of

the home, and pregnancy. Unfortunately, on a few occasions, students were suspended

for engaging the system in a manner that is critical in its intent, but reactionary in its essence.
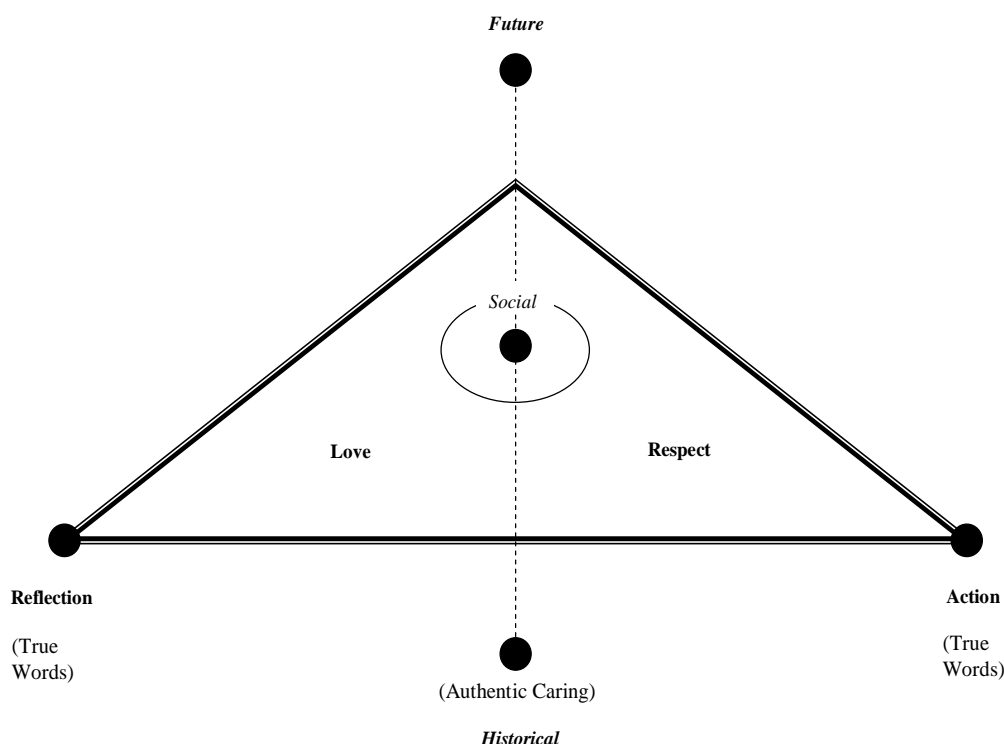
Figure 15. The Praxis of Critically Compassionate Intellectualism. This praxis helps students recognized and understand who they are in moment; it also, helps students create greater meaning to this moment through the understanding of and connection to their historical reailities. Moreover, created in the nexus of this socio-historical bi-dimensionalism is the ability of the student to place themselves in a futuristic moment. This moment is also distinguished as a space of hope.

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[58] Figure conceptualized by author

At this point, the SJEP students did not have the ability to create true words. Because their words were created in a uni-dimensional state, their words were without reflection or action. The words created by the students represented either verbalism or activism; neither of which takes students to an elevated state of reality, epistemology or critical consciousness nor an ontological evolution. According to Freire (1994), "When a word is deprived of its dimension of action, reflection automatically suffers as well; the

word is changed into idle chatter, into v*erbalism*…on the other hand, if action is emphasized exclusively, to the detriment of reflection, the word is converted into *activism*" (p. 68-69). Either dichotomy negates praxis and creates unauthentic thought and an unauthentic existence. In this state our students perpetuated what McLaren (2000) refers to as a culture of silence. In this state our students were unable to transform their reality, much less engage in a project that sought to help transform the reality of others.

As a result of this reality, I engaged in the process of helping the students gain the ability to tri-dimensionalize their realities. Freire (1994) states, "Through their continuing praxis, men and women simultaneously create history and become historical-social beings. Because — in contrast to animals — people can tri-dimensionalize time into the past, the present, and the future, their history, in function of their own creations, develops as a constant process of transformation" (p.82). Our students engaged in the exercise of praxis, and over time they were able to transcend their state of uni-dimensionalism. As students gained a deeper epistemological contextualization of their realities and their histories, they were able to construct futures in which they do not fall prey to Delgado's theory of surplus equality,[59] wherein a society functions to maintain a subgroup that is consistently exploited.

The end result is a praxis that nurtured the students' ability to offer true words and to tri-dimensionalize their realities. As a result of these practices our students entered a state that Solórzano and Delgado-Bernal (2001) refer to as transformational resistance. In this state, the students' praxis illustrated a critique of oppression and a profound desire for social justice. This is further illustrated in the students' commitment to the SJEP, their abilities to express true words that counter the present-day oppressor group hegemony,

their ability to negotiate and mediate the racist system of American education and their

commitment to social justice beyond the realm of this project.

CHAPTER TEN

CCI and SJEP Outcomes: *Critically Compassionate Intellectualism* in Practice

The top priority of the SJEP and the practice of CCI is the intellectual development of Chicana/o students. The SJEP and the practice of CCI support and nurture intellectual development by creating the opportunity for students to question and investigate: (1) racial, social, and economic problems that undermine their potential to excel academically, as well as, (2) the impediments of the wellbeing or opulence of their families and communities.

> Olvia: it came down to us and our experiences to change these things. The
>
> project helped us understand that we can change our world, we can have a
>
> different education, we can do things that the system didn't expect us to
>
> do, and we are the ones who will change our community and our lives. It
>
> is hard to understand or even believe this, but it is true. But, schools do not
>
> help us understand this. Instead they make us learn a bunch of crap that
>
> really really doesn't matter. Why don't they teach us about racism and
>
> oppression? Why don't they teach us about how we can challenge these
>
> things? Why don't they teach us how we can help ourselves or how we
>
> can help our communities? This is what is real, this is what real education
>
> is; this is what made the connection for me.
>
> Rolando: It was awesome [laughs]. It was just…it was a new experience,
>
> like it was my next step; it was like a way for me to speak what I have to
>
> say. It was a chance to speak, you know, like a chance to express
>
> ourselves. It was hard, the readings and the writing were really hard, but

we did it. We did it because we knew it was about us; we knew this would

help us. We were looking at ways to explain our real stories, and we were

giving people ways to change the bad, the injustice, and inequality we

faced at school and in our barrios and communidades. This made the class

[project] really interesting and it made it really very important.

In their advocacy and activism, the SJEP students articulated the need to expand

the SJEP. The rationale offered by the students for this expansion is the development of

an academic identity and an increased level of academic proficiency, both of which the

SJEP students attribute primarily to their participation in the project.

Rolando: We were changing things and its funny [laugh] because we

changed. We, those of us in the second year, all graduated. Me, Ramiro,

Tina nobody except you guys thought we would make it. Oh, Ansenia

made it too. The class [project] gave us stronger confidence; it helped us

in our other classes. We believed in ourselves. We believed we could do

the work no matter what the other teachers said or did to us. Man the class

did make things easier for me, and I know a lot of the other kids said the

same thing. I even started to think that I was smart. All those days sitting

in the back of the class and the teachers ignoring me, rolling their eyes,

blowing out air, not helping me, and getting mad at us; after all that you

feel like just quitting, and it makes you feel like you are not worth it. They

make you feel small, they make you feel stupid, and a lot of days I just

wanted to hide. I think that's why I would ditch. I know that made it

worse, but it seemed like the only way I could stand up to it. The class

[project] made me find ways to stand up. I asked more questions, I made sure I understood; it was their job to teach, and they needed to teach me.

Cami: You would come in, and you would give us these ideas, and we would elaborate on them. We would have to connect them to our lives. That made it different: our lives were the curriculum, our lives were the class. You would connect our lives to civil rights, to the Constitution, to all the Supreme Court cases we studied. Then it was up to us to create new questions and new answers. You made it so that we wanted to learn more. We wanted more curriculum; especially because you would come in and say 'where are we?' And that meant not where we were in the book, it meant, where were we in our thoughts. You challenged us to come up with our own answers. You challenged us to open our minds. You challenged us to say what we wanted in the curriculum and what we wanted to learn more about. But, the hard part was when you would say, 'why?' We had to let you know why we needed more knowledge or deeper knowledge in this topic or area. We were challenged to think of information we needed to help make things better for our school and the lives of our families and our community… Also, I know that the project helped us challenge the school and the teachers. I know the project kept me in school. I know it kept a lot, probably all of the students in school. Like you would always say the things we were learning would become the ammunition we would use to take on the world. What we learned about ourselves, our history, and the new thoughts we had of what could be; helped me and the other

students do better in our classes, and helped us believe that we could do a

lot better than we had. I know I went a lot longer than I would have, but

the project kept me in.

The CCI model was created by the SJEP and has since been implemented in three other

high schools. The effectiveness of the model is evident by the students' performance on

the AIMS Test, student surveys, and student testimonials regarding the personal

transformations that they have experienced as a result of their participation in the SJEP

and Raza Studies courses.

 In the forthcoming sections, I interpret the AIMS comparison data from the 2004-

05 – 2006-07 schools years and I contextualized the setting in which each of these

academic snapshots took place. The survey is from cohort one (class of 2004) – cohort

three (class of 2006). Due to its revealing nature, in my eyes, the survey data is more

important than the AIMS data. The survey data tells me what the students believe, and it

offers an expression of there experiences. In order to further strengthen the understanding

of relationship between academic success and CCI participation, I present the voices of

CCI/SJEP participants. These voices are by far the most important data within this

section. The voices of students give a direct understanding of what students are

experiencing and the impact these experiences are having on their lives.

11th Grade AIMS Data

In the fall of 2005, the SJEP started to collect the data that reflected how our

students performed on the AIMS test in comparison to similar ethnic 11th grade cohorts

who were not exposed to the CCI model. In the spring of 2005, the CCI model was used

at four SUSD high schools in a total of class eight rooms. The next three slides are

broken into the three subject areas of the AIMS, and they reflect the percentage of our

students at the four sites who passed the different subject areas of the AIMS versus the

other 11th grade ethnic cohorts at those cites who were not exposed to the CCI model.

The tables represent a comparison of the pass percentage of the CCI student versus that

of the next highest ethnic group: On the 2004 – 2005 reading section of the AIMS test,

the CCI students outperformed all other 11th grade ethnic cohorts at the four sites where

CCI was implemented. In three of the four cases the gap in performance was equal to or
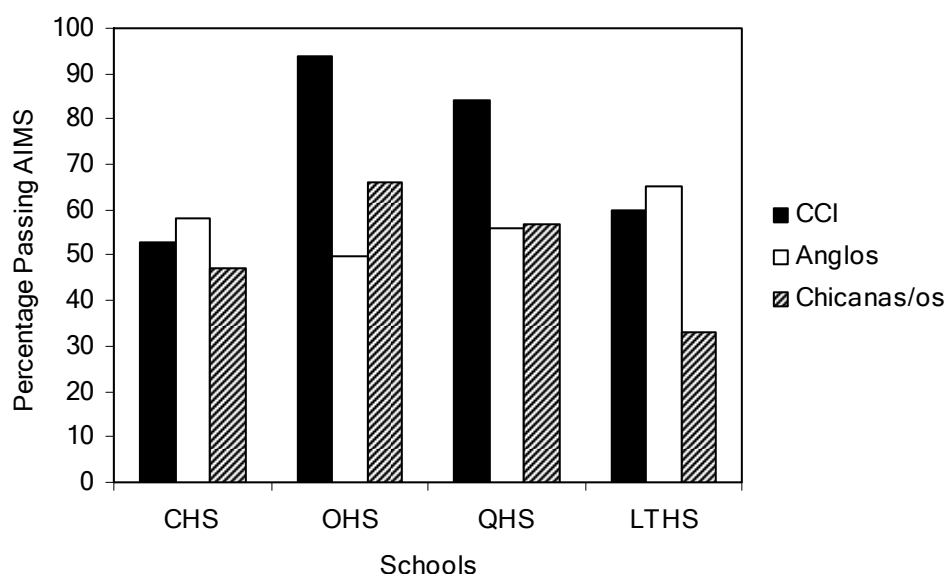
greater than 23%.
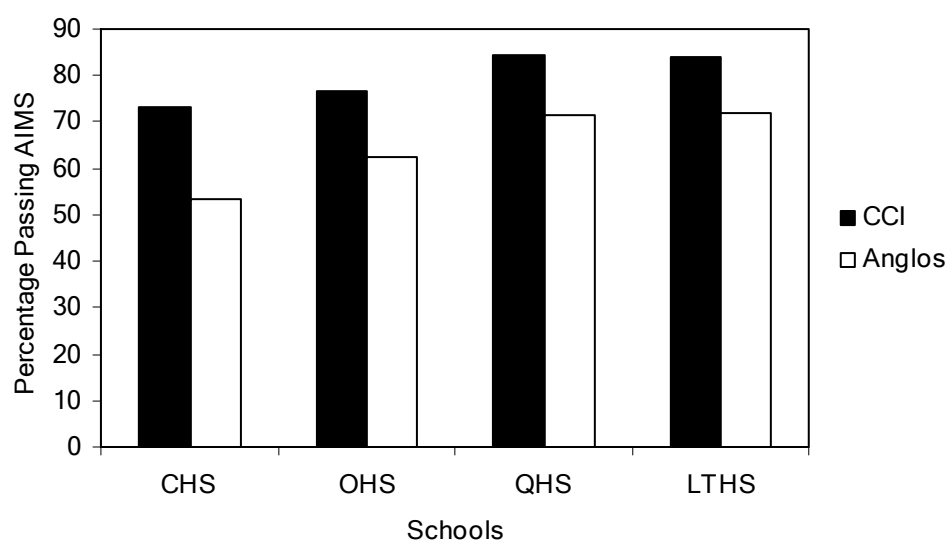
Figure 16. 2004 – 2005 SY 11th Grade AIMS Reading CCI Cohort Comparison

[60]Adapted from SUSD's website from its Accountability and Research Page. The data is specific to
SUSD's AIMS Cohort Comparison page.

On the 2004 – 2005 writing section of the AIMS test; again, the CCI students

outperformed all other 11th grade ethnic cohorts at the four cites where CCI was

implemented. In three of the four cases, the gap in performance was equal to or greater

than 23%. At two of the four sites the gap in percentage passed was equal to or greater than 25%.

The 2004 – 2005 math section of the AIMS test is the only section that CCI students did not outperform all other 11th grade ethnic cohorts at the four CCI sites. At CHS, Anglo students outperformed CCI students by one percentage point. However, at the other three sites, CCI students outdistanced all other groups by at least 7%. Moreover, within the CCI model is the notion of academic identity. When explaining academic identity, I point to the AIMS math results of our CCI students, and offer the words our students have shared with me. At the 2007 Critical Race Theory in Education Conference, four of our CCI/SJEP students spoke to this very point. Sol, Renee, Pete, and
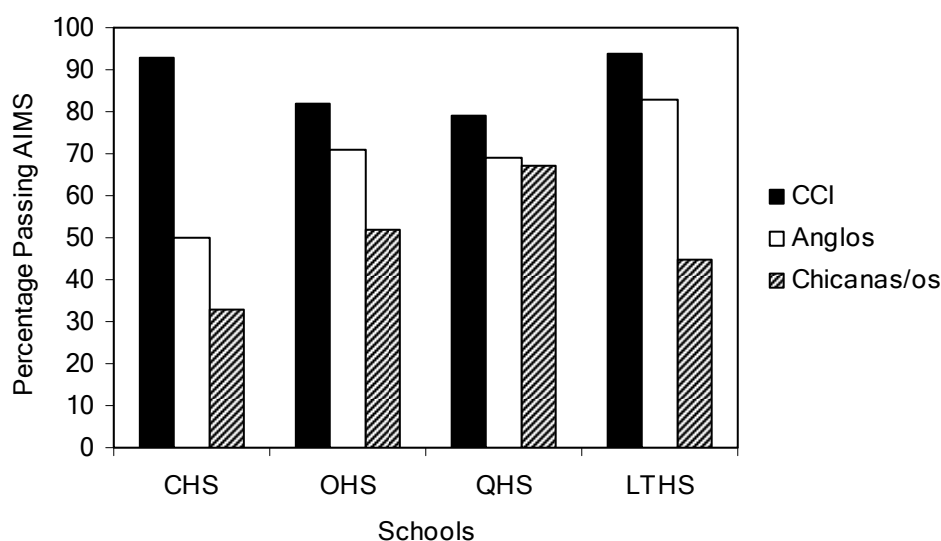
Figure 17. 2004 – 2005 SY 11th Grade AIMS Writing CCI Cohort Comparison

[61]Adapted from SUSD's website from its Accountability and Research Page. The data is specific to SUSD's AIMS Cohort Comparison page.

Luz all spoke about how the CCI model has helped them to develop an academic identity, an identity that helps them engage and overcome the inadequacy and injustice that exists

within the curriculum and instruction of their courses outside of the SJEP. Sol and Renee both stated how despite the fact that the SJEP does not offer a math course, and that the CCI model is not used in their math courses, they and other colleagues were able to have greater success in there math courses because the SJEP and its CCI model helped them realize that they could handle the instructional and curricular challenges of their math courses. Sol stated, "It [SJEP] helped me believe that I could pass the math on the AIMS. After my junior year (year one of the SJEP), I knew that I was going to graduate. I knew that I was going to pass the Math (on the AIMS test)." Renee jumped in and said, "Me too. Being in the classes gave a lot of confidence in my other classes. When I took the test, I was not scared. I knew I was going to pass. I think that the classes helped me feel that way."
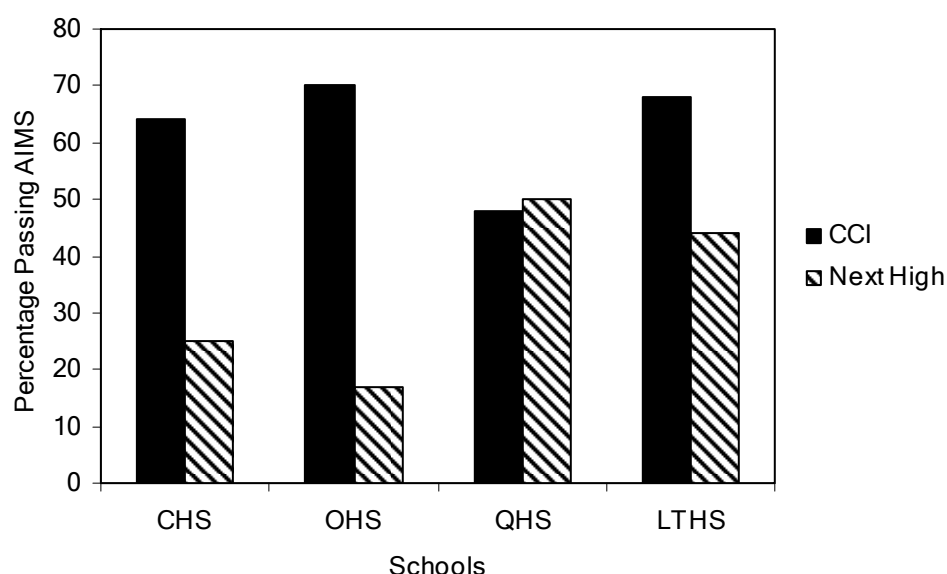

Figure 18. 2004 – 2005 SY 11th Grade AIMS Math CCI Cohort Comparison

[62]Adapted from SUSD's website from its Accountability and Research Page. The data is specific to SUSD's AIMS Cohort Comparison page.

The AIMS data for the 2005 – 2006 11th Grade Raza Studies cohort comparisons revealed the same trend of CCI/Raza Studies Student or those students exposed to the CCI outperforming those cohorts who were not. Moreover, the gap between CCI students and non-CCI students is greater in the 2005 – 2006 school year than in 2004 – 2005 school.

With the exception of Quinto High School where Anglos outperformed CCI students by 2% in AIMS Reading; CCI students at all four sites performed all other 11th grade ethnic cohort groups. In AIMS Reading, the smallest gap between CCI students and the closest Ethnic cohort was 24% at LaTusa High School. At Ollin High School the
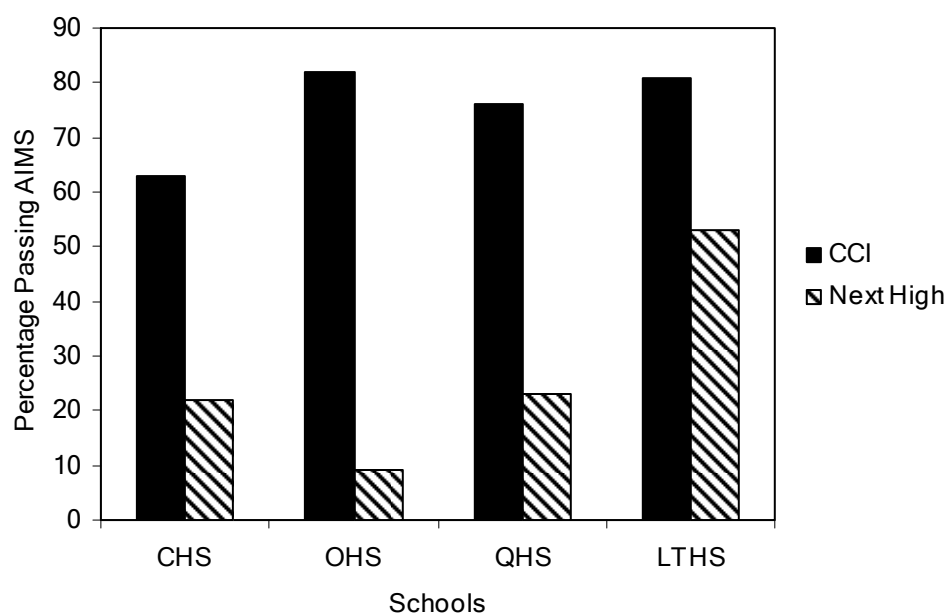

Figure 19. 2005 – 2006 SY 11th Grade AIMS Reading CCI Cohort Comparison

[63]Adapted from SUSD's website from its Accountability and Research Page. The data is specific to SUSD's AIMS Cohort Comparison page.

smallest reading gap between CCI students and non-CCI students was 53%. The 2005 – 2006 11th grade AIMS Writing gap between CCI students and the closest ethnic cohort was 28% at LaTusa High. In comparison at Ollin High the smallest gap between CCI

students and non-CCI students was 73%. In AIMS Math, the 2005 – 2006 data revealed

that, again, CCI students were able to create a gap between themselves and all other

ethnic cohorts. In 2005 – 2006, the smallest gap, AIMS Math, occurred at Quinto High.

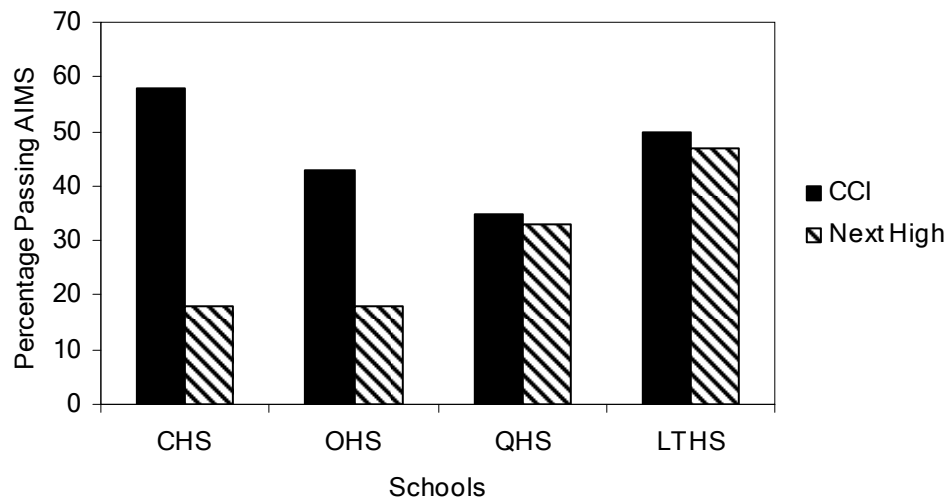However, at Controlado High the smallest math gap was 40%.

Figure 20 . 2005 – 2006 SY 11th Grade AIMS Writing CCI Cohort Comparison

[64]Adapted from SUSD's website from its Accountability and Research Page. The data is specific to
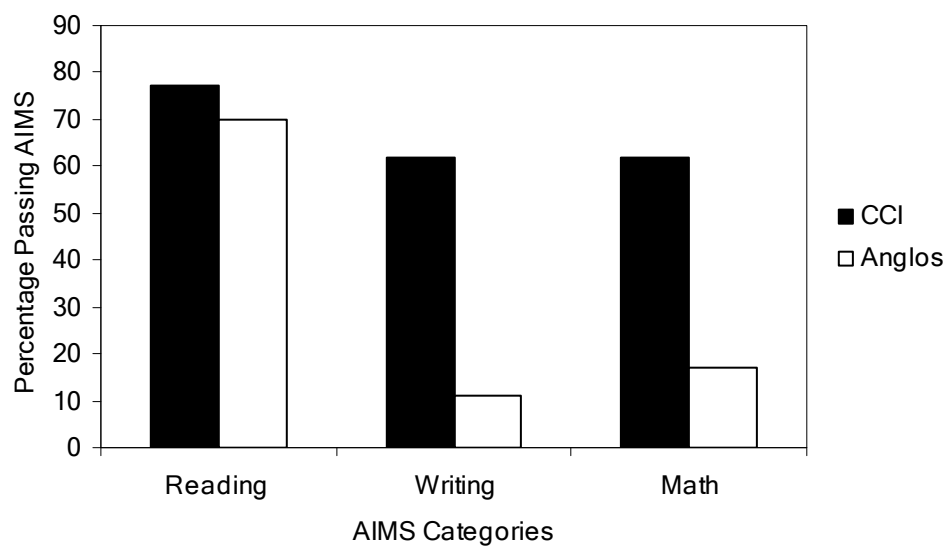SUSD's AIMS Cohort Comparison page.

In 2006 – 2007, I became more comprehensive in the reporting of AIMS cohort

comparisons for the SJEP. The 2006 – 2007 charts include the performance of all 11th

grade ethnic cohorts at the four CCI sites. At Controlado High in 2006 – 2007, CCI

students again outperformed all other 11th grade ethnic cohorts in all three areas of the

AIMS exam. The largest gaps occurred in Writing and Math, 42% and 40% respectively.

In Reading, the gap between CCI students and their Anglo classmates was 7.

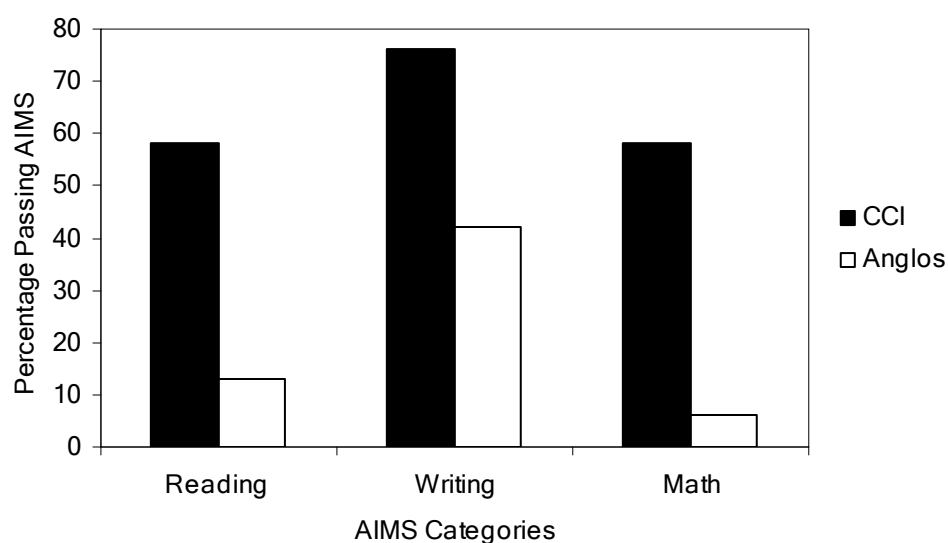*Figure 21. 2005- 2006 SY 11th Grade AIMS Math CCI Cohort Comparison*

[65]Adapted from SUSD's website from its Accountability and Research Page. The data is specific to SUSD's AIMS Cohort Comparison page.

Figure 22. 2006- 2007 SY Controlado H.S. 11th Grade AIMS Cohort Comparison

[66]Adapted from SUSD's website from its Accountability and Research Page. The data is specific to SUSD's AIMS Cohort Comparison page.

At Quinto High, the 2006 – 2007 gaps between CCI students and non-CCI students were quite significant. In Reading, the 27.8% gap between Chicano non-CCI students and CCI students was the smallest. The smallest Writing gap was 33.8%, which took place between Anglos and CCI. The smallest Math gap 52%, took place between Anglo students and CCI students. The gaps at Ollin High were less significant than the two previous sites; however, the level of CCI performance was similar. The largest gaps took place in Writing, and in the Math section of AIMS again CCI students outperformed all other ethnic groups. In the area of Reading, CCI students significantly outperformed Anglos.
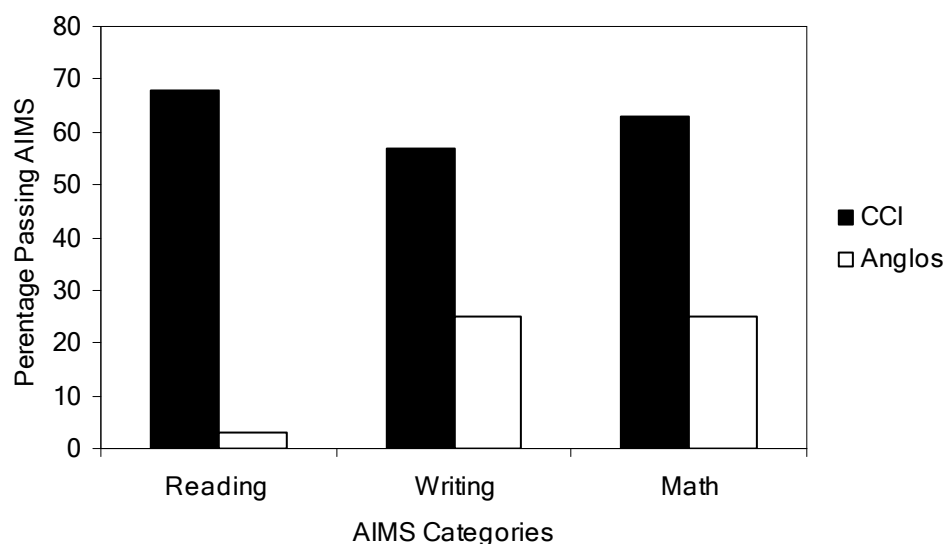

Figure 23. 2006- 2007 SY Quinto H.S. 11th Grade AIMS Cohort Comparison

[67]Adapted from SUSD's website from its Accountability and Research Page. The data is specific to SUSD's AIMS Cohort Comparison page.

At LaTusa High in 2006 – 2007, CCI students impressively outperformed the nearest ethnic cohort on the writing section by 68.7%. On the Reading section, CCI students

surpassed Anglos by 15% and 19.8% on the Math section. CCI students at LaTusa, like their peers at Ollin High, Quinto, and Controlado were able to outperform all other 11th grade cohorts on all the three sections of the AIMS exam.
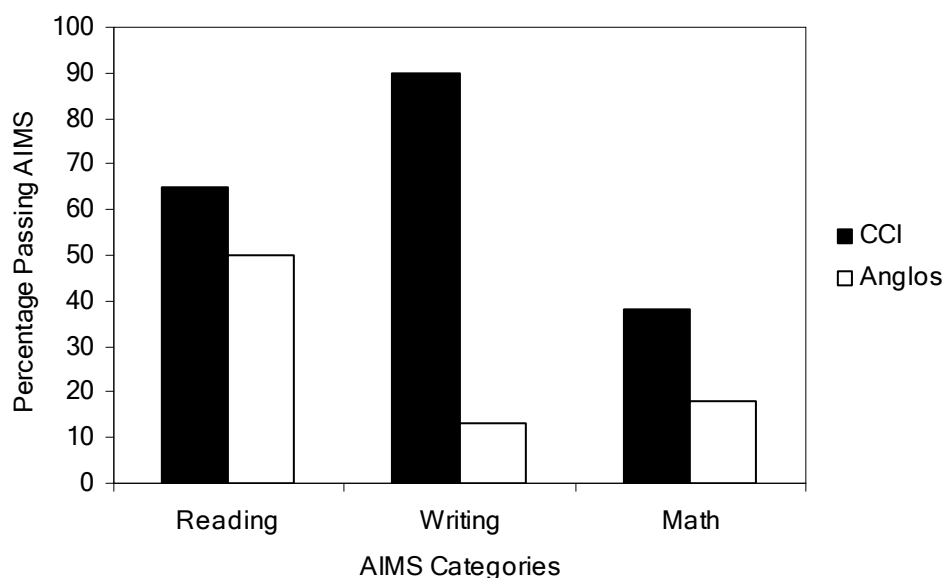

Figure 24. 2006- 2007 SY Ollin H.S. 11th Grade AIMS Cohort Comparison

[68]Adapted from SUSD's website from its Accountability and Research Page. The data is specific to SUSD's AIMS Cohort Comparison page.

12th Grade Academic Impact

Another example of a stronger academic identity is the graduation rate of the SJEP/CCI students. Over the course of its four cohorts or graduating classes, the SJEP/CCI graduation rates exceed the Anglo graduation rates of the site where the SJEP/CCI is offered (SJEP rate v. site rate for Anglos): Class of 2004: 94 % CCI v. 81 % site; Class of 2005: 96 % CCI v. 83% site; Class of 2006: 100% CCI v. 82% sites; and the Class of 2007: 99.7% CCI v. 84% sites.[69]

In addition, over the course of our two-year (2004-05 SY – 2005 -06 SY) SJEP program, 100% of the students who entered the project in the 2004 – 05 school year with
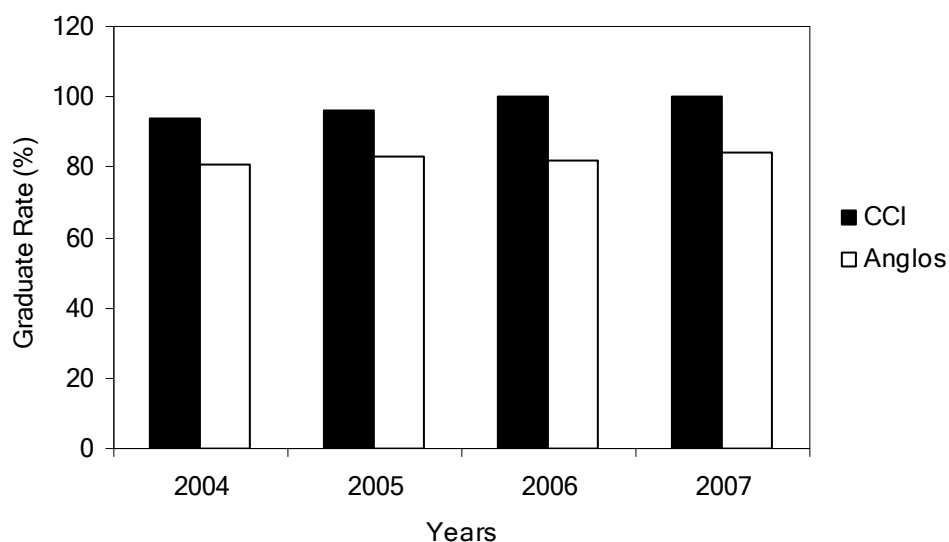
Figure 25. 2006- 2007 SY La Tusa H.S. 11th Grade AIMS Cohort Comparison

[70]Adapted from SUSD's website from its Accountability and Research Page. The data is specific to SUSD's AIMS Cohort Comparison page.

a deficiency in any or all test areas passed all phases of the AIMS test with augmentation.[71] More impressive are the results without augmentation for this same group of students. Without augmentation, 34 of 36 of our students passed the reading section, 35 of 36 of our students passed the writing section, and 27 of 35 of our students passed the math section.

The SJEP's Class of 2007 experience a small increase in their non-augmented pass rates across aboard in comparison to their 2006 peers (2006 % vs. 2007%): 95% vs. 96% pass rate in Reading; 97% vs. 98% pass rate in Writing; and 77% vs. 94% pass rate in Math. Our augmented pass rate in 2007 in Reading and Writing maintained the 100% pass rate that was achieved by the SJEP class of 2006. In Math, the augmented pass rate went from 100% in 2006 to 99.7% in 2007. It should be noted that the overall number of

students in the SJEP Class of 2006 was 38 (two sites and one class at each CHS and

LTHS) with 35 still in need of passing the AIMS Math section when they entered the

SJEP as juniors.

Figure 26. CCI/SJEP Graduation Rate vs. SUSD Anglo Graduation Rate: Classes of
2004 - 2007

[72]Adapted from SUSD's website from its Accountability and Research Page. The
data is specific to SUSD's AIMS Cohort Comparison page.

In comparison, the SJEP Class of 2007 had 124 students (three sites: one class at

QHS, one class at CHS and two classes at LTHS), with 105 needing to pass the AIMS

Math section when they entered the project as juniors. Another small note: it is important

to acknowledge the gain that took place in the non-augmented pass rate between the two

classes. The pass rate went from 77 % (27/35 students) in 2006 to 94% (98/105) in 2007.

The goal of the SJEP is 100% graduation and 100% pass rate in all areas of the

AIMS test, and we continue in that pursuit. However, it is important to acknowledge

success when it takes place; and, I believe this is one of those moments.

Table 1

SJEP / CCI 12th Grade 2005-2006 AIMS Performance*

Pass Status	Sections Tested	Sections Passed	Pass % in Reading	Pass % in Writing	Pass % in Math
Pass Without Augmentation	107	96	95%	97%	77%
Pass With Augmentation	107	107	100%	100%	100%

*Adapted from the SJEP End of the Year Report

Table 2

SJEP / CCI 12th Grade 2006 – 2007 AIMS Performance*

Pass Status	Areas Tested	Areas Passed	Pass % in Reading	Pass % in Writing	Pass % in Math
Pass Without Augmentation	415	402	96%	98%	94%
Pass With Augmentation	415	414	100%	100%	99.7%

*Adapted from the SJEP End of the Year Report

Survey Data

The survey data collected from the Class of 2004 – the Class of 2006 is revealing.
The vast majority of SJEP/CCI students believe that their CCI experiences have helped
become better readers and writers, in essence, better students. This has led to the
substantial majority believing that the SJEP/CCI has prepared them for college. These
indicators are critical to our understanding of the impact of the SJEP and its CCI model.
However, for me the most important information revealed by this data is the fact that a

huge number of our students share what they learn in our class with their parents or other significant adults. Equally important is the understanding that an immense number of our students believe that their experiences in the SJEP and with the CCI model have helped to understand that they can be positive contributors to our society.

In an exit 2005 – 2006 survey, 100% of the Controlado and LaTusa 12th grade SJEP/CCI students *believed* or *strongly believed* that participation in the SJEP led to the improvement of their writing and reading skills. Of those surveyed, 100% believed or strongly believed that they were better ready for college because of their participation in the SJEP. In addition, 100% of the students from the same sample believed or strongly believed that after participating in the SJEP, they felt that they could make valuable contributions to their community and society in general. CCI student comments reveal an added level of SJEP impact. According to Alma Verdugo, a freshman at Arizona State University:

> People need to know that these classes (SJEP classes) are the reason why, me and probably all of us have done good in school and on the AIMS test. These classes gave me confidence; I knew I would feel smart at least once a day. And then Lozano (Lozano is the SJEP teacher of record) was right; I realized that these classes were really, really hard, and if I could do good in these classes, I could get A's in my other classes too.

> This class also helped me believe that I could go to a university. Nobody in my family even went to Pima (local community college), and most of them didn't even graduate from high school. I am going to graduate from college, and a big part of that will be these classes and the project.

Melissa Yebes, a freshman at Pima Community College:

> I thought I wasn't going to graduate from Cholla because I didn't think I was
> going to pass the AIMS. The classes (SJEP/CCI) and you guys help me to pass
> the AIMS. If I didn't take these classes or have you, Lozano and Olvia for my
> teachers, I would not be graduating. My life would be different; next year I am
> going to Pima and then to the U of A.
>
> I remember one day you were talking about the other class (cohort one)
> and how they said the project saved their lives. That made me think; I was
> wondering if that could be true. I didn't think you were lying, but I was not sure
> how this would be for me. For me and Jaime this class did change our lives.
> It helped us understand that … *Nos vemos el mundo con ojos críticos*, you know,
> like, we see the world different. We see ourselves different, I see different, and I
> believe different things. Now I believe that things can change, I can help change
> things, and things can be just. It's hard, and sometimes it feels like too much, but I
> know Mexicanos or Chicanos can be strong, we do have power, and unless we
> speak up and take action, nothing will change. I am going to help.

Table 3

2003/2004 – 2005/2006 SJEP /CCI Survey Data*

Number of Respondents	Percent of Students Responding to Survey	Survey Response
389	95%	Agree and strongly agree that working on this project or taking this class has improved their writing skills.
	96%	Agree and strongly agree that they talk to their parents and/or other adults about what they have learned in the project or in the class.

97%	Agree and strongly agree that the project or the class has better prepared them for college.
97%	Agree and strongly agree that working on this project or taking this class has improved their reading skills.
96%	Agree and strongly agree that they are willing to do homework in order to keep the project moving along on tome to ensure participation in class.
97%	Agree and strongly agree that working on this project or taking this class has helped them believe that they have something worthwhile to contribute to this class.

*Adapted from the SJEP End of the Year Report

For some people it may be hard to believe that a significant number of our students have transformed in many ways. However, these transformations have taken place, and they have helped our students reconstruct their identities, and their epistemologies. Many CCI students believe that they are the constructors of knowledge, and many believe that they can help change the world, even if it is only the small piece of the world that they experience everyday.

Despite the successes of the students and the project, we have not been 100% successful. We must consciously and deliberately avoid complacency or even arrogance. We still have a lot to learn, and within our evolution, we must continue to be educated, educate ourselves, and educate others. We look forward to our experiences with future cohorts, and we commit our hearts, souls and minds to the educational revolution that is the Social Justice Education Project.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Tomorrow and the Movement Towards Critically Compassionate Intellectualism:

Reflections and Implications

This study brings the Critical Compassionate Intellectualism Model of Transformative Urban Education to the center of analysis. The CCI model was constructed through the voices of marginalized Chicana/o student, and through their voices this paper unfolds their understanding of the impact of CCI. In addition, the analysis of CCI is constructed through the understanding and knowledge that has been constructed by these same voices.

Peter McLaren (2000) helps me understand that the movement towards CCI is an act of educational revolution, a revolution that uses CCI foundation of curriculum, pedagogy, and student-teacher-parent interactions as the, "wellspring for creating the type of critical agency necessary to contest and transform current global relations of exploitation and oppression" (p.xxvi). In addition, through emancipatory tenets of CRT, CP and authentic caring, CCI pursues the creation of an inimitably transformative and liberatory model of transformative education.

One of CCI's objectives is the development and nurturing of a critical consciousness that leads to both student self-transformation and student praxis (the conjoining of action and reflection) to perpetuate community transformation. Another of CCI's objectives is to help students achieve this state of critical consciousness through the convergence of: (1) critical pedagogy and its exercise of praxis, (2) critical race theory / Latino critical race theory and there use of racism as its principal analytical lens, (3) authentic caring and its additive impact on the educational experiences of Chicana/o

students. It is through the newly created lens of these converged theories, that students question and analyze the racism within their lived experiences, as well as the lack of compassionately authentic relationships within the educational setting.

Our classes are often centered upon healing. This process is extremely time-consuming and requires a huge spiritual and self on the part of both the teachers and the students. The naming of our oppression is a process that is much more difficult than placing the word *racism* on the chalkboard. The naming of our oppression involves an in-depth articulation of how this oppression has manifested itself within the social reality of the student. In each and every case, teachers within the project shared their oppression(s), and they too, provided an in-depth articulation of how this oppression has impacted their social reality. Not until each teacher has taken the risk of fully articulating his or her oppression(s) are the students asked to do the same. This shared naming process is one of the first steps towards the creation of a new multidimensional reality. Within this new reality hope can be created, and this new found hope can help lead students to the creation and transformation of knowledge. Our praxis has helped me understand how, "…pedagogy functions as a cultural practice to produce rather than merely transmit knowledge…" (Giroux, 1992, p. 98)

In this production of knowledge, Giroux (1983) argues that critical pedagogues view schools as "contradictory social sites" (p.115). In the case of the SJEP, relations based on racism and class relations were not simply reproduced during classes outside of the project. SJEP students contested these experiences through their reflections and during the planning of and engagement in counter-hegemonic actions. This praxis is incredibly close to the lived moment. Students bring to class the racism they experience

and therein the students reflect upon the issue and then decide upon the action(s) they should take. This praxis "scares the shit out of" site and district level administrators; as well as the racist, the ignorant and the naïve within the community. Not only are the students unafraid to engage in praxis, but the administration knows that this project has a huge amount of capital within the Chicano community. Given this reality, administrations at the site and district level know that it would be extremely difficult to get rid of the project. Nevertheless, the reality of the community support and the level of praxis are reciprocal in the manifestation and perpetuation, and together they support the creation of a space that is truly "contradictory" to the standard or traditional educational experiences of Chicana/o students.

Research and Critical Reflections

It is important to recognize that of the students that are the focus of this study, only Blanca has had success at the college level. The others have been in and out of the community college system. I still encourage them in their struggle towards a college degree, but the reality is that most of them still have quite a bit of work in front of them.

Simultaneously, this phenomenon has significantly shifted with the last three SJEP cohorts. The last three cohorts have quite a few representatives attending our local university and even more that are still active in our local community college.

I cannot provide a precise answer for cohort one's lack post-secondary success; rather, I believe it is a combination of variables. The first being the reality that the CCI model was a creation of the year - one experiences of the first cohort. As a result, the experimental curriculum and pedagogy that we offered in year were not fully defined,

which means that our articulation and implementation of the educational process was not as clear and precise as it has been with the most recent SJEP cohorts.

Another shortfall has been our inability to construct a fully structured and institutionalized post-secondary support mechanism for our SJEP students who enter our local university and/or our local community college. The SJEP is in the process of creating such a mechanism at the university, but this process has been slow and filled with bureaucratic road blocks.

The SJEP has also been reluctant to designate its course offerings as advanced placement courses. This reluctance stems from our lack of desire to perpetuate the exclusionary posture of advanced placement courses. Also, we feared that an advanced placement designation would make the course less desirable to the marginalized students that we are targeting. However, recently we have decided to create a dual enrollment option. This means that a student can enroll in the advanced placement SJEP course or non-advanced placement SJEP courses. The curriculum and pedagogy in the course would be the same, but the course requirements would differ slightly.

Another variable is the reality that no other cohort in its collective as come from the extreme depth of the well of racism as has the first cohort (Bell, 1992). For nearly all of the students in cohort one, high graduation was not even a consideration. Therefore, because these students made the huge self transformation and the huge self investment in order to graduate from high school, it is my fear that for many of them that was their educational finish line. I do understand that for some the commitment of college graduation may come later, and I do understand that the SJEP and I must continue to encourage our students to pursue higher education.

The Revolution of Transformative Education: Implications

According to McLaren (2000), "A revolutionary pedagogy resists those immaculate discourses and representations of U.S. history, culture, and politics that too often make their way into the classroom of the nation … A revolutionary pedagogy challenges the ideological assumptions that underlie conservative and progressive schooling" (p. 197). CCI and McLaren (2000) agree that our struggle is a daily struggle that can be found in the classroom and on the streets of the barrios, the ghettos and the reservations within our communities. I agree that this is a struggle transcend issues of educational policy, curriculum, and pedagogy; rather this is a struggle for power, the power to dictate the type of education that is afforded Chicana\o students. Our attempt at establishing spaces of power is informed by our understanding that, "education and cultural progress aimed at liberation does not succeed by freeing people from their chains, but by preparing them collectively to free themselves" (p. 193). With this in mind, CCI moves forward. It moves forward because our students have freed themselves from their chains; and in this freedom, they are demanding that CCI move forward as an act of true words.

CCI is the process wherein true words are the praxis or the act of love. For Paulo Freire, "Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself…Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for people. The naming of the world, which is an act of creation and re-creation, is not possible if it is not infused with love…because love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is commitment to others" (1994, p. 70). According to McLaren, love, for Che Guevara, meant the willingness to sacrifice oneself for the, "dignified survival of the

world's vanquished and immiserated peoples" (2000, p.116). CCI is about love, because love is the force the drives us towards the creation of new counter-hegemonic paradigms. It is love that will drive CCI towards and beyond the paradigm shifts that will take place as a result of oppressor groups' hegemony and/or rearticulation of *de jure* racism. Furthermore, love created CCI, and love gives it strength and its place within our struggle.

In this state, CCI is motivated by the words of Che Guevara: "Let me say, with the risk of appearing ridiculous, that the true revolutionary is guide by feelings of love. It is impossible to think of an authentic revolutionary without this quality ..." (Freire, 1994, p.70). As revolutionaries engaged in an educational revolution, CCI teachers understand the need for a paradigm that transcends those that exist and that have existed. It is through the act of love that we seek to create and move towards a paradigm that intensifies and clarifies our students' critical consciousness, their level of praxis, and their level of what Freire refers to as an "epistemological relationship to reality" (Shor, 1996). The love and the praxis inherent within CCI have helped the SJEP students transcend their uni-dimensionalized state of nihilism, wherein neither hope nor love are realities. CCI has helped its students to unfold their realities, and as they unfold their realities, they come to understand the duality of the depth and shallowness of their realities. As they become more able to live and love outside this bottomless pit of nihilism, they begin to develop the understanding that they themselves are deeper than the shallowness of nihilism's bottomless pit.

Taking the aforementioned into consideration, I reflect upon an early exercise conducted with the SJEP students that reveal the hopelessness, anger and the whiteness

(rather than blackness) of their unidimensional reality. For the vast majority of the SJEP students, the moment is the only reality they knew. Yesterday and tomorrow are less than real, and to a large degree, insignificant (Freire, 1994). However, as the students engage in praxis exercise after praxis exercise, the transformation of their words become evident. This transformation of words leads to a transformation of their actions, and these actions lead to new words that are transformational and emancipatory in nature. This process takes place over and over again. For our students, true words became the reality of the SJEP as well as the reality of our students' lives outside the classroom.

True words and praxis are the daily practice of CCI because it is the daily process of the SJEP students. Today these students know, exist, and engage in praxis of love and hope. Love and hope nurture a praxis that helps students to name and re-name their realities and to shed the culture of silence that is fostered and nurtured by the articulations and re-articulations of racism.

Because of our connection to the community and our emancipatory objectives, I believe that CCI has helped the SJEP create a spiritual ontological space wherein hope, faith, courage, and belief are nurtured, — a space that Palmer (1993) refers to as being neither material nor intellectual, but rather it is a spiritual space. This space and its spirituality bring us closer to social change; the spirituality and the stories herein facilitate new knowledge, new epistemology, and new ontology presenting opportunity for the realization of our untested feasibility (Freire, 1996).

APPENDIX A

RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA ANALYSIS MATRIX

Table 4.

Research Methods and Data Analysis Matrix

Research Questions	Methods	Analysis
Do Chicana/o students believe that racism has influenced their educational experiences?	Unstructured individual interviews with open-ended questions. Unstructured focus group interviews with open-ended questions.	Review the transcripts from individual interviews and focus group interviews; identify conceptual themes. Secondary review to ensure the establishment of conceptual themes. Create analysis memo that articulate the larger patterns within the analytical codes. Review social science literature to help me understand and contextualize what I will discover.
If so, what do they think can be done to counter the educational racism they face on a daily basis?	Unstructured individual interviews with open-ended questions. Unstructured focus group interviews with open-ended questions.	Review the transcripts from individual interviews and focus group interviews; identify conceptual themes. Secondary review to ensure the establishment of conceptual themes. Create analysis memo that articulate the larger patterns within the analytical codes. Review social science literature to help me understand and contextualize what I will discover.
What influence does an education model that merges critical race theory, critical pedagogy and authentic caring have upon the educational experience of marginalized Chicana/o students?	Unstructured individual interviews with open-ended questions. Unstructured focus group interviews with open-ended questions. Evaluation data test scores.	Review the transcripts from individual interviews and focus group interviews; identify conceptual themes. Secondary review to ensure the establishment of conceptual themes. Create analysis memo that articulate the larger patterns within the analytical codes. Review social science literature to help me understand and contextualize what I will discover. A secondary analysis of the survey data.

Table 1. *(continued).*

Research Methods and Data Analysis Matrix

| Research Questions	Methods	Analysis
The Evaluation of Archival Data from the Social Justice Education Project's (SJEP) first cohort.	Evaluate data from funding source reports	Identify conceptual themes. Secondary review to ensure the establishment of conceptual themes. Determine if the conceptual themes match the themes from the original research segment. Determine if the conceptual themes can be collapsed into the themes of the original research segment.
Exam scores for students who haveexperienced the SJEP educational model.	Evaluate student performance on the state mandated high school exit exam.	Identify a pattern(s) within the test results. Secondary review to ensure the establishment of the patterns. Determine if the identified patterns are consistent with the conceptual themes within the original research segment and the archival research segment.

APPENDIX B

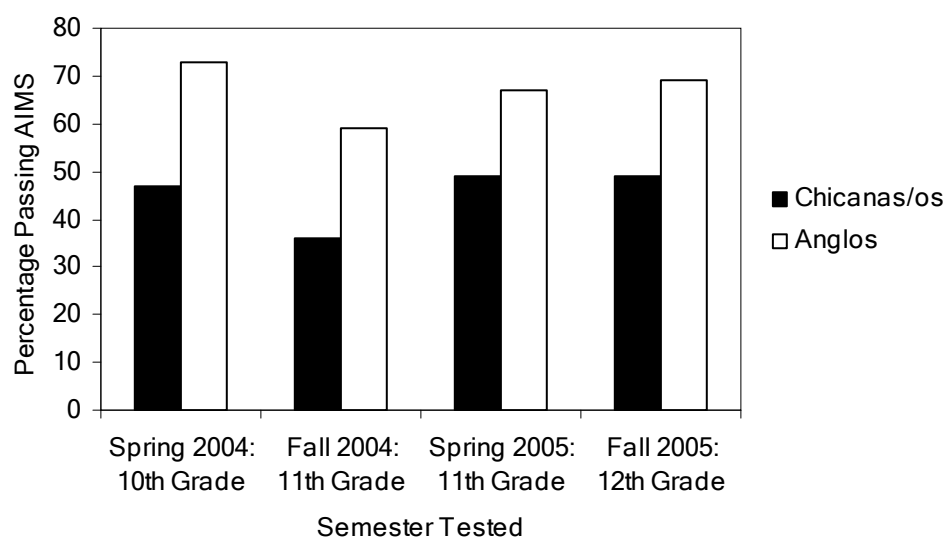CLASS OF 2006 NON-ELL AIMS COMPARISON – STATE OF ARIZONA
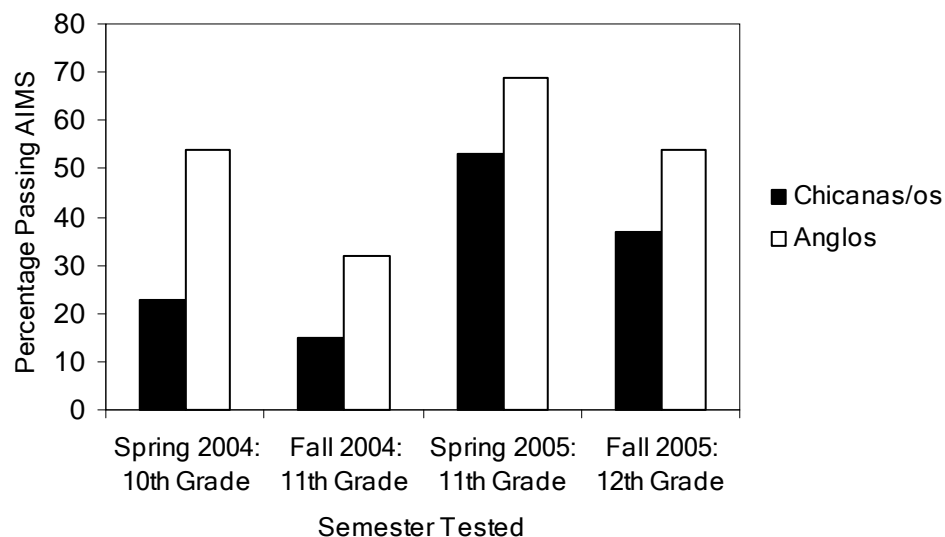
Figure 27. Class of 2006 Non-ELL Math AIMS Comparison

[73]Adapted from Arizona Department of Education, Accountability Division Research and Evaluation Section, State of Arizona, AIMS Report Wizard.
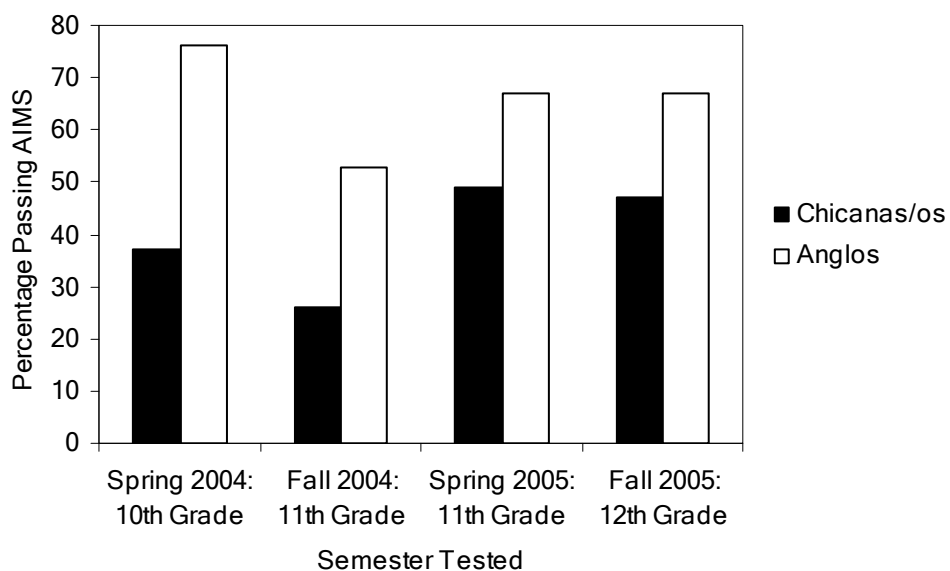
Figure 28. Class of 2006 Non-ELL Reading AIMS Comparison

[74]Adapted from Arizona Department of Education, Accountability Division Research and Evaluation Section, State of Arizona, AIMS Report Wizard.

Figure 29. Class of 2006 Non-ELL Writing AIMS Comparison

[75]Adapted from Arizona Department of Education, Accountability Division
Research and Evaluation Section, State of Arizona, AIMS Report Wizard.

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FOOTNOTES

[1] Adapted from the College Entrance Examination Board, National Report on College-Bound Seniors, selected years 1986-87 through 2002-03.

[2] Adapted from the College Entrance Examination Board, National Report on College-Bound Seniors, selected years 1986-87 through 2002-03.

[3] For counter-hegemonic and political reasons, I refer to the students in this study as Chicanas/os instead of generic and homogenous term Hispanic.

[4] Adapted from U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau; U.S. Census of Population, 1960, Volume 1, part 1. Current Population Reports, Series P-20 and unpublished tabulations; and "1960 Census Monograph, Education of the American Population," by John K. Folger and Charles B. Nam.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Adapted from Arizona Department of Education, Accountability Division Research and Evaluation Section, State of Arizona, AIMS Report Wizard

[7] Adapted from SUSD's Accountability and Research website. The data is specific to SUSD's enrollment page and the ethnic breakdown.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) is Arizona's high stakes graduation exam. The AIMS data was taken from SUSD's Accountability and Research Department Website.

[10] AIMS data has been taken from SUSD's Accountability and Research webpage.

[11] AP Student Access Indicator (APSAI), which controls for both the size of the school and the number of AP courses available at the school. This indicator divided the overall high school student enrollment by the number of AP courses available at the high school. For instance, we calculated the APSAI score at Whitney High School in Cerritos California by dividing the 1,025 students by 34 AP courses for a score of 30. The lower the ratio of students to AP courses, the higher the ranking of the school.

[12] Per the recommendation of Solórzano and Orenalas (2002; 2004) the Social Justice Education project create it own formula to measure the level of inequality within SUSD's advance placement programs. The Advanced Placement Student Equity Congruency Ratio is the ratio of disparity that exists between Chicanas/os and Anglos within the Advanced Placement School Equity Index.

[13] The Advanced Placement School Equity Index equals the number of specific students of color enrolled in AP courses divided by the number of those specific students of color enrolled in the school. For example, at a particular school you would calculate the number of Latino/a or African American students enrolled in AP courses divided by the number of Latina/o or African American students enrolled in the school. The Advanced Placement School Equity Index identifies schools with high underrepresented students of color participation in AP courses; equal participation, and low participation.

[14] Adapted from SUSD's Accountability and Research website. The data is specific to SUSD's enrollment page and the ethnic breakdown.

[15] Ibid.

[16] I have interpreted Gramsci's (1999) war of position to mean an ideological and intellectual struggle wherein the counter-hegemonic groups is attempting win over those who currently operate in the space and hegemony of the oppressor group.

[17] I have I have interpreted true words to mean the actions that are informed by a high level of reflection that take places through a lens of respect and love.

[18] Gramsci (1999) strategic conjecture is "the level of strategic preparation of the theatre of struggle." (p. 217). Gramsci goes on to say, "The level of strategic preparation can give victory to forces which are apparently inferior to those of the enemy" (p. 217).

[19] The 1C was SUSD's Americanization program wherein students suffered corporal punishment and psychological violence for speaking Spanish.

[20] In 2000, the anti-bilingual education Proposition 203 was passed by Arizona voters.

[21] In 2004, Proposition 200 which requires individuals to produce proof of citizenship before they may register to vote or apply for public benefits was passed by Arizona voters. .

[22] In 1994, Proposition 187 was ballot initiative designed to deny undocumented immigrants social services, health care, and public education. It was passed by California voters, but within days of its

passage a fedral court judge issued a restraining order against the proposition. Three years later, the federal court rules Proposition to be unconstitutional.

[23] Proposition 209 was a 1996 California ballot proposition which amended the state constitution to prohibit public institutions from considering race, sex, or ethnicity.

[24] Proposition 227 was an anti-bilingual education ballot initiative that was passed by California voters in 1998.

[25] HR 4437 The Border Protection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005 was the catalyst of the nationwide anti-immigration protests that took place in the spring of 2006.

[26] Popular perception a number of more or less active elements -- the national myth, elements of history, the negative image of the Other, and the possibility of various uses --globalization, demonization, essentialization, aggression, threat, inferiorization or destruction of the Other, protection of privileges, and self-persuasion of those in power. It maintains its basic structure, which manifests itself in different forms and which analysis must bring to light: in the form of an "everyday ideology" (or popular perception), that is, a spontaneous form based on the presumption of the "national" group's homogeneity; in the form of political practices, that is, political explanations based on the concept of difference -- real or supposed; and in a more formalized expression of racist ideology found in the legal system (Guillaumin, 1992, p.16).

[27] Mendez v. Westminster set the precedent used in arguments during Brown v. Board of Education. On April 14, 1947, the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit affirmed the district court's ruling on the unconstitutionality of educationally segregating Mexican American chldren.

[28] Hernandez v. Texas was a landmark United States Supreme Court case that decided that Mexican Americans were protected under the equal protection clause of the U.S. Constitution's 14th Amendment.

[29] Brown v. Topeka Board of Education established that de jure racial segregation is a violation of the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment.

[30] Adapted from data from SUSD's Accountability and Research Department

[31] In Zeus Leonardo's (2005) Critical Pedagogy and Race, Eduardo Bonilla Silva defines
 new racism as (1) increasingly covert, (2) embedded in normal operations of institutions, (3) avoiding direct racial terminology and (4) invisible to most whites.

[32] In her 1991 article entitled *Dysconscious Racism: Ideology, Identity, and Miseducation*, Joyce King defines Dysconscious Racism as a form of racism that tacitly accepts domination of white norms and privileges. It is not the absence of consciousness but an impaired consciousness or distorted way of thinking about race as compared to, for example critical consciousness.

[33] According Solórzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) transformational resistance refers to student behavior that illustrates both a critique of oppression and a desire for social justice.

[34] Xinachtli in the ancient Aztec language means germinating seed.

[35] For Omi and Winant (1994) rearticulations is, "the process of recombination of familiar ideas and values in hitherto unrecognized ways" (p. 163). Therefore, as a means of perpetuation, the familiar idea racism must rearticulate itself in a manner that is unrecognizable.

[36] It is important to note that White Oppression like White Privilege creates significantly greater opportunities for Whites; however, I am not saying that all Whites engage in the perpetuation of this evil nor I am saying that all Whites are bad. In fact, I believe that the vast majority of Whites are good people. Moreover, I believe that a critical educational experience would help Whites develop a stronger and deeper critical consciousness. Unfortunately, the current structure of education has been constructed to perpetuate and intensify racial apartheid.

[37] Microaggressions are subtle insults that are automatically and/or unconsciously directed to Chicanas/os and people of color.

[38] Great Equalizer is taken from Jay McLeod's *Ain't No Making* wherein McLeod denounces the notion that school are the great social equalizers; but rather, he argues that they are sites of social reproduction

[39] Language as a problem according to Ruiz (1984) is a language planning orientation wherein language is viewed as an obstacle that must be overcome.

[40] Taken from Ruiz's (1984) language as a resource; a transfer of Ruiz's notion to diversity, creates an understanding that diversity should be viewed as a resource rather than a problem.

[41] According to Bonilla – Silva and Lewis (1997) racial structure is a system ability to produce and reproduce racism at all levels.

[42] Agency is the human capacity to make decisions.

[43] Authentic Education is the sense of the Freirean notion of education versus schooling.

[44] According Solórzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) self-defeating resistance refers to student who may critique of oppression, but lack a motivation for social justice.

[45] The pill is a reference to the Matrix wherein Neo is asked to take a red or blue pill. If he take the 888 pill he will be able to the world in its truest form; however, if he takes the blue he will continue to world only as it has been constructed for him to see it. Our students connected this scene to development of a critical consciousness wherein if developed a critical consciousness they would be able to the world in the most critical or truest form. However, if they took the blue pill they were free to remain in their naïve or magical realties.

[46] Redemptive Rememberings are SUSD's Mexican American / Raza Studies Department transformative teacher learning communions.

[47] This is a transformative educational model that was constructed through the voices of students.

[48] From T, Yosso, *Critical Race Counterstories Along the Chicana/o Educational Pipeline*, 2006, p.29.

[49] In Shor & Freire (1987) Paulo Freire defines untested feasibility as, "something not yet here but a potential, something beyond the 'limit situation' we now face, which must be created by us beyond the limits we discover.

[50] On the ground refers to the interactions and praxis that take with students in their classrooms.

[51] A curricular and pedagogical praxis that is emancipates the humanity of students and teachers.

[52] Stand and Deliver refers to the one way pedagogy wherein teacher stands and delivers information without any expected reciprocation or interaction from students

[53] My History is a construction of knowledge exercise wherein students go beyond the tradition family history lesson. In this exercise students question and reinterpret social dynamics and constructions of their families lived experiences.

[54] Four Tables are an exercise wherein students take a half sheet of paper and create four boxes. Each of the four boxes serves a purpose. Box one is the word, box two is the definition of the word, box three is a word association, and box four is a picture of the word. In my experiences, box four has been the most meaningful in that students are able define and understand the word through their intellectual understanding.

[55] I Am Poems give students the opportunity to define and even understand themselves. In the CCI classroom, I Am poems are assigned at least three times during the course of year. The meaning behind this is the conscious reexamination by students of the transcendence of their level of consciousness.

[56] These are actions that are informed by a high level of reflection that take places through a lens of respect and love.

[57] According Solórzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) reactionary behavior refers to student behavior that illustrates both a critique of oppression and a desire for social justice.

[58] The intellectual connection of one's social reality to the past that through true words rearticulates the understanding of the future.

[59] Through the theory of surplus equality Delgado (1999) argues that more equality inheres in our national principles than can be accommodated at anytime. Therefore, not all Americans will experience equality. Given this reality and the reality of White oppression, blacks and Latinos, are constructed as unequal through hegemony of White oppression.

[60] Adapted from SUSD's website from its Accountability and Research Page.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid

[69] The SJEP Classes of 2004and 2005 represent one site and one classroom; the class of 206 represents two sites and two classrooms, and the class of 207 represents three sites and four classrooms.

[70] Ibid.

[71] AIMS augmentation may used by Arizona high school seniors to achieve a passing score. Grades in cores courses can be used to augment the AIMS test scores in failed areas of the AIMS.

[72] Adapted from SUSD's website from its Accountability and Research Page.

[73] Adapted from Arizona Department of Education, Accountability Division Research and

Evaluation Section, State of Arizona, AIMS Report Wizard.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid.