Youth Participatory Action Research: A Pedagogy of Transformational Resistance for Critical Youth Studies

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Abstract

This article explains how some youth gain insights into educational processes of social reproduction by participating in a pedagogy of transformational resistance. These insights lead to resistances that have the potential to transform young people's subjectivities while allowing them to envision ways of learning to counteract oppressive and reproductive schooling.   The pedagogy of transformational resistance derives from a youth participatory action research (YPAR) program implemented in Tucson Unified School District (TUSD). The YPAR program was called the Social Justice Education Project (SJEP), and its primary function was to engage youth in critical inquiries that address negative social and economic conditions in their schools and communities. The article begins with a brief lineage of critical youth studies (CYS), and its attendant academic focus on social reproduction and resistance. The contemporary moment within CYS centers around YPAR, where formal pedagogical practices cultivate young people's critical insights/consciousness and resistances.

Critical youth studies (CYS) began as scholarship to understand how and why some youth challenge dominant ideological structures perpetuating inequality. There are different trajectories for CYS but most start at the same place – the Centre for Contemporary Culture Studies (CCCS) in Birmingham, England (Geldens et al. 2011; Johansson & Lalander, 2012). The CCCS had interest in documenting "youth sub cultures" to understand how youth could interact and sometimes live within mainstream culture but still carve out spaces to produce their own unique cultural identities apart from assimilating to the mainstream. Social reproduction was the dominant theory informing CCCS scholars, which led them to perceive youth as possessing scant resources and agency to overcome the structural exigencies influencing their lives. Although many young people followed the established patterns of social reproduction, some realized that they could resist the grand design and act in ways that seek to define their statuses or social groups on their own terms.

This article explains how some youth gain insights into educational processes of social reproduction by participating in a pedagogy of transformational resistance. These insights lead to resistances that have the potential to transform young people's subjectivities while allowing them to envision ways of learning to counteract oppressive and reproductive schooling. The pedagogy of transformational resistance derives from a youth participatory action research (YPAR) program implemented in Tucson Unified School District (TUSD). The YPAR program was called the Social Justice Education Project (SJEP), and its primary function was to engage youth in critical inquiries that address negative social and economic conditions in their schools and communities.[1] Having youth document and analyze their surroundings provides them with a sense of clarity about the formation of their lived environment. Documentation and analysis open their eyes to a human constructed and contingent reality instead of one appearing to be fixed or static. Once young people realize the dynamic,

changing characteristics of reality, they critique reproductive schooling processes that reinforce status quo perspectives and structural inequalities.

The article begins with a brief lineage of critical youth studies, and its attendant academic focus on social reproduction and resistance. The contemporary moment within critical youth studies centers around YPAR, where formal pedagogical practices cultivate young people's critical insights/consciousness and resistances. Youth participatory action research is a collective process of critical inquiry in which young people are both the researchers and subjects of studies that strive for social justice (Cahill, 2007; Cammarota and Fine, 2008; Fine et al., 2005; Kirshner, 2007; McIntyre, 2000; Morrell, 2006; Torre, 2009; Tuck, 2009). Most YPAR projects garner knowledge for improving various aspects of education, including teacher effectiveness, pedagogy, service learning, school counseling, school safety, student/teacher relationships, school climate, and student engagement, to name a few (Akom, 2009; Berg et al., 2009; Krueger, 2010; Ozer et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2010; Schensul & Berg, 2004). The SJEP offers a prime example of YPAR and how it becomes an opportunity to peer into the human structures (ideologies, policies, and practices) behind the construction of young people's lived contexts. Student collected data reveal different reproductions active at school, including class-based social reproduction and the reproduction of docile bodies. The article concludes by suggesting ways to bolster young people's transformational resistances through a formal SJEP pedagogy. The concluding section also discusses how failure among students of color results from inadequately preparing or fostering their historical agency.

Resistance Theories in Critical Youth Studies

Scholars at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in Birmingham, England shifted from traditional Marxism by studying culture not

as a pure reflection of the mode of production but as a social practice related to, yet distinct from the economic base. Stuart Hall (1980) contends that a group of CCCS scholars whom he identifies as 'culturalist' followed Antonio Gramsci's lead by arguing against this traditional perspective of determination. Research reveals moments in which culture develops autonomously from the economic base. These 'moments' may also inspire cultural practices that critique or resist ideologies reinforcing the status quo.

CCCS scholars initiated critical youth studies by claiming youth 'sub-cultures' as the ideal location for studying autonomous cultural moments. Youth engaged unique cultural styles, practices, and mannerisms that often represented a resistance to assimilation into mainstream lifestyles. In 1976, the CCCS published Resistance through Rituals, arguably the seminal volume in critical youth studies, which documents youth sub-cultural actions and expressions that resist societal norms by initiating historical and cultural change. Therefore, CCCS scholars read youth sub-cultures not as "some sporadic way of being deviant, of being essential troublemakers," but rather as sources of innovation and critique that bear the potential to challenge dominant ideologies of normalization (Johansson and Lalander, 2012 p.1079).

Paul Willis' Learning to Labour (1977) is by far the most notable research on youth sub-cultures produced by the CCCS and represents a major contribution to critical youth studies. His ethnography of working class youth builds on the many themes presented in Resistance through Rituals, including cultural autonomy and resistance. He also probed Marxist conceptions of social reproduction, which suggest that capitalist societies reproduce their class structure from one generation to the next. Schools contribute to reproduction by operating as a sorting mechanism placing students in different academic levels that mirror the general social hierarchy (Apple,1979; Bourdieu & Passeron,

1977; Bowles and Gintis, 1976). These conceptions generally assumed social reproduction as a seamless process, in which the younger generation tends to follow (willy-nilly) the footsteps of the older generation by entering in the same class location. Willis' working class youth were reproduced into the working class but avoided doing this quietly or without any recognition that reproduction was occurring. They critiqued the dominant school ideology implying that education putatively generates social change by providing opportunities for the working class to experience economic mobility. They recognized that this ideology of meritocracy was a myth; schooling has never helped anyone from their working class communities ascend into the middle class. They also resisted the claim that if they were obedient, they would do well in school and thus qualify for high paying jobs. In the end, they resisted schooling, and the efforts to reproduce them as docile subjects.

Resistance theories made their way to American scholarship, maintaining the British notion that young people express cultural agency in response to dominant ideological impositions (Giroux, 1983; Fine, 1991, Foley, 1990; Ogbu, 1987). This scholarship extended well into the 1980s and 1990s with the intention of demonstrating how resistances present challenges to the logic and exigencies of dominant systems. Youth, therefore, did not always conform to the dictates of formal and informal school policies, practices, and beliefs. Numerous studies revealed how young people express an autonomous agency despite the pressures of structures attempting to control and guide their actions (Apple, 1982; Giroux, 1983; Fine, 1991; Foley, 1990). Much of this scholarship adhered to a class-based theoretical approach, examining schools as well as youth resistances as responses to processes of social reproduction in capitalist contexts.

Critical youth studies made an important turn with anthropologist Signithia Fordham's book <u>Blacked Out</u> (1996). Her ethnography of African American adolescent females not only loosened the class-based grip on resistance theories but also presented another form of resistance. Generally, resistance studies, since Willis, documented youth (primarily male and white) who possessed a critique of the school system while attempting to subvert ideological intentions by either disrupting its normal everyday flow or simply dropping out. Fordham, in contrast, researched a group of African American females who maintained a critique—not necessarily of school—of society's overall perception and treatment of African American women. Particularly, these youths worried about stereotypes of African American females, which spuriously labeled them as loud, rude, and unintelligent. Therefore, they perceived school not so much as an instrument of social reproduction but as a space to challenge negative stereotypes of African American females. By conforming to school norms around discipline and achievement, they could resist stereotypes by demonstrating sobriety and intelligence. Perceptions or even understandings of school vary according to social subjectivities.

In 2001, Solórzano and Delgado Bernal published an article entitled, "Examining Transformational Resistance Through a Critical Race and Latcrit Theory Framework: Chicana and Chicano Students in an Urban Context," which blew the lid off resistance theories. Their primary argument is that some students who resist from a critique of oppression bear the agentive potential or at least the desire to transform systems and institutions. This *transformational resistance* bucks the trend in critical youth studies. They argue that most of the resistance literature in critical youth studies examines what they describe as *self-defeating resistance*. Willis' study of working class youth exemplifies this negative form of resistance such that the young people in his study had a critique of education but failed to act in ways that would foster needed change.

Their response to the critique – disrupting the learning process – actually reinforced the reproductive function of school by leading them to failure. Furthermore, Solórzano and Delgado Bernal describe students, such as in Fordham's study, who have a social critique but align with school norms as engaged in *conformist resistance*.

By examining historical examples of Chicana and Chicano student protests and actions, Solórzano and Delgado Bernal identify a resistance that moves beyond critique to envision transformation. The classic example of Chicana and Chicano student transformational resistance is the school 'blow outs' of 1968. These students criticized the injustices of LA schools but organized large-scale walkouts to protest and demand systematic changes to education. They resisted school by walking out while using this action to call for transformation in the context and content of learning. They demanded changes to the curriculum, including bilingual education and culturally and historically relevant course work. They also wanted improvements in school conditions, especially unlocking bathrooms during lunchtime and serving Mexican food in the cafeteria. Latina/o communities throughout the country are still engaged in struggles to bring about some of the same changes to render education linguistically and culturally responsive to the needs of Latina/o students (Cammarota, 2008; Cammarota & Romero, 2014; Irizarry, 2015; Valenzuela, 2010).Although student organizing may or may not lead to critical transformation, the most important aspect of transformational resistance is 'acknowledging' that systems and institutions can be changed to achieve greater social equity. This acknowledgement emerges from a desire to strive for social justice.

Transformational Resistance Through Youth Participatory Action Research

An important move for critical youth studies is to avoid conceptualizing these resistive actions as deriving from inherent pathologies. Young people are not born with predispositions to certain types of resistances, whether they express self-defeating, conformist, or transformational resistances. Young people learn these actions or behaviors in either informal settings such as peer groups or families, or formal settings such as community-based organizations or classrooms. In the latter case, resistances can develop through pedagogies. This article takes up the question of how youth learn resistance in the formal setting of school. Moreover, the discussion focuses on the possibility of a pedagogy of transformational resistance through youth participatory action research (YPAR). The Social Justice Education Project (SJEP) represents a YPAR program with the intent to cultivate transformational resistance among high school students.

The SJEP in Tucson, Arizona[2]

SJEP started at Cerro High School in the Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) of Arizona. The program expanded to three other high schools including Campo, Pima, and Mountain High Schools. There were a total of six SJEP courses offered every year. The students who enrolled in the SJEP were working-class Latinas/os from the southwest area of Tucson. This high concentration of Latina/o students occurred from the schools' locations primarily in Latina/o neighborhoods. Other ethnicities of students enrolled in the SJEP include white, African American and Native American.

Students met every day for one period, usually second period, and four semesters straight. The social science program was aligned with state-mandated history and US government standards and involved students in YPAR projects. By participating in our second period social justice program, students received

their social science credits for graduation and the knowledge of how to conduct original YPAR projects. The program was split between state-mandates and YPAR; three periods per week were devoted to US history and government requirements while two periods per week focus on YPAR.

Their YPAR involved critical analyses of social justice problems and presentations to influential people in their community to initiate change. Students learned qualitative research methodologies for assessing and addressing the everyday injustices limiting their own and their peers' potential. They learned how to conduct observations of different sites on campus, including other classrooms, the main office, and cafeteria. Students wrote up observations in weekly field notes. They also documented their observations through photographs. They learned how to conduct taped-interviews of their peers at school.

The students investigated problems and issues that affected them personally. For example, they selected research topics from poems they created expressing various problems they faced in their social worlds. To facilitate the student poetry, examples of social justice-minded poems were provided to the youth: "I Rise" by Maya Angelou or "I Am Joaquin" by Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzalez. The students discussed these poems and their social justice messages before creating their own. Then, they collectively identified the poignant social justice and "generative themes" throughout their poems.

Identifying "generative words" or themes from poetry derives from the literacy work of Paulo Freire (1993; 1998). In his adult literacy program in Brazil, Freire taught reading and writing with words that originate from his students' lived experiences while connecting to their social, political, cultural realities. In others words, Freire would never teach literacy with words originating from

outside the students' socio-cultural context. Rather, students would select the themes, topics, or words for study themselves, which allowed for the creation of new meanings and knowledge grounded not in dominant ideologies but in the students' everyday experiences.

Thus, SJEP students developed research topics from self-selected themes, which they feel needed urgent attention. For instance, some students selected the topic of border and immigration policies because family members have died crossing the desert. Others addressed discrimination against Latinas because they see how schools, workplaces, and governments unfairly treat them and the women in their families.

They spent the latter part of their second year analyzing the poems, notes, photos, and interviews, using Chicana/o studies concepts and critical race theory as their analytical lenses. Students learned about micro-aggressions, interest convergence, intersectionality and the social construction of race and gender (Delgado& Stefancic, 2017; Yosso et al., 2009). Their analyses became written reports, presentations, and video documentation. The students presented their findings to family members, teachers, principal, district superintendents, school board members, and federal, state, and local officials — with their voices being the focal point of their action strategy. Through YPAR, students gained the confidence to challenge the social and economic conditions impeding their life opportunities. The effect of conducting original research and presenting their results to key stakeholders, including family members, attained the intent and goal of praxis such that students think deeply and critically about impediments to their own social and economic progress while building constituents to help them remove these impediments.

In this regard, students understood the difference between transformative resistance/actions and self-defeating resistance/actions. Transformational resistance involves student behavior that demonstrates both a critique of oppression and desire for social justice. The goal of most YPAR projects is to provide pedagogical strategies that promote transformational resistance (Cammarota and Fine, 2008). Self-defeating resistance refers to students who may critique oppression but lack motivation for social justice. Examples of SJEP students' transformative resistance/actions were: students exposing the structural decay that continues at their school; students fighting to ensure that the SJEP be offered for them and future students; and most importantly, students recognizing that certain (alternative) pedagogies bear the potential of empowerment.

This article focuses on the field notes of students from one course offered at Mountain High during the 2009-2010 school year. Their YPAR projects were some of the last ones implemented before the State of Arizona banned Ethnic Studies and the SJEP because students engaged in a critical examination of their own schooling. They examined the educational disparities within their own school and also between Mountain High and the college preparatory school, Scholastic High School on the same campus. The focus on educational disparities included a detailed look at the tracking involved with social reproduction. In 2009-2010, Mountain High's demographics revealed that the school was 64% students of color and 36% white. Meanwhile, the demographics for Scholastic High, which shared the same campus as Mountain, showed that the student population was 42% student of color and 58% white. A majority of white students not only received a better education at Scholastic High but white students were also over-represented in the higher tracks at Mountain High.

Intra-School Tracking

Although Mountain and Scholastic are differently tracked schools, tracking also exists internally within Mountain. An ability-grouping program at Mountain called the "housing" system is a prime example of how students are provided with disparate educational opportunities within the same school. A senior SJEP student, Anita Diaz, writes about her experiences being tracked at Mountain High in the "housing" system.

In this system, we were separated into different groups. There were four groups, which were known as the green, orange, pick and gold houses. The green house was known as the honors group since all the students had Advanced Placement classes. The rest of the houses, according to the teachers, were supposedly at the same level. But the students thought differently. They believed the houses were at different levels and placed in these different levels according to how smart the students were. When I was a freshman, students told me that the green house was the first, gold house second, pink was third, and orange fourth. At the beginning of the freshman year, we were never asked which house we wanted to be in. We were never given the choice. The green house was mostly made up of white students but there were some exceptions. The other houses were mostly minority students. While being placed in these houses, we didn't get a chance to meet other people for almost two years except for those who were placed in the same house as you were.

I was placed in the pink house for my freshman and sophomore years. The pink house was mainly minority students. Everyone in the same house had the same group of teachers, whether it was English, math or science. In my second semester, my math teacher gave up on us. He no longer taught us anything. He would just put a power point on, sit behind his desk and talk to his teacher's aide or look at his computer. There was also my science teacher. In the beginning of the year, we would do projects but by the second semester we ended up doing only bookwork. We would get to class, open our books and read and answer questions from the text. In those two classes, I didn't really learn anything. In one class, the teacher gave up on us. In the other class, we did only bookwork.

> The house system placed us into different tracks. For instance, the green house was preparing students to go to college. The rest of the houses were not preparing students to go to college, especially if you had teachers who didn't care if you received an education. One time I was given an auto shop class, which I didn't want. I tried to switch out but all the other business classes were already full. We are put into this track to lead us into a job instead of going into college.

With her observations, Anita provides a fine-tuned analysis of the some of the problems of tracking. First, she describes how the students were segregated by race in ways that provided white students with better educational opportunities. Second, she states that she was prevented from actually meeting other students, which according to social capital theory indicates that she was denied relationships to peers who could help her improve her academic performance. Third, the quality of teaching was inferior in her track. Some teachers were negligent at their jobs, failing to provide the kind of instruction needed to learn. Fourth and last, she realized that some students, especially the white students in the green house, were receiving an education that was preparing them for college. Meanwhile, Anita felt that her education was leading her to some kind of vocational career. She could perceive the processes of social reproduction implemented through this housing system of education.

Another student, Ana Federico writes field notes about her experience being one of the only Latinas in her Advanced Placement English class at Mountain. She states:

> The change that these classes so desperately need is the presence of racial diversity. Diversity is always lacking in these classes, because all I see are Caucasian students. I hear conversations of college plans, moving out of parents' house to have their own apartment, someone's new car of the year. And not a single student is something other than Caucasian. And I can't help but wonder why that is? The answer is that everything was planned out for them since the beginning. Their families led them to a

track of academic achievement; they were there for them to help in anything and putting them in extra curricular activities. Many other friends that I know could do it too I'm sure of it, but social reproduction retrains the capacity of many of them and others.

Anita sees white students who have the privilege of material wealth. They do not have to worry whether they will obtain the items or experience the conditions that make life comfortable. Their world is different than Anita's. She does have to worry about resources and whether she will have enough money to afford college. She makes an important distinction between the white students and herself by realizing that they do not have the same worries as she does and therefore can focus on their future plans without much distraction.

The SJEP course provides Anita with the theory of social reproduction to help her understand why some students have better opportunities than others. According to social reproduction theory, a white middle class youth will receive certain advantages from his or her socioeconomic background, such as economic resources, educated parents, and well-funded school system, which provide him or her a better chance at staying in the same class location or rising above his or her parents. Meanwhile, someone of lower economic status experiences a life of diminished resources and opportunities and most likely will not have the possibility to supersede his or her present class location. Anita realizes that people she knows have the capability to take Advanced Placement classes but miss the resources and opportunities that would have prepared them for such classes.

The resource differential that produces varied life chances for young people exists not only in society but also within Mountain High. Lola Martinez talks about the difference in resources between her SJEP class and an Advanced

Placement (AP) English class. She was a student aide in the AP class, which provided her with an insider's view of what was available for students. She states that the AP English class has "good desks and the students all have computers. They all have good books and chairs that move around." She then compares her SJEP class with the AP class. She writes that we don't "have books, computers, good desks." The differences are apparent, making Lola realize that certain students at her school are expected to learn while others are expected to fail. This realization of differing expectations derives from Lola's understanding that social reproduction instigates resource disparities.

The disparity of resources translates into a hierarchy among students in which certain students believe they are superior and thus more entitled than others. SJEP student, Lisette Montoya writes in her field notes about a conflict between students in her English class. The conflict indicates how certain students perceive that they are better and the school therefore should have a preference for their cultural orientation. The incident happened after the school announcements over the PA system had completed. The announcements were given in both English and Spanish—English first and then Spanish immediately after. Bilingualism is both a prized marker of cultural/linguistic progress and despised practice for monolingual English speakers who feel threatened by its growing presence. There is no doubt that language policy in Arizona is politically charged, dividing people along linguistic and cultural lines (Iddings et al., 2012). When the Spanish announcements were completed, one student shouted, "How Ghetto!" Lisette states that one "girl yelled, 'Speak English,' while another added, 'We're in America.'" A Latina student angrily stated, "Well look around the majority at this school are Hispanics." A white student responded by saying, "I speak English so everyone else should too, we're in America." The anti-Spanish language students were obviously attempting to maintain their dominance over the majority at the school. Although the school's

demographics were rapidly changing, white students wanted to sustain the English dominance at the school and thus keep their advantage. Becoming a white minority does not mean that these students would lose their power and status. An apartheid structure at Mountain is a present and unfortunate reality. By maintaining English as the dominant language, these students continue to hold onto and argue for cultural superiority, even though they represent the minority.

Inter-School Tracking

Academic segregation exists between the two high schools sharing the same campus – Mountain and Scholastic High. Mountain students are painfully aware that Scholastic has the greater prestige and therefore the better capacity for academic advancement. Ana Federico states that Scholastic students receive an education that "prepares them for college, while Mountain students get a lower education that prepares them for work." She perceives the processes of social reproduction that foster different educational tracks and experiences. This difference, according to Ana, encourages Mountain students to "rebel" against their school, "due to the unbalanced education" between the schools. SJEP students observe social reproduction occurring at school and engage in transformational resistance by writing field notes that document the real reproductive purpose of traditional schooling.

The differences between the schools' reputations translate into differences in expectations. In the minds of SJEP students, Mountain and Scholastic students share the same academic capabilities. However, it is obvious that Scholastic students receive higher expectations, thereby making a world of difference in educational experiences. Ana Federico writes that "Mountain and Scholastic students start the same way in having dreams, everything starts as a dream." She states that accomplishing dreams is a difficult process "because there has to be

people who will believe in that dream and will help in following it." The primary difference between Mountain and Scholastic students, according to Ana, is that "Scholastic students are given that opportunity in which their teachers believe in them. Teachers are essential in this process because they have the power more than anyone to place students on the right path toward reaching their dreams."

As part of their research, SJEP students document the rare occasion when they need to visit Scholastic High school. On these occasions, SJEP students notice the unique dynamic between teacher and students. One SJEP student, Geraldo Castro, had to bring a note to a teacher at Scholastic High. When he reaches the classroom, he notices that:

> all the students are looking forward and writing on their papers. I'm surprised that no student turns to look and see who is at the door. Not one movement, they are robots. The teacher stops abruptly and stares at me. The worst stare I have been given, my heart turned cold and my eyes felt heavy. I ask the teacher if she's the teacher whose name is on the note and she yells at me, 'I was told that there wasn't going to be any interruptions during my class!' I asked her again are you this teacher? She responds, 'No! She is in the computer lab three doors down! Now leave my class and let me teach these bright students.'

Geraldo was not bothered by how the teacher was demeaning toward him because he was a Mountain High student. Instead, he was concerned that, "No student talked, no student moved while the teacher yelled at him. I felt uncomfortable knowing that many of my friends went through that. I felt that they had no life during school." Geraldo felt sorry that Scholastic students learned to behave as if they had no feelings, indicating that they had internalized passiveness. They have become submissive to the teacher's authority and remained consistently silent, even in times of crisis. Geraldo observed

reproduction as a process of constructing docile bodies (Foucault & Rabinow, 1984).

Other SJEP students have the impression that Scholastic students seem stoic and passive in their classes. Judy McDougal visited Scholastic to see how it compares with Mountain. She asked the teacher if she could observe his classroom for one period. He accepted and told Judy to sit in the back. She writes in her field notes.

> Each student filed in one by one, really no one talking to another. There was an assignment written on the board. The students made their way to their seats and started pulling out their work, no words said. The late bell rang, the door closed and let me tell you no one was late. The teacher was sitting at his desk not saying a word, not even a hello to the students. They have to review the page they read for homework (a whole chapter) and read another chapter and answer the review questions. There were no moans or groans from the students saying that it is too much work. A couple words are said from student to students here and there but no conversations.

Judy notices that Scholastic students have higher expectations in that a greater amount of work is assigned to them while they accept it without complaint. However, the detail of the difference in workload is not what concerns Judy. She observes that there is little to no communicative interaction between the students and the teacher. The students' primary task is to sit quietly and engage with the text without any dialogue. They are learning individually, missing out on the opportunity to share and build knowledge collectively.

When the teacher finally interacts with the students, he lectures and handles the dissemination of knowledge as a one-way street starting from him and leading directly to the students. Judy states:

> He stands there and lectures starting from the beginning of the sections that the students read for their homework. They automatically take out notebooks and start taking notes. These students sit here as the teacher banks the education into the students' head. He doesn't even ask for the students' perspective on the subjects he was talking about.

In the SJEP course, students learn about Paulo Freire's (1993, 1998) concept of banking education. Students refer to banking education to critique the traditional lecture style, which is often autocratic in delivery and thus silences students. This concept also helps with implementing the anti-thesis of problem-posing education. The problem-posing pedagogy centers on building knowledge not as the distribution of unquestionable facts, figures and ideas, but through problems that the students address with questions facilitating the discovery of solutions. The differences are vast between the banking and problem-posing pedagogies. The former leads students to the kinds of knowledge that the teacher wants them to learn. The latter allows students to discover knowledge as the primary process of learning, which shows students how they can create and develop knowledge on their own. The problem-posing approach teaches autonomy such that students realize they can become knowledgeable without the help of an authority. Problem-posing pedagogy promotes leaders who can solve problems with their own intellectual processes. In contrast, banking education forces students to become followers who cannot think independently from an authority or outside expert. The outcomes diverge in which students experiencing banking education become passive subjects who need someone to tell them how to think. Outcomes for problem posing include students who think critically and pose questions to find the best solution to a particular problem.

Although differences in expectations exist between the two schools, SJEP students would rather attend Mountain given the opportunity to choose. Judy McDougal writes that there are "huge differences between our two schools. These students (Scholastic) are taught to all be the same, pretty much have no individuality. If it were left up to me, I would go to Mountain." More specifically, SJEP students feel that the problem-posing education that they receive in the SJEP course is the reason behind their motivation. They see it as form of transformational resistance in which they critique the oppressive circumstances of schooling while seeking alternative pedagogical strategies for their own and others' liberation.

Implications

Within Mountain High, students experience the range of consequences of tracking. In the lower tracks, expectations are minimal so students feel less motivated to achieve. There is also a difference in resources between high and low tracks. Higher track students appreciate their learning opportunity while lower track students, who realize they have been short changed, tend to resist their education and thus follow the standard patterns of resistance identified in critical youth studies. In addition, the focus of the education seems to be different for each track. Higher tracks are geared toward college preparation, while lower tracks guide students toward vocational learning. Through a pedagogy of transformational resistance, SJEP students recognize that this hierarchical structure results from processes of social reproduction.

Students from different tracks rarely interact, which takes away important social capital for lower track students. If they had the opportunity to interact with higher tracked students, then those in the lower tracks could build the type of peer relationships that could help them challenge exclusionary practices. Furthermore, separating students by "ability" often is a proxy for separating

students by race and culture. This racial segregation leads to tensions between groups such that the dominant racial group will attempt to maintain dominance while the subordinate group will struggle for equal rights and treatment.

SJEP students who engaged in transformational resistance went beyond the critique of social reproduction by recommending that the negative aspects of tracking be removed, including lowered expectations, limited resources, unequal preparation, and racial segregation. The students would also like to see the two schools, Mountain and Scholastic merged to construct one college preparatory high school. They believe that all students have the same capabilities to excel but not all students have the same opportunities. If the students at Mountain and Scholastic were given the same opportunities, there would be more students graduating and experiencing academic achievement.

SJEP students want the SJEP pedagogy of transformational resistance become standard throughout the school. This pedagogy allows students to participate in the construction of knowledge and have their voices and ideas matter while engaging them in improving their school.

These feelings of transformational resistance are not necessarily experienced throughout the general curriculum at Mountain High. In some Mountain High classes, students can and do experience banking education. Ana Federico writes about her English class.

> Everyone is quietly reading and waiting for her [teacher] to say today's assignments, which is a discussion of the chapters we were supposed to read by today. As always everyone is afraid to say his or her opinions, afraid to say anything to this woman, this figure of authority known as the teacher. We have witnessed her making faces and rolling her eyes at the opinions students make. We are afraid to express our opinions and become silent.

Teachers who become authorities by judging students in ways that make them feel unknowledgeable tend to cast a shadow of fear over the classroom. When students feel afraid, they accept their silence and hold back their opinions and ideas. A classroom in which the teacher negatively judges students' thinking becomes a place of a singular source and ownership of knowledge. Without the space for a collective production of knowledge, the classroom will appear fiercely undemocratic and oppressive.

With YPAR, students in the SJEP course have the experience of a pedagogy of transformation resistance, and any other type of education seems oppressive in comparison. They are treated as complete human beings with thoughts and ideas and the agency to bring changes to their environment. In settings of banking education, SJEP students feel less than human, because their intellectual and emotional capacities are suppressed. Once they experience a pedagogy of transformational resistance, students understand that learning in this way is naturally human — an educational situation in which all students' intellect and ability to construct knowledge are engaged. Moreover, a natural way of learning involves not only the students' understanding of history but also their recognition that they too have the agency to become history-makers. This approach of empowerment is what makes transformational resistance such a compelling structure for education. Collectively, people learn to participate in how to understand and engage their world. Collective participation in the construction of knowledge leads to a sense of equality as well as efficacy among participants. YPAR collectives challenge "traditional social hierarchies" and encourage democratic relationships among students (Torre and Ayala, 2009: 389).

Once students learn that they too can contribute to history, they become more engaged in their education. YPAR is empowering for young people, particularly

young people of color, because they comprehend their places and possibilities in history. Schooling that fails to develop the historical agency of students is the reason why so many young people of color feel disconnected from education. Most often students of color attend schools that focus on social reproduction instead of promoting pedagogical practices that increase their resistance. Young people who miss the opportunity to learn how to become transformational resisters will lack the motivation to seek knowledge. When one feels as if he or she has no effect in the world, he or she will avoid engagement and participation. YPAR builds transformational resistance and the sense that one can have an effect. Students of color, through YPAR, see their place in history and thus feel empowered to make positive contributions to their schools and communities. YPAR is the next important step in CYS since it answers the question of whether youth can learn transformational resistance.

In Arizona, the State momentarily prevented the SJEP and thus YPAR from taking that next step. Governor Jan Brewer signed the anti-Ethnic Studies bill HB2281 into law during the Spring 2010 semester when Mountain High students were finishing their YPAR projects. Because YPAR helped to cultivate their voices, students were ready to challenge the law and preserve this alternative approach to learning. Some Mountain students, along with other SJEP peers across the district, maintained consistent pressure to keep Ethnic Studies and SJEP courses alive. After struggling for several years, the spirit of the SJEP remains intact under a new form and name. Some teachers in TUSD's Culturally Responsive Curriculum (CRC) received their student training in SJEP classes before the implementation of the ban. Currently, these teachers uphold YPAR in the CRC program because they know how pedagogies of transformational resistance inspire young people to lift themselves up in order to elevate others.

Notes

[1] A.R.S.§ 15-112(A) is the Arizona law that bans Mexican American Studies in Tucson Unified School District. The Social Justice Education Project (SJEP) was the social science program for Mexican American Studies. In January 2012, the SJEP was shut down after 10 years of operation.
[2] Parts of this section on the SJEP were published elsewhere including Valenzuela, A. (Ed.). (2016). *Growing critically conscious teachers: a social justice curriculum for educators of Latino/a youth*. Teachers College Press; Cammarota, J. (2008). The Cultural Organizing of Youth Ethnographers: Formalizing a Praxis-Based Pedagogy. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, *39*(1), 45-58.; Cammarota, Julio. "The social justice education project." *Raza Studies: The public option for educational revolution* 107 (2014).

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