

To combat this systemic racism, Alexander states an urgency for racial justice advocates to ensure that America's current racial caste system is its last by "accepting all of us or none" [7].

According to The International Commission on the Futures of Education [8], a reinvention of education is urgently required to promote lasting sustainability beginning with readdressing past injustices and redefining the social contract for education through two foundational principles: (1) the right to quality education and (2) a commitment to education as a public societal endeavor and a common good (p.11). Fulfilling these contractual obligations requires a basis and commitment to human rights and devotion to the lens of education regardless of intersectional characteristics used to discriminate and exclude.

The unfaltering evidence of systemic racism that lives in the United States and bleeds into institutions of education must be dismantled. Forms of racism and oppression have proven to be recycled through our youth; it is learned and expected. Understanding the current educational system in the United States requires unbiased awareness and knowledge of the historical injustices that have propagated through generations.

8. BLM

Movements such as #BlackLivesMatter have erupted with the mission to eradicate white supremacy and to create and practice localized empowerment that will intervene in the violence that continuously harms Black communities. According to the Howard University School of Law, "Black Lives Matter Movement" (2018), the origin of this movement erupted in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer in 2013, with leading black organizers Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi. The Black Lives Matter movement has since become recognized as a global social movement protesting police brutality and systemic racism against the black community. The prevailing movement of BLM inspired other social movements to erupt, such as Black Lives Matter at School, an educational justice mission created by The National Education Association intended to engage and mobilize social justice advocates in the fight for racial, social, and economic justice in public education. The efforts to resist and combat systemic racism within all facets of society have certainly spurred into action from the foundation of the Black Lives Matter movement. It is notable to recognize the onset of social change initiatives and, most importantly, how to

practice their mission and goals throughout all areas of life most affected by these injustices.

9. Place and Institution on Students' Sense of Identity

Research on students' sense of identity is a highly regarded topic amongst educators and instructors alike, informing disciplines on a global scale with the intention to move learned individual student practices into academic communities. Dunham [9] explains student academic identity as the appropriation of academic values within a sense of self that ultimately reflects the willingness and commitment of the practices of the academic community.

The expectation of student success in academia has contributing factors that involve culture and geography, according to Ellis [10]. Ellis argues the importance of classrooms in serving as spaces of positive identity and social support, emphasizing the strain of academic competition that precludes these *place* experiences from occurring. The social construction of place is based on the social and physical resources allotted to a given space, informing the development of a place to be one representative of the culture and identity of its inhabitants. Place-making is, in turn, bestowed upon the educators to ensure that the rules and routines introduce appropriate resources for their students.

Developing a place that encourages a student's sense of identity to flourish and thrive must come with an understanding of the systemic disparities that exist and affect students daily. Fortunately, with the rise of social justice movements such as Black Lives Matter, the necessity to implement inclusive places and institutions is on the rise.

Historically critical pedagogy has examined the consequences of capitalist predatory systems critically. Lately, it incorporates critical feminist theories and studies, yet more recently, a conference that generated the book *Reinventing Critical Pedagogy* added critical race theory studies and anti-racism education as essential epistemology to counteract racism and white supremacy. The hegemonic totalities that affect human existence are predatory capitalism, patriarchy, and white supremacy. A ramification of these three hegemonies is the root cause of human oppression.

Fine [11] contributed the classic article on Silencing Public Schools, studying a high school community but also indicating that in elementary and middle school, students develop and construct an idea that to be a good student means to be a quiet and passive learner.

Teachers and administrators avoid discussing topics such as abortion, drugs, and school dropouts...hoping students will not get the wrong idea and actually do it. Nevertheless, the opposite happens; the more schools avoid talking about these topics, the more it brings a predicament. Fine [12] also revealed findings of a study with a longitudinal character where students that earn straight A's pay a hefty price for being high achievers--have excellent paying jobs but have more relationship and emotional problems. In contrast, students that drop out of school and protest against schooling experiences have fewer emotional problems and have low-paying and low-skill jobs yet have many bills to pay. Hence, we advocate for a balanced schooling experience, academic achievement, and personal development.

To invest in education is to pave the way for a better future so individuals can transform their lives and subsequently transform the world. For the same reason, the quality of our democracy depends on people's quality of education. Consequently, what is transformative quality education? To define these terms, we focus on theoretical studies of Freirean and critical pedagogical principles to examine the current challenges of the U.S./Mexico borderland community. To talk about quality education in this context is first to denounce problematic dominant systems that prevent the academic success of those in oppressed conditions; to then announce educational programs that can be empowering and transformational. Most of the U.S. public school curriculum is based on white colonizers' version of history. Non-white students usually feel disempowered and develop identity crises as they are forced to internalize whiteness. The call for a critical multicultural education that deconstructs white supremacy and neo-fascism is extremely crucial in this context. For the most part, much of the racial tension built up in the U.S. consists of white people's fear of losing their privilege. White-dominated structures control the economy, politics, and history. People of color often encounter an invisible ceiling in their upward mobility. A citizenship pedagogy from the people, with the people, and for the people in the borderlands is to connect students' daily life experiences, where transnational students can see themselves as historical agents. Quality education then is defined as students' ability to practice critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity skills to develop intellectually and prosper academically to become contributing citizens to society.

10. Conclusion

Inspired in Gloria Anzaldúa we critically reflect on our locality and political positionality as borderlanders. She stated that the switching of "codes" from English to Castilian Spanish to the North Mexican dialect to Tex-Mex to a sprinkling of Nahuatl to a mixture of languages establishes a new language--the language of the Borderlands.

Overcoming the tradition of silence. "I will have my serpent's tongue - my woman's voice, my sexual voice, my poet's voice. I will overcome the tradition of silence" [13].

Lack of preparation for college readiness leaves many students lacking post-secondary opportunities. The majority of our communities are working and middle-class families. Therefore, replicating an educational experience that reproduces their social-economic status. For the most part, since teachers come from the working class and middle class, they tend to teach the way they have been taught. Most of them experience an education of right and wrong, teacher-centered, dittos, memorization, discipline, and banking, while upper social groups have a creative, problem-solving, and critical thinking education. At the end of the day, higher social groups have a better-quality education that truly makes a difference in real life. Once a domesticating education keeps people as spectators and obedient to someone else's commands, the lack of creativity limits people's alternatives to make a living.

The implication of this study's findings reveals that students living in liminal spaces have so much against them. School curriculum and pedagogy need to focus on the specifics of culturally responsive multidisciplinary educational practices that transform and empower their critical consciousness in a holistic way. We don't need a test to find out who are the students who are left behind we do need to test our educational institutions on how they can make them successful. By actively participating in our grant-funded college readiness program, all students succeed in transitioning from high school and enrolling in a post-secondary institution. Otherwise, the spectrum of their academic endeavors would be bleak. For over twenty-five years that our program has been servicing students, the data reveals that personalized college mentors, tutors, and student development specialists make a significant difference in their intellectual growth. The objective of UTEP ETS is to foster knowledge and promote the development of skills that prepare students to be well informed, thoughtful, and productive and transformative intellectual leaders and

citizens. Our public institutions should provide to all students' quality education without exceptions.

The UTEP ETS program provides advising, information on financial aid programs, assistance in completing financial aid applications, financial literacy, and support for college enrollment. Moreover, the program supports students' non-cognitive needs to ensure that they persist, succeed, graduate from high school, complete a rigorous secondary school program of study and enroll in college. Based on the need, the UTEP ETS Project implemented (5) ambitious yet attainable objectives: (a) persistence from one academic year to the next grade level; (b) graduation with a regular diploma within the standard number of years; (c) graduation with a rigorous secondary school program of study; (d) college enrollment; and (e) postsecondary attainment.

The meager college enrollment rate of only 50% for target school graduates signals a definite need for individualized technical assistance in the college admissions and financial aid application process provided by the UTEP ETS Project. The data suggest that only 5% of target area residents have earned a four-year college degree compared to the state (31%) and national (33%) rates. This exceptionally low college degree attainment rate signals a definite need for the college, financial aid, and financial literacy awareness activities provided by the UTEP ETS Project.

The research suggests that there is also a critical need to support economically disadvantaged parents that are less knowledgeable about how the education system works so that children can gain access to and be successful in college. [14] Welton et al. supported the finding that schools recognizing the need to support parent engagement provide opportunities. College knowledge was objectively low among the Latin@ parents surveyed. Language barriers constituted a significant negative factor in acquiring college knowledge. This finding was evident across different communication channels and sources, face-to-face interactions with teachers or counselors, written materials from schools and colleges, and participation in information dissemination events such as college nights. In turn, students develop ownership over their learning experiences. This study confirms that only quality education allows our youth to "make it" and transcend beyond social barriers that prevent them from developing and succeeding into a social upward mobility.

11. References

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