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# An Assessment of Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of Hope in U.S. Urban Schools

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AN ASSESSMENT OF PAULO FREIRE'S PEDADOGY OF HOPE

IN U. S. URBAN SCHOOLS

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DISSERTATION APPROVAL

We hereby approve the Dissertation

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PEDAGOGY OF HOPE IN U.S. URBAN SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

AN ASSESSMENT OF PAULO FREIRE'S PEDADOGY OF HOPE

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Inner- city schools are confronted with a number of challenges that are unique to their urbanized setting. To help identify opportunities for improvement in these schools, this study sought: 1) to determine whether Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope* theoretically responds to what is known of the phenomenon of hopelessness in inner-city US schools and 2) to produce a systematic evaluation of that model, by examining published critiques of Freire's work, as well as responses to these critiques, both theoretical and empirical. This determination is an important contribution to the field of critical pedagogy and serves educators seeking guidance on which aspects of that pedagogy may be useful in their situations. The formulated answers to the research questions are presented in the concluding chapter, together with recommendations for educators and policymakers alike.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*To speak a true word is to transform the world (Freire).*


When I told Dr. Ann Margaret Sharp that I was going to take my AP students to Europe (a first for this inner-city school) she advised me to, "make sure to take the students off the beat and track."   Inspired by Ann's advice, I continued to take students 'off the beat and track' of the streets of Newark, NJ to study abroad in countries such as: Belgium, England, France, Greece, Italy, and The Netherlands.   Seeing the impact that traveling 'off the beat and track' had made in the lives of the students inspired my journey, 'off the beat and track' of my inner-city classroom, to the challenges of the P4C (Philosophy for Children) and the Pedagogy and Philosophy Program.  I will remain forever grateful to Dr. Ann Margaret Sharp for her invaluable advice.

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To the source of my encouragement for powering through the challenges of this program -  my husband and family, I thank for your unwavering faith in me, and enduring love.

DEDICATION

Julia Mary Lyon Alston, the source of my strength.


Herlie Alston McDonald, the source of my courage.


Lonia Belle Alston Abbott, the source of my tenacity.


Rooster Edward-James Jackson &

Revel Jaye-Ross Jackson, the source of my hope.

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**Chapter 1: Introduction**

While it could be argued that some general trends in education have been positive in recent years, many inner-city schools in the United States remain marginalized for a number of reasons, some of which directly relate to a basic lack of resources. The references cited in this introductory section documenting and explaining this problem go back as much as thirty years, but are echoed in very recent sources. This suggests that this is a profound and longstanding problem that has yet to be alleviated. Curwin and Mendler (1999) observe that, "Inner-city schools often lack many of the luxuries their more affluent neighbors consider necessities. Often, inner-city schools are older and scarred from the battles of seventy-five to one hundred and fifty years of serving students" (p. 196). In American cities, where large numbers of immigrant populations have clustered before dispersing into the heartland, providing educational services involves a higher degree of "wear and tear" on physical and human infrastructures, in ways that are not experienced by their suburban counterparts. In this regard, Kristol (1972) argues that, "It is quite impossible for the city to be a processing depot for immigrants and at the same time strive for a traditional European kind of urbanity. The wear and tear is enormous; urban life is inevitably too messy and turbulent and more than a little sordid" (p. 37). Consequently, major cities such as Newark, New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles have been struggling to satisfy the mandates of the federal government with respect to the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2002 while faced with

dwindling state budgets during a period of lingering economic downturn and increasingly large and diverse student populations.

Although the *No Child Left Behind* Act has been amended by the more recently legislated *Every Student Succeeds Act* of 2015, the spirit of both laws remains the same. To ensure that states continue to strive to close the achievement gaps, the new law kept federal mandates, such as requiring schools to test 95% of students in any underperforming subgroup every year from the third through eighth grades and again in high school. Schools must also report the test scores for minority groups and Title I schools that fall into the bottom 5%, graduated less than 67% of students, or have subgroups that are consistently falling behind must implement a school-level improvement program for students in any underperforming subgroups (www.help.senate.gov). Per ESSA these subgroups include students that are economically disadvantaged, from major racial and ethnic groups, English language learners, or disabled. Because the newly legislated *Act* expressly prohibits State Departments of Education from imposing the Common Core, and removed some of the emphasis on testing, high performing suburban school communities will feel some stress relief. On the other hand, many of the same stressors remain for people of color and the poor as contributing factors to the anxiety and tensions that nourish the sense of hopelessness that exists in today's low income, low performing urban schools.

Identifying opportunities to create conditions that improve student learning has become a top priority for an increasing number of inner-city school districts in the United States (Singh, Vaught, & Mitchell, 1998). Because educational resources are scarce and

educators are faced with some difficult choices when formulating curricular offerings, it is important to apply what is known in meaningful ways to avoid false starts and lost opportunities, a need that directly relates to the problem considered by this study: alleviating the particular kinds of hopelessness that beset students and teachers in inner-city U.S. schools.

**Background of the Problem: Historical Causes of the Plight of Urban Schools**

This study examines the work of Paulo Freire in relation to the phenomenon of hopelessness in urban US schools. A thorough understanding of that phenomenon requires an examination of the historical factors that have produced it. Inner-city schools in the United States are faced with the same types of problems as American schools everywhere, including inadequate teacher preparation and support. However, these problems are frequently more severe in inner-city schools, because they are confronted with a number of obstacles that are unique to their urban settings, including disproportionate underfunding (Good & Braden, 2000), overcrowding, crumbling physical infrastructure (Kristol, 1972), student populations that are highly diverse in terms of ethnicity (Haycock, Jerald, & Huang, 2001; Singham, 2003), large numbers of learning disabled and ESL (English as Second Language) learners, cultures that are oppositional to academic achievement (Neckerman, 2007), neighborhoods that are hostile to students and teachers (Anyon, 1997), and high incidents of student-on-student and student-on-teacher violence (Curwin & Mendler,1999).

These obstacles are largely the result of historical trends that took place during the second half of the 20$^{th}$ century. I will briefly discuss six of the most important of

these: 1) demographic shifts, 2) school funding/economic shifts, 3) labor market discrimination and institutionalized racism, 4) local cultures oppositional to educational achievement (Hunt, 2008; Neckerman, 2007), 5) educational policies and practices that exacerbated the disadvantages of minority students and 6) the distortion of inner-city schooling by local, state and national politics. These historical trends, which occurred in a domino-like fashion, served to set the stage for the educational reform efforts that have been undertaken for decades and are still taking place today. Examining the lasting impact these historical trends have had on current educational thought is an important part of any analysis of modern inner-city environments.

According to Neckerman (2007), dramatic "economic and demographic change … occurred in northern cities during the 1950s. The suburbs grew rapidly, drawing white and middle-class residents out of the city" (p. 3). Following the shift to a peace-time economy after World War II, the manufacturing and other commercial industries that characterized many American cities in years past either reduced their business activities or relocated to suburban communities (Neckerman, 2007). At the same time, millions of African Americans left the south and headed for major northern cities in a process that concentrated them in inner city areas.

A concomitant of this transition was the beginning of the financial and structural degradation process that continues to afflict many larger metropolitan regions of the country today. In this regard, Neckerman advises that, "These developments are likely to have shaped urban schools. If the tax base declined when industry and middle-class families left, school funding may also have fallen. Given the city's changing demographic

composition, *big-city schools may have faced growing numbers of poor and disadvantaged students at the same time their financial resources were dwindling*" (2007, p. 4, emphasis added).   The lower levels of per-pupil spending in urban, as compared to suburban, schools is well documented, as is the fact that education in inner-city settings typically costs more than comparable services elsewhere (Wolfe, 2003).

Good and Braden (2000) report that, "Children attending poorly supported schools in impoverished or inner-city schools do not perform as well as those in affluent areas where funds are readily available to provide technology, laboratory and library facilities or other types of equipment and supplies needed for lessons in various subjects" (p. 71).  Many inner-city school educators struggle to obtain the basic necessities for classroom instruction while their more affluent suburban counterparts enjoy state-of-the-art technologies and more experienced teachers based on the disparities that result from current approaches to public school funding in the United States. In a study by Lalas (2007), the following were cited as a primary reason for teacher stress and job dissatisfaction:

1. Inadequate professional development opportunities for teachers and very little support

2. Inequitable access to instructional materials and curriculum- 75% of the teachers surveyed said that they use the same textbooks for their ELs and English-only students with no materials adapted to their linguistic needs, and teachers with high percentages of ELs are less likely than teachers with low

percentages of ELs to have access to appropriate textbooks and instructional

materials;

3. Inequitable access to adequate facilities-schools with a high concentration of

ELs have overcrowded classrooms, poorer working conditions for teachers,

less parental involvement, and more neighborhood crime (pp.18-19).

As Good and Braden (2000) point out, "As long as the financial support of

education depends strongly on real estate taxes, inequities are bound to continue in the

quality of education provided students in different locations" (p. 71). Thus, the effects of

the historical trend in school funding continues its lasting impact on modern inner-city

environments, notably, as it relates to teachers' stress and job dissatisfaction.

Drawing on my own experiences of teaching in the Newark Public School District

for 29 years (1987 to 2016), I quote from a letter to the former superintendent of Newark

Public Schools, Cami Anderson, from Principal Sharnee Brown, that traces inner-city

teachers' stress and job dissatisfaction to a lack of resources:

[W]e received approximately 12 Emotionally Disturbed students, and we do not

have a Behavioral Disabilities program to meet their therapeutic, socio-emotional

needs…. Our plea for adequate staffing has been an on-going struggle in the

district. This struggle for adequate staffing has caused overcrowding with many

teachers forced to teach extra classes. In addition, other grade levels currently

have substitute teachers due to a lack of staff, and SPED classes are out of

compliance due to a lack of resources and staff. All of these compounded issues

negatively impacted the culture, morals, and the learning environment causing

frustration to the teachers, students and administration (personal communication, 2015).

This double-whammy of underfunding and a high percentage of disadvantaged students has never really abated, but only fluctuated in small degrees since that time. Indeed, a long series of unfunded educational mandates has created a situation where many inner-city schools are being overwhelmed by students with learning disabilities (as continually redefined by the U.S. Department of Education), growing numbers of ESL (English as second language) learners, and dwindling budgets in the face of a shaky national economy. Learning disabled and special needs students require individualized educational services, which many inner-city school systems lack the resources to provide. (Manz, Power, Ginsberg-Block, & Dowrick, 2010). Nor do they have sufficient resources to provide the professional development necessary to prepare teachers to offer such services, an exacerbating result of which is that many teachers flee urban schools to better conditions at the earliest opportunity (Manz et al., 2010).

The double-whammy has contributed to the situation in which the overt, institutionalized racism of the South has been replaced with less discernible but still pronounced racial barriers in inner cities throughout the country (Neckerman, 2007). Because many young black people have seen their parents' ambitions frustrated despite their relentless hard work and perseverance, some began to question the utility of pursuing an education, assuming their future would be characterized by the same racial barriers to success (Neckerman, 2007). For example, according to Neckerman, "the problems of disadvantaged black workers deepened as industrial production was scaled

back after 1945, and as middle-class black families moved out of ghetto neighborhoods. Inner-city youth lost touch with the men and women who could have linked them to the mainstream economy and given them hope of attaining success through conventional means. In this context, inner-city youth might reasonably have questioned whether education would help them get ahead economically" (p. 4).

Indeed, pursuing the traditional American dream became, for many black youths, synonymous with an "Uncle Tom" attitude that further degraded the value of an education for many of these young people. In this regard, Neckerman emphasizes that, "Residential segregation intensified over time and became inscribed in the built environment of the city. As the ghetto grew, neighborhood racial transitions were often met by violence. This racial segregation and hostility may have fostered what anthropologists have termed an "oppositional culture" (1986, p. 176). Even city schools with a high percentage of minority teachers suffer from cultural clashes. Minority teachers and administrators who have "made it" and have graduated from college may be seen as different by the inner-city students who do not view college as part of their world.

According to the work of Signithia Fordham and John U. Ogbu, this oppositional culture frames academic effort as a betrayal of racial identity—as 'acting white'—and discourages students from making a commitment to their education" (1986). This oppositional culture, fueled by institutionalized racism, contributed to a situation wherein cultural forces served to further alienate many young minority youths, especially African American, from pursuing the educational goals that provided their white counterparts with a path to success while they were still being marginalized. This disparity served to

influence the cost-benefit analysis of the value of an education for many of these young people who saw few legitimate employment opportunities in their own communities.

The historical factors of demographic shifts, shifts in school funding, labor market discrimination and the development of a culture oppositional to educational achievement have been exacerbated by educational policies and practices that further disadvantage minority students in the United States. Although the details differ from region to region, the general responses to increasing numbers of immigrant and minority students by inner-city school systems has ranged from racial stereotypes to veritable social engineering practices. For instance, Neckerman observes that, "working-class or minority students were channeled into lower-track or vocational classes. Others report that academic curricula were 'dumbed down' and standards for promotion were diluted. Thus, the troubles of inner-city schools could reflect misguided or racist school policies that denied low-income and minority students a rigorous education and sent a message of low expectations" (2007, p. 4). According to Singh, et al. (1999), "Research has revealed that due to their poor academic performance, a disproportionate number of African American students, males in particular, have been channeled into special education programs, tracked into less challenging course work, and perceived as lacking the ability and motivation to succeed and perform well in school" (p. 158). Furthermore, "black students, particularly black male students, are three times as likely to be in a class for the educable mentally retarded as are white students, but only one-half as likely to be in a class for the gifted and talented" (Irvine, 1990, p.14).

In addition to educational policies, teachers themselves are often direct contributors to the phenomenon of hopelessness in inner city schools. There are undoubtedly teachers who are caring and conscientious, and if they make mistakes with their students, it is more out of ignorance than ill will. Still, too many students are subjected to what Miller (2009) called 'poisonous pedagogy' which describes hurtful and detrimental methods employed and attitudes exemplified by educators and parents toward school-aged children. Some educators mask the use of poisonous pedagogy under the appearance of adhering to the demands of a curriculum or as unyielding adherence to procedures for the sake of stability. Too often teachers devote themselves solely to the organization and curricula of the school with only occasional reference to what actually happens to the children at home or in their neighborhoods.

Many teachers are blind to the brutal reality of many inner-city students' existence, which seems to exacerbate this phenomenon of hopelessness in students, which is described and clearly illuminated the following journal entry (2009) of a former student of mine:

Every day I am a witness to the future. No, I am not a psychic, I am a student. I see the future of my classmates, and most are destined to be: murders, drug dealers, thieves, prostitutes, or dead. School is no longer a place for education because alot [a lot] of kids come to school to get high, make a drug deal, fight someone they have a beef with, or find their future baby daddy. All of this is done in a classroom right under the teachers ['s] nose and is disregarded by a pop quiz, or a turn of the cheek. How did all of this happen? Since when did teachers

start being afraid to stop a student from fighting, dealing drugs, or sleeping off a high in class? Better yet, no one seems to care why kids come to school to do such thing, and why hasn't it been dealt with?

[One] incident was an accidental overdose of cocaine on school grounds. A friend of mine was a known drug addict. He would often come to school with a residue of white powder on his nose, due to the hit of Bernice (a.k.a. cocaine) he had just taken in the bathroom a few minutes before class. The teacher's response to the student was, "Hey wipe your face and sit down, your [you're] late again to my class. I've got to cover this curriculum". The student often said out loud in class, "I got laid last night." Once my reply to him was "By who [whom]?" and he announced "Bernice" (Bernice is a scientific element used to make cocaine). This is another example of how if the teacher would have worried less about tardiness and covering a curriculum, and more about the student's wellbeing, he could of [have] been rescued, but now he's dead; but, he'll never be late for his 3rd period class again.

Such examples of poisonous pedagogical practices produce feelings of abandonment, despair, and dread in students, similar to feelings attributed to victims engaging in risky behaviors (Miller, 2009).

Finally, the phenomenon of hopelessness in inner city schools is triggered by the distortion of inner-city schooling by local, state, and national politics. The expected

political pressures for greater equity may not appear as a consequence of choice,

especially if choice has the effect of defeating students (Wolfe, 2003).   Yielding to the

national and state political pressure of NCLB for greater equity and to the local political

pressure of some parents caused a Robin Hood effect within schools, thus, "yielding

gains for low-achieving students but at the expense of high achievers" (Loveless, 2007, p.

253).  For instance, this educator contends that local political pressure helped launch the

controversial *One Newark Admissions Program*, inaugurated under the leadership of

Cami Anderson, and sanctioned by many NPS (Newark Public Schools) parents

determined to ensure that their children were admitted to top performing schools, has

negatively impacted many schools, which Anderson and her team professed to have

improved.   Instead of working to improve under-achieving schools, some students,

against the better judgment, and in some cases, without the request or knowledge of the

parents, are placed in schools that cannot offer the services that the students require.  As a

result, the NPS Advisory Board submitted a Declaration of Petition the New Jersey State

Board of Education citing the following:

> State District Superintendent Cami Anderson's One Newark Plan has forced
>
> placement of special education students in schools without the services and
>
> supports required by students' IEPs.  Numerous examples of such violations,
>
> including placement of emotionally disturbed students in a school without a
>
> program to service their needs, lack of aides for autistic students and other
>
> increasing violations, exacerbate the level of non-compliances with IDEA and
>
> federal guidelines, and set Newark Public Schools up for failure.  A chronological

description of such violations at just one school is detailed by Central High

School Principal Sharnee Brown in a recent letter to State District Superintendent

Cami Anderson.  Similar disparity is also evidenced in some schools in programs

for English language learners (Petition, Exhibit 1, 2015).

State control and soft bigotry have contributed to creating a crisis of hopelessness

within the Newark, New Jersey community.  During a discussion on *Oprah* (2010), when

New Jersey Governor Chris Christie stated that local control was responsible for the ills

and failures that plague Newark, he was appealing to the inner racist (Alston. Personal

Communication, 2015).   "So where we are now is that a whole country of people believe

I'm a "nigger," and I don't, and the battle's on . . . And that is the crisis" (Baldwin, 1963,

p.4).   In fact, since Newark has been under court-ordered State control since April 1995,

thus those calling the shots for Newark Public Schools are those educational leaders

appointed by the State of New Jersey's appointed leaders, such as former State District

Superintendent Anderson, and presently, State District Superintendent Cerf. The failure

of Newark Public Schools must be understood as the failure of the State of New Jersey's

control of that district.   As Alston (2015) argues,

> When New Jersey Governor Chris Christie said that local control over education
>
> is good and important, but not in Newark, do you really have to call us a nigger
>
> when you are continually treating us like one? When you are treating an entire
>
> school system full of students and parents and teachers, and administers like one.
>
> The term nigger is a hateful and ugly word, but what makes the word so ugly isn't
>
> the sound of the word. The ugliness is rooted in the hateful ideas and assumptions

about African-Americans. The governor never said the words, but his meaning

was as clear as when that Supreme Court justice declared that Black people "have

no rights that a white man was bound to respect." So our governor can say

without irony that local control is good, just not good for those people - not really

people - in Newark. You don't have to say the word to use the word when the

ugliness is embedded in your actions. When the governor associates Newark and

failure, he is saying Newark and nigger; and, Niggers should not have a say in the

education of their children. They cannot be trusted to be educators and parents

and producers of knowledge and technique (Personal Communication, pp. 1-3).

During an August 2015 meeting with Newark Public Schools Vice Principals held

at Montclair University, State District Superintendent Cerf proffered, "All parents and

students need to know is that they are in a good school. The rest they need to leave to us

grownups" (Cerf, Personal Communication, 2015). This kind of discourse insidiously

transmits an implicit attitude of hopelessness to other educators, and tacitly conveys a

message to inner-city parents and their children that they are sans the capacity to make

informed decisions about their children.

With Zuckerberg's $100 million donation to Newark schools backing the

undertaking, Anderson's brainchild for increasing teacher accountability was to attach

the questionable reform of merit pay to the teacher contract, and to oust those teachers

evaluated as ineffective. Thus, using $50 million of the Zuckerberg donation for the

Newark teachers' contract, she simultaneously created an EWoP (Educators Without

Placement) pool of teachers costing over $20 million per year. Additionally, $25 million

went towards increasing charter schools in Newark, and $20 million was used on consultants (Russakoff, 2015; Alston, 2015, Gross, 2015).   Prior to this, and contrary to the failures associated with Newark schools, US News and World Report (2010 – 2013) ranked one third of Newark's public high schools as some of the best in the United States: Science Park, Technology, American History, University, and Arts High Schools. However, Anderson's misguided actions contributed to the racking up of a $70 million deficit and the undermining of some of the most important educational strides those top-ranked high schools had achieved, for instance, reneging on its five-year commitment to fund the Districts first International Baccalaureate Diploma Program at Science Park High School.

The people of Newark clearly would have preferred to determine for themselves how to use Zuckerberg's $100 million to educate the children of the NPS community, rather than give that $100 million to State-appointed, predominately white, people from other communities to create programs and institutions they believed were best for Newark (Alston, Personal Communication, 2015).  The fact that NPS teachers, parents and students were not even consulted in these decisions constitutes an episode of profound disrespect and disenfranchisement that epitomizes the role of state and national politics in contributing to the phenomenon of hopelessness in US urban schools.

**Background of the Problem: The Phenomenon of Hopelessness in Urban Schools**

Whether fueled by their recognition of social injustices that make their educational achievements worthless, because of a sense of loyalty to a culture that conflicts with educational success, or by recognition of their schools' efforts at

downward social engineering, urban students' resistance to schooling is imbued with hopelessness. Hopelessness is a bleak attitude about future circumstances (Weinger, 1988), and a belief that failure is inevitable (Bhavnagri & Prosperi, 2007). Bolland and Formichella (2005) examined the relationship between violence, depression, and hopelessness, and found that hopelessness is linked to a negative future orientation. Many studies have been done examining hopelessness in marginalized youth, but these studies have primarily focused on children experiencing suicidal or severe psychological problems (Snyder, 2005). However, there are some studies on the phenomenon of hopelessness in inner-city adolescent students and teachers (McLaren, 2000; Kirylo & McNulty, 2011). In inner-city school adolescents, hopelessness is a psycho-social construct consisting of a number of inter-related negative academic, social and psychological attitudes and behaviors, the most important of which are: (1) giving up on academic work, (2) a lack of respect for the authority of the teacher and the school, (3) poor social interactions, including episodes of intense rage and acts of violence, and (4) negative self-concept, loss of self-confidence and even the desire to commit suicide (Bhavnagri & Prosperi, 2007). I will briefly discuss each of these aspects of hopelessness in inner-city adolescent students.

Urban students demonstrate a lack of engagement in their own learning, in terms of attention and effort that students bring to their schoolwork. For many inner-city students coming to school to engage in a curriculum that seems to have no connection or meaning to their lives is frustrating and problematic. Life seems worthless and constantly overshadowed by events (social and economic), and there is no reason to hope for good

tomorrows.  For these youth, perhaps unaware of the role of historical trends, they are

aware of their present history and environment, which has relegated them to a social class

that delimited a strict dichotomy between the "haves, have-nots and have-too-little"

(West, 2001, p. 94).  So, life is filled with hopelessness and school, along with schooling,

is dull, useless, and a waste.

Another aspect of hopelessness in urban students is that they often demonstrate a

lack of respect for the authority of the teacher and the school.  A study about student

discipline is cited as a top problem by 42% of teachers in urban schools—in contrast with

only 1 in 4 of their rural (25%) and suburban (26%) counterparts (Vogel, 2004). They are

less likely to trust the teacher and to follow her direction, and are at times overtly

antagonistic (Brown, 2004).  Students are antagonistic and resist efforts by teachers to

involve them in classroom activities and they disrupt the work of those students who do

want to participate (Brown, 2004).  Anyon (1997) describes urban students at Marcy

Elementary (a nom de plume) in Newark, New Jersey, who face intractable barriers and

whose "desperate lives" make them "restless and confrontational" (p. 23).  According to

Brown (2004) and Anyon (1997), many disadvantaged Black students perceive urban

schools to represent the interests of a larger, white, middle-class group which seeks to

destroy the local group with which they identify (Brown, 2004). Fordham and Ogbu

(1986) explains that Black students' resistance to anything they perceive to threaten their

group, including the apparent desire of some Black students to leave it.

These two experiences – authority and engagement – are connected.  Clearly,

engagement suffers when discipline problems arise, and vice versa. Classroom conflict

can be noisy and disruptive, distracting students and stealing instructional time.

Disengagement also cycles back to diminish authority and trust (Neckerman, 2007, p. 4).

On the other hand, if students are interested in the schoolwork, they become self-

motivated. The more the lesson pulls them, the less the teacher needs to push. Engaging

work has a longer-term benefit as well: it creates a reservoir of goodwill and trust on

which the teacher can draw in the future (Neckerman, 2007, p. 4).

Another aspect of hopelessness in urban students is that they often engage in

destructive social interactions, including episodes of intense rage, and acts of violence.

"F*** you b***h, get the f**k out of my face, leave me the f**k alone, stupid b***h,

you got me f**ked up" are the kind of words teachers are listening to in the classrooms

(Chawla, 2014). Grossly disrespectful behaviors, such as using foul language and racial

epithets, and assaults on teachers are common occurrences in urban schools across the

country, and these behaviors take a serious toll on educators. As one teacher reported,

"It's gotten to the point where you just show up every day mentally preparing to be

disrespected and cursed out by kids. Kids who you would never think would do it, are

now. It's just commonplace because so many are doing it and they're seeing that they can

get away with it, and the kids know it and they'll tell you they do it because they know

nothing's going to happen to them" (Chawla, 2014).

Even more disturbing than verbal abuse are incidents of student violence,

directed not only at other students but also at teachers and school staff. According to

NJDOE (2014), in Newark, New Jersey there were 197 reported instances of violence in

the previous school year, including 81 incidents of vandalism, 39 weapons-related

offenses, 30 substance-abuse offenses and 172 incidents of harassment or bullying.

Williams (2015) reported that in a school district near St. Louis, teachers have had

pepper-spray and dog repellant sprayed in their faces. "A Philadelphia seventh-grade girl

with a history of incidents against her teacher sprayed perfume in the teacher's face after

telling her that she smelled "like old white p***y." After telling her classmates "I'm

about to kick this b**ch's white a**," she shoved the teacher, knocking her to the floor"

(Williams, 2015, p. 2)    In Baltimore, since 2010, an average of four teachers and staff

were assaulted daily; and in 2014 a teacher's jaw was broken by an outraged student

(Williams 2015).  In Houston, a 66-year-old female teacher was knocked out by her

student (Youtube.com, 2015).  In Philadelphia, a 68-year-old substitute teacher was

knocked out cold by a student. Earlier that year, two other teachers in the same school

were assaulted (Youtube.com, 2015).  On the one hand, it is ironic that many school

districts with the highest incidence of violence employ the highest numbers of police

officers and security guards (Philadelphia schools employ close to 400 school police

officers (Williams, 2015).  On the other hand, as Devine (1996) argues, adolescent

violence is a learned behavior, and the presence of such a heavy-handed security staff

represents an insidious and counter-productive institutional disengagement from the

caring supervision of the student body. While recognizing that security personnel cannot

be entirely eliminated from the school environment, Devine proposes proper training in

psychology and sociology for security guards (Devine 2014).

Another aspect of hopelessness in urban students is that they often manifest

negative self-concept, loss of self-confidence and even the desire to commit suicide.

Pinto & Whisman (1996) reported that suicide ideations are significantly greater in adolescents experiencing hopelessness and with poorer self-concept. Their research showed that negative affect and cognitive bias variables accounted for 48% of the variability in suicidal ideation" (Pinto & Whisman, 1996, p.165). These researchers additionally indicated that while adolescents who consider and attempt suicide may have different psychological profiles, the "findings regarding suicidal ideation support a [statistical] mediational model in which negative views of the self and the future contribute to negative affect, and ultimately, suicidal ideation" (p. 165).

The phenomenon of hopelessness in inner-city schools is not confined to student populations, but also manifests in teachers, school administrators and parents. In this study, I will focus on the phenomenon of hopelessness in urban students and teachers. That phenomenon primarily manifests (1) in feelings of stress and job dissatisfaction, (2) in messages teachers communicate directly and indirectly to students about their inevitable failure, (3) in a regimented teaching style that equates teaching with control and learning with submission, and (4) in abusive behavior toward students.

One way the phenomenon of hopelessness manifests in urban schoolteachers is in feelings of stress and job dissatisfaction. According to Anyon (1997) "Most [B]lack teachers with whom I interacted during my work in the school. . . expressed deep frustration in dealing with their students" (p. 28). As one teacher explained to Anyon, "It's what they're use to. They wouldn't listen to us if we didn't yell and put on a mean face. They know it's only our school voice" (29). "Two white teachers expressed fear of confronting their students" to Anyon, in which one shared, "I don't like to talk to them . .

. They'll challenge you now, and you might not win" (p.30). One white male teacher

stated, "They all have social workers, and the social worker tells girls, don't let any man

touch you. One girl accused me of touching her on the knee. Her mother told her to do

it, to get [her] out of my class. And it worked" (30). Anyon reasoned that this kind of

stress resulted in a high rate of teacher absenteeism, noting that on one day, "Twelve out

of the 25 classroom teachers (48%) were out, which was not unusual for a Monday" (p.

152).

One study of teacher stress and job dissatisfaction in New Jersey urban schools,

involving extensive interviews with teachers, revealed that student discipline is the

foremost source of teacher stress and job dissatisfaction (Vogel, 2004). "More than 1 in

3 teachers say they have seriously considered quitting the profession because of student

discipline and behavior became so intolerable. And 85% believe new teachers are

particularly unprepared for dealing with behavior problems" (Vogel, 2004, p. 3). This

study attributed teachers' feelings of frustration, stress and job dissatisfaction to their

schools' slow or ineffective action with students' outrageous or violent behavior.

Topping the teachers' list of complaints were "students who disrupt class by talking out

of turn and horsing around," and who engage in "cheating, lateness, disrespect and

bullying" (Vogel 2004, p.14). One New Jersey teacher commented, "What I find

amazing . . . is this lack of morals. There's just a disrespect for classroom materials;

they'll write all over things, desks, rulers...I don't even think they think [it's] wrong, and

it just amazes me...like they didn't know that was inappropriate" (Vogel, 2004, p.17).

Another concern for urban teachers noted in this study was their sense that the authority

of their schools to effectively discipline special needs students whose behavior becomes

disruptive is constrained both by the law and by anticipatory fears of parental challenge.

More than 3 in 4 (76%) teachers believed that "students with 16 I.E.P.'s∗ who

misbehave are often treated too lightly, even when their misbehavior has nothing to do

with their disability" (Vogel, 2004, p.16).

Perhaps the greatest contributing factor to urban teacher stress and job

dissatisfaction is their being directly confronted with violence from students.  Holly

Houston, a post-traumatic stress specialist who counsels teachers in Chicago public

schools reported, "Of the teachers that I have counseled over the years who have been

assaulted, 100 percent of them have satisfied diagnostic criteria for PTSD" (Williams,

2015, p.3).  This phenomenon, of public school teachers suffering from work-related

PTSD, is a widespread problem affecting urban schools even in smaller cities like Baton

Rouge, Louisiana (Chawla, 2014).

Teachers experiencing hopelessness regarding inner-city education often

communicate messages directly and indirectly to students about their inevitable failure.

For instance, Anyon (1997) described that an older teacher explained, "You can't treat

these kids nice.  They don't deserve it" (p. 29).  And in reaction to a beginning teacher

who had taken her class to the museum but had been asked to leave because the students

were touching everything,' the older teacher asserted, 'Why did she take them on a trip?

They don't deserve to go to the museum!  They don't know how to act!" (p. 29).  For

Freire, human discourse is a powerful tool capable of cultivating either dominance or

freedom (2005, p.24).  Analysis of discourse, the means by which human beings are able

to express and communicate their ideas to one another, including the use of spoken, written, and other multiple forms (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002), discloses the political attitudes of many inner-city educators, and how they use discourse as a function of power and control. An example of discourse exercised as a function of racial oppression was experienced firsthand by this educator during a principals' meeting in which the NPS Supervisor of Special Needs, who was presenting a workshop on Special Needs policies and procedures, offered as a reason for black males performing poorly on standardized assessments, their inability to "speak Standard White English" (Personal Commentary at Principal Leadership Institute, October, 2014). Such discourse insidiously transmits an implicit attitude of hopelessness to other educators, and tacitly conveys a message to inner-city parents and their children that they lack promise.

The discourse of urban educators shape perceptions and influences actions of students and parents, and therefore it must be understood as an inherently political power. Thus, for educators, the challenge is to "interrogate the descriptive nature of the discourse on race and ethnicity" in order to "unveil the inherent description that hides how ethnicity [and] cultural differences are reshaped around a racial identity [giving rise to] a hierarchy that subcategorizes while devaluing groups of people that are designated 'racial others,' or 'ethnic outsiders'" (McLaren, 1997, p. 304). Although these are complex challenges, the importance of the outcomes that are involved demands a timely and informed response on the part of the educational community.

Teacher hopelessness also manifests in regimented styles of teaching. According to Helfield (2001) and Miller (2009) many urban teachers hold that absolute obedience to

authority and the suppressions of students' thinking is the foundation of all education in order to avert intractability and disobedience. This covert exercise of power over students is a clear example of poisonous pedagogy (Miller 2009).

Walk into almost any inner-city school and you will observe teachers using formulas and procedures that centralize their authority, in an effort to maintain power and control within the classroom, lest anarchy ensue and disrupt the schooling. For example, within a forty-two-minute class period at the inner-city school where I work, one can see that teaching is contingent upon this practicing of a formula:

- 10 minutes: Do Now (a short activity, usually written on the board for students to work on as soon as they enter class

- 10 minutes: Guided Practice

- 10 minutes: Independent Practice

- 10 minutes: Group Guided Responses

- <u>02 minutes: Closure</u>

- Total:   42 minutes of activity

It is disrespectful and demeaning to students for teachers to time activities in this way, as if students are machines that can be turned off and on at the drop of a dime. As a result of this formulized procedure the primary voice heard is that of the teacher inaugurating ideas. When and if the voices of the students are heard, they emerge echoing or responding to some directive from the teacher. Subsequently, the teacher's thoughts are folded into the thoughts of the students, i.e., the teacher's thoughts trump the thoughts of the students, a process personifying what Freire (2005) termed, banking education.

Finally, the phenomenon of hopelessness also manifests in urban schoolteachers in abusive behavior toward students (Sharpe, 2011). Researchers indicate that it is not uncommon for many teachers' classroom management and disciplinary measures to include emotionally abusive practices (Krugman & Krugman, 1984; Germain, Brassard, & Hart, 1985; Briggs & Hawkins, 1996; Twemlow et. al, 2006). Nesbit (1991) identified six categories of emotionally abusive behaviors demonstrated by teachers in classrooms: 1) demeaning students through put downs, 2) biased interactions with students, 3) dominating and controlling students, 4) intimidating students, 5) distancing themselves from students and being emotionally unsupportive, and 6) displaying a wide spectrum of attitudinal behaviors that have a negative impact on the classroom environment (p. 25).

Additional research on teachers who bully by Paul and Smith (2000) identified six distinct ways in which teachers misuse their power over students; each of these behaviors or actions fit into the category of emotional abuse. According to the authors, bullying teachers: 1) employ unnecessarily strict disciplinary practices that severely minimize student dialogue and communication; 2) establish problematic student groupings in the classroom that often disrupt the flow of lessons; 3) enact and reinforce oppressive rules in which students have little or no say in daily routines; 4) implement instructional practices that do not allow children to voice their thoughts/opinions; 5) demonstrate unfair and biased evaluations of a student's work and progress; and 6) maintain a communication style with children that is overly harsh and riddled with sarcasm (p.35).

Similarly, Anyon (1997) characterized the teachers at Marcy Elementary in Newark as unable to distinguish discipline from abuse. She reported that she heard

language directed at students that was filled with verbal humiliation and degradation, such as:

> Shut up!;  Get your fat head in there!;  Did I tell you to move,[ talk, smile]?; I'm sick of you; He's not worth wasting our time waiting for; Act like a human being; I'm going to get rid of you!;… "[Your] breath smell[s] like dog shit;  You're disgusting; you remind me of children I would see in a jail or something; Shut up and push those pencils.  Push those pencils – you borderline people!; Your mother's pussy smells like fish.  That's what stinks around here! (p. 29).

> If I had a gun, I'd kill you.  You're all hoodlums; Stop picking in your ear.  Go home and get a bath; Why are you so stupid!  I'm going to throw you in the garbage; Don't you have any attention span?  You have the attention span of Cheerios!; This ain't no restaurant, you know – where you go in and get what you want! [pause] You have no sense! (p. 30).

Significantly, Anyon found that such abusive language was just as likely to come from white and black teachers and administrators in this school.   She observed that even the supposedly motivational quotes that were displayed on the school's hallway bulletin boards underscored the abusive culture of the school.  For example

> If you have an open mind, chances are something will fall into it.

> The lazier we are today, the more we have to do tomorrow.

> The way to avoid lying is not to do anything that involves deception.

> It is easier to think you are right than to be right.

Don't pretend to be what you don't intend to be.

If you can't think of anything to be thankful for, you have a poor memory (p.31).

**Statement of the Problem**

The need to address the phenomenon of hopelessness of inner-city students has been met with a variety of educational policies and teaching strategies, many of which have been derived from the work of Brazilian educator and philosopher Paolo Freire (1921-1997). Freire was among "the first internationally recognized educational thinkers who fully appreciated the relationship among education, politics, imperialism, and liberation" (Steiner, Krank, McLaren, & Bahruth, 2000, p. 1). Many scholars have applied his political analyses to the context of U.S. education (Roberts, 2000). As McLaren puts it, "We need [Freire's] pedagogy of hope that guides us toward the critical road of truth, not myths, not lies. A pedagogy of hope will point us toward a world that is more harmonious, less discriminatory, more just, less dehumanizing, and more humane. A pedagogy of hope will reject our society's policy of hatred, bigotry, and division while celebrating diversity within unity" (1997, p. 304).

Especially important for this dissertation, Freire famously addressed the phenomena of hope and hopelessness in the context of education, in language that recalls Aquinas. He wrote, for instance, that educators must,

Take hope seriously and seek to embody it in their actions; they must also find ways of fostering it among their pupils and colleagues, and especially now given that so much in our world, privately, nationally, and globally is characterized by

chronic uncertainty. Because education is essentially a future oriented project concerned to bring about improvement specifically growth in the learner's knowledge and understanding, successful teaching requires practitioners to teach with hope in mind (1992, pp. 8-9).

Freire's central work in this regard was *Pedagogy of Hope* (1992); however, hope and hopelessness in education were themes throughout his oeuvre. Hope, for Freire, is "'not just a question of grit or courage. It's an ontological dimension of our human condition'" (1998, p. 47). Freire contends that humans are "hard-wired" for hopefulness, even in the most dismal and challenging settings; and though overwhelming circumstances can cause a loss of hope, it is possible to create circumstances that actually regenerate a hopeful response, and this can happen in educational settings.

For decades, educational theorists and practitioners have shown a continued interest in utilizing Freire's theoretical work on the politics of education and the phenomena of hope and hopelessness in the education of marginalized young people (Roberts, 2000, Curwin 1992). Many have argued, for instance, that, rather than reinforcing the low expectations of students who have internalized what adults have told them they are capable of doing as self-fulfilling prophecies of failure, educators who subscribe to a Freirean pedagogy can inspire young learners to higher expectations for themselves and even for their communities. In this regard, Giroux suggests that, "The goal of educated hope is not to liberate the individual from the social – a central tenet of neoliberalism – but to take seriously the notion that the individual can only be liberated through the social" (2004, p. 64).

Some of this scholarship, however, has resulted in a number of criticisms of Freire's work, for example:

1.  Those who regard education as a neutral or technical process have complained that Freire's approach "politicizes" teaching and learning unnecessarily;

2.  Freire's refusal to provide "curriculum packages" has irritated those who seek clear-cut methodological solutions to educational problems;

3.  Freire has been criticized for his focus on social class in his analyses of oppression, to the exclusion of considerations of gender and ethnicity;

4.  Some critics have argued that a Freirean pedagogy, contrary to its professed aims, constitutes a form of cultural invasion.

In spite of the controversy surrounding Freire's pedagogy, there has not been a systematic assessment of the merits of Freire's approach as it has been put into practice in U.S. schools.  In fact, few studies have directly examined the effectiveness of Freire's pedagogy of hope in meliorating hopelessness among inner-city youth and educators. Therefore, while numerous educational policies and pedagogical strategies have been implemented that explicitly or implicitly draw on Freire's pedagogy of hope, we do not know, on the whole, how effective that work has been.  This is one of the problems addressed by this dissertation.  Another, and logically prior, problem addressed here is that there is considerable confusion in the literature about what it means to practice Freire's pedagogy of hope, owing to a lack of a theoretical model of that pedagogy that is both coherent and clear enough to be operationalized in ways that can be implemented

and empirically evaluated.   This study begins to fill that gap in the literature by offering

a theoretical schema that maps significant points of Freire's theory to what is known of

the complex phenomena of hopelessness in U.S. urban schools.

## Chapter 2:  Methodology

**Purpose Statement and Research Questions**

This dissertation had two, closely-related purposes.  The first was to determine whether Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope* theoretically responds to what is known of the phenomenon of hopelessness in inner-city US schools.   This determination is an important contribution to the field of critical pedagogy and serves educators seeking guidance on which aspects of that pedagogy may be useful in their particular situations. One of the most important tasks that is necessary in order to accomplish this purpose is to construct a model of Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope* that is both coherent and clear enough to be operationalized in schools, and, for the purposes of this dissertation, to identify empirical studies of attempts to implement that pedagogy in U.S. urban schools.   The second purpose of the study was to produce a systematic evaluation of that model, by examining published critiques of Freire's work, as well as responses to these critiques, both theoretical and empirical.

In light of the problem addressed and the purposes of this study, the dissertation was guided by the following research questions:

**RQ1.** Can a model of Paolo Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope* be articulated that (1) theoretically addresses the phenomenon of hopelessness in U.S. inner-city schools, and (2) is coherent and clear enough to guide practices in schools and to guide the identification of empirical studies of such practices?

I attempted to answer this question by pursuing answers to the following three sub-questions:

**RQ1a**. What are the most salient and recurring aspects of the phenomenon of hopelessness in U.S. inner-city schools?

**RQ1b**. What are the important components of Freire's Pedagogy of Hope?  In particular:

1. What was Freire's normative philosophy of the purposes of education in relation to the phenomenon of hope?

2. What was Freire's approach of teaching and learning in regard to the phenomenon of hope?

   a) What was Freire's descriptive account of learning, in relation to the phenomena of hope and hopelessness?

   b) What was Freire's normative approach to (practical suggestions for) teaching, in relation to the phenomena of hope and hopelessness?  What practical suggestions did he recommend?  What practices did he warn against?

**RQ1c**. Which aspects of the phenomenon of hopelessness in inner-city US schools (the findings for sub-question 1) are, and are not addressed by the components of Freire's Pedagogy of Hope (the findings for sub-question 2)?

**RQ2.** What do we know so far about the merits of Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope*, as applied in U.S. urban schools, based on published critiques of Freire's writings and both theoretical and empirically-based responses to those critiques?  This

second research question will refer to the model that results from answering the

first, and will include the following sub-questions:

**RQ2a.** What are the major categories of critiques of Freire's perspective?

**RQ2b.** What counter-arguments have been made regarding the critiques?

**RQ2c.** What empirical studies, with qualitative or quantitative, have provided

evidence against the critiques?

**Research Methods for Research Question 1**

Research Question 1 called for the construction of a model of Freire's *Pedagogy*

*of Hope* that addresses the phenomenon of hopelessness in U.S. inner-city schools

described in the introduction, and that is coherent and clear enough to guide practices in

schools and guide the identification of empirical studies of such practices.  Because

Freire was a philosopher of education, and most of his writing is philosophical in nature

(supported by rich, narrative episodes), the method I used to answer this first research

question is that of philosophical textual analysis.  The American Philosophical

Association's "Statement on Research," explains that,

> Research in philosophy … often takes the form of efforts to refine analyses,
>
> develop and advance or criticize interpretations, explore alternative perspectives
>
> and new ways of thinking, suggest and apply modified or novel modes of
>
> assessment, and, in general to promote new understanding…. Philosophical
>
> research also deals with the understanding and assessment of aspects of the
>
> thinking of those who have contributed significantly to developments in the
>
> history of philosophy or of human thought. Other work in philosophy deals with

problems of social policy, normative theory, and value theory on a more applied

level (APA).

I answered this research question in three steps, the first of which was to construct a

model of the phenomenon of hopelessness in US urban schools. This step addressed the

first sub-question of my first research question:

**RQ1a.** What are the most salient and recurring aspects of the phenomenon of

hopelessness in U.S. inner-city schools?

In order to answer this question, I drew on my 29 years of experience with high school

students and teachers in the Newark, New Jersey school district, during which I

conducted numerous teacher observations and evaluations, and had countless

conversations with teachers, students and parents.  Throughout these years, I kept

journals about student behavior and what I perceived to be affecting it, as well as

different kinds of teachers' interactions with students, and what affects these seemed to

have.  I systematically reviewed my school journals and made notes of particular aspects

of student and teacher behavior that seemed to indicate hopelessness, and I used these

notes to direct my search of research literature, in order to compare my perspective on

hopelessness to perspectives in the literature, and to see what kinds of research have been

done on this phenomenon.  I searched books, journal articles, blogs, and videos.  I

attended seminars and joined web-based seminars.  I took copious notes, in the form of

double entry journals, with the source reference and synopsis of author's claim on one

side, and notes about how the claim either supported or challenged my construct, on the

other. This investigation revealed two important things: First, my initial construct of

hopelessness, based on my own observations and thinking in Newark schools, was largely confirmed in the research. My revised construct consists of the eight specific phenomena I discussed in Chapter 1: Regarding students: (1) giving up on academic work, (2) a lack of respect for the authority of the teacher and the school, (3) poor social interactions, including episodes of intense rage and acts of violence, and (4) negative self-concept, loss of self-confidence and even the desire to commit suicide. Regarding teachers: (1) feelings of stress and job dissatisfaction, (2) messages teachers communicate directly and indirectly to students about their inevitable failure, (3) a regimented teaching style that equates teaching with control and learning with submission, and (4) abusive behavior of teachers toward students. My answer to Research Question 1a constitutes a new theory of the phenomenon of hopelessness in US urban schools.

The second thing revealed in my research on the phenomenon of hopelessness was that Freire's work was cited as foundational to both theoretical and empirical studies of the eight phenomena I found, more than any other educational philosopher or theorist. This confirmed my appreciation of the importance of Freire's work for my research.

The second part of my first research question included three sub-parts:

**RQ1b**. What are the important components of Freire's Pedagogy of Hope? In particular:

(1) What was Freire's normative philosophy of the purposes of education in relation to the phenomenon of hope?

(2) What was Freire's descriptive account of learning, in relation to the phenomena of hope and hopelessness?

(3)  What was Freire's normative approach to (practical suggestions for) teaching, in relation to the phenomena of hope and hopelessness? What practical suggestions did he recommend? What practices did he warn against?

My first step in answering this Research Question was to select the texts I would analyze in order to construct a model of Freire's Pedagogy of Hope. I selected the following texts from Freire's oeuvre and a small set of secondary sources (all of which I had read and had taken notes on, in preparation for my proposal), based on the criteria (1) that they directly address Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope*, and (2) that they were authored by Freire himself or by recognized authorities on Freire's work.

Works by Freire (in chronological order):

1.  *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970)

2.  *Pedagogy in Process: The Letters to Guinea- Bissau* (1978)

3.  *The Politics of Education* (1985)

4.  *A Pedagogy for Liberation: Dialogues on transforming education*, coauthored with Ira Shor (1987)

5.  *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World* coauthored with Donaldo Macedo (1987)

6.  *Learning to Question: A Pedagogy of Liberation,* coauthored with Antonio Faundez (1989)

7.  *We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on Education and Social Change,* coauthored with Myles Horton (1990)

8. *Paulo Freire on Higher Education: A Dialogue at the National University of Mexico* (Escobar, Fernandez, and Guevara-Niebla, with Freire, 1994)

9. *Pedagogy of the City* (1993)

10. *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1994)

11. *Letters to Cristina: Reflections on My Life and Work* (1996)

12. *Mentoring the Mentor: A Critical Dialogue with Paulo Freire* (Freire, Fraser, Macedo, McKinnon, and Stokes, 1997)

13. *Teachers as Cultural Workers: Letters to Those Who Dare Teach* (1998)

14. *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage* (1998).

Works by noted Freiri scholars:

15. *A Teacher's of Success among Non-Elite Children in an Heterogeneous Urban Setting* (Statzer, 1995)

16. *Deadly Symbiosis: When Ghetto and prison Meet and mesh* (Wacquant, 2001)

17. *Renewing and Reinventing Freire: A Source of Inspiration in Inner-City Youth Education* (Noguera, 2007)

The next step was to perform the analysis of these texts that would result in a model of Freire's Pedagogy of Hope. Pedagogy is a normative approach to teaching, informed by a descriptive account of learning and by a normative philosophy of the purposes of education. I therefore constructed a matrix to organize my analysis in terms of these three aspects of Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope*. As I read each work, I took notes

regarding these sub-questions:

1. What was Freire's normative philosophy of the purposes of education in relation to the phenomenon of hope? (How many different purposes can I identify, and how do they relate to each other?)

2. What was Freire's descriptive account of learning, in relation to the phenomena of hope and hopelessness?

3. What was Freire's normative approach to (practical suggestions for) teaching, in relation to the phenomena of hope and hopelessness? What practical suggestions did he recommend? What practices did he warn against?

In analyzing text passages relevant to each of these questions, I was looking for inconsistencies, contradictions and ambiguities, as well as for clarity and coherence. The model I initially constructed of Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope* consisted of these three sections, based on my initial reading of the works cited above. As I re-read these works, I re-examined these sections and considered whether they needed to be modified or added to. Within each section I enumerated as many discrete components as I had found in the literature, took notes on how they related to each other and if I noticed any tensions among them. I identified any ambiguities, inconsistencies or other theoretical problems I discovered.

As I developed the sections of this model, I also kept a list of key terms that I could use to search for qualitative studies of implementations of Freire's Pedagogy of Hope in U.S. urban schools. From my reading of these texts, I noted the following as search terms: *American*, *education, Freire, hope, hopelessness, inner-city, pedagogy,*

*school(s), study/ies, urban, qualitative, U.S./United+States*.   Additionally, keywords were used that intersect with other areas, such as:  politics of urban education, criticism of urban education, liberation and pedagogy, dialogical pedagogy, pedagogy and praxis, pedagogy and democracy, decentralization of education, failures inner-city education, successful inner-city schools, multicultural education in inner-city schools, stewardship in education, rigor in inner-city schools, access to knowledge in inner-city schools, attitudes about inner-city education, teacher training, educational equity in inner-city schools, and U.S.A and illiteracy/literacy.

**Research Methods for Research Question 2**

Research Question 2 called for an evaluation of the critiques of Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope*, as applied in U.S. urban schools.   This began with a new search of the literature in search of such critiques, and was followed by a categorization of the critiques and a search for responses to them. While most of the responses were theoretical arguments, there have been a few empirical studies of the effectiveness of certain methods proposed by Freire, which constitute important responses to certain critiques. The most useful empirical studies of school practices addressing hopelessness and drawing on Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope* are qualitative studies that provide rich details about particular sites. The results of qualitative research frequently provide more broad-based findings that are beyond the original focus of a study (Anzul, Evans, King, & Tellier-Robinson, 2001, p. 235).

In fact, however, my literature review uncovered fewer empirical studies than expected relating to the efficacy of Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope* in US urban schools. If

this research has uncovered close to the entire body of empirical work on Freire's theories, then there is a clear need for more extensive empirical research. There will also be the need to continue the work I have begun in this dissertation, of locating and analyzing such studies, as a consequence of my theoretical analysis. In this regard, my work in this dissertation constitutes only the beginning of an important, ongoing project.

**Stage 1: Developing a research question**. This has been accomplished, in that Research Question 2 was developed in constructing my response to the problem I described in my introduction. The research question and its sub-questions were modified as I completed the subsequent stages of this study (Timulak and Creaner, 2013).

**Stage 2. Identifying and selecting relevant original studies.** My protocol for identifying studies has two parts: a strategy for finding relevant studies and selection criteria.

**Stage 2, Part 1: Data-gathering strategy.** Relevant studies were located through a strategic search of literature, beginning with five databases of academic research: Proquest Education, HighBeam, EBSCO, ERIC and Ed.Gov. These databases provided access to hundreds of the most reputable journals in education theory and practice, including coverage of the literature on primary, secondary and higher education, and including special education, home schooling and adult education. However, my search excluded studies of higher education, home schooling and adult education. When I was not able to find enough from these databases to conduct a meaningful analysis, I extended my search to include four additional databases: *JSTOR*, *PsycINFO,* and *UMI ProQuest Digital*

*Dissertations*. In addition to looking for original studies, I also examined reviews of articles mentioned in relevant analysis and narrative syntheses.

In my initial search of these databases, l utilized the thesaurus of search terms I developed in my analysis for Research Question 1. Once I found five studies, I interrupted my search to read them over to discover if they contained additional search terms that would help me find additional relevant studies. The keyword *hope* was paired with additional combinations of the terms, such as: philosophy of hope, hope and education, function of hope, hope and school counseling, hope theory, social learning, emotional learning, power of hope, hope and desire, hope and motivation, hope and despair, perceptions of hope, socio-emotional learning, emotional intelligence, social intelligence, motivation and hope, hope and achievement performance, academic achievement, academic success.

It was not possible to rely solely on electronic sources to find sufficient relevant studies, so in my search for sources I manually searched in 'grey' literature (Thorne et al., 2004), such as related research questions, titles, book chapters, reference lists in articles, and abstracts and journals I examined references from these reviews in order to distinguish studies that could possibly meet the criteria for my study.

**Stage 2, Part 2: Criteria for Selecting Reviews.** I used three criteria for selecting sources to include in my analysis: I only included texts (1) of teaching and policy strategies (2) implemented in U.S. primary and secondary schools, that

(3) directly reference one or more of the aspects of Freire's Pedagogy of Hope that I delineated in response to my first research question.   At the end of the literature search process, I found enough sources that I did not need to take additional steps.

**Stage 3: Appraisal of empirical studies.**   This process required appraising the methodological features of the original studies, including their theoretical frameworks, findings, limitations, sampling procedures, methods of data collection and data analysis, and credibility checks (Timulak and Creaner, 2013).  In doing so, I followed the guidelines for assessing qualitative primary research in Noblit and Hare (1988). This approach allowed me to "compare and analyze text, creating new interpretations in the process" (Noblit & Hare, 1988, p. 9).   These included evaluating the validity of data by triangulation and determining whether the findings can be generalized beyond settings in which they were generated.  Because the validity or generalization were not strong enough for all forty-eight 48 papers found, five (5) duplicate papers were discarded, forty-three (43) papers were critically appraised, and a total of twenty-one (21) relevant publications were identified and selected for review through the above search process.

**Stage 4: Preparing data.** I carefully extracted the arguments and findings from each publication, so that I had a tidy set of data to analyze.  In doing so, I took the following steps recommended by Timulak and Creaner (2013):

a)  Find the findings in each study.  Mostly these were in the results section, but the studies had other interesting details that are relevant to RQ2 that I used as data.

b) "Once anything that might be considered as a relevant finding of a study is localized, gathered all such findings (these served as the data for the meta-analysis) and organized them into meaning units. A meaning unit is a summary of the finding in the form of a brief statement or paragraph that conveys the meaning of the reported finding" (Timulak and Creaner, 2013, p. 99).

c) I conducted steps (a) and (b) once, then decided whether I needed to go back and consider aspects of a study that I was alerted to by some other study but did not originally identify as a finding.

I am aware that it usually takes two independent reviewers to scrutinize the original studies and examine their results sections, to do a credible analysis, but I did not have that option, so that was a limitation of my study.

**Stage 5: Data analysis.** In my analysis, I made some generalizations about the merits of Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope* as applied in U.S. urban schools. Timulak and Creaner (2013) suggested to: "utilize a flexible analytical strategy, based on comparison, abstraction, observation of similarities and differences among the original studies, while trying to retain contextual influences and detail in the findings. Categories or themes were generated through the comparison of meaning units" (2013, p. 99). I read over the meaning units developed in the previous stage numerous times until I started to see some patterns emerging such as regarding which parts of Freire's Pedagogy of Hope seem to work and which do not, and about notable exceptions that arise to those generalizations.

**Stage 6: Credibility checks.** I took several steps to boost the credibility of my analysis, including:

a) Transparency: I kept a detailed record of my thinking, including thoughts, feelings, ideas, questions and hypotheses that occurred to me as I performed each step, and I make reference to that record in my dissertation chapters so that my readers can make their own judgment about how much my personal bias or perspective influenced my work.

b) Self-Audit. Once I had formulated my findings, I then reviewed that transparency record I made for each of the previous stages, to check if there was anything in that record that needed to be re-considered or re-done, to verify my potential findings.

c) Cross-checking. When I had my list of potential findings of my analysis, I then did another read-through of all the findings from the studies, to double-check them against my potential findings, considering what I might have missed, and what might have needed to be revised.

## Chapter 3: Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of Hope

The first purpose of this dissertation was to determine whether Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of Hope theoretically responds to what is known of the phenomenon of hopelessness in inner-city US schools. To make that determination it was necessary to construct a model of Freire's Pedagogy of Hope that is both coherent and clear enough to be operationalized in schools. My research addressing this purpose is guided by the following research questions, around which this chapter is organized:

1. What was Freire's normative philosophy of the purposes of education in relation to the phenomenon of hope?

2. What was Freire's descriptive account of learning, in relation to the phenomena of hope and hopelessness?

3. What was Freire's normative approach to teaching, in relation to the phenomena of hope and hopelessness?

**Freire's Philosophy of Education and the Phenomenon of Hope**

Freire held that learning begins with taking "the self" as the first object of knowledge (2005), and that education facilitates this acquisition of both self-knowledge and knowledge of the world through a sense of "epistemological curiosity" (2005, p.57). This knowledge "emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other" (Freire, 2005, p. 51). Thus, Freire's normative philosophy of education derives from his understanding of the human condition, which is that human

beings are (perpetually) unfinished beings in a world that is also (perpetually) unfinished, and "it is our incompleteness, of which we are aware as a permanent [eternal] process, in which education is grounded" (Freire, 1998, p.58). For Freire, it is not education that makes us educable, that is, susceptible to learning. Rather, our "Educability is grounded in the inherent unfinishedness of the human condition and in our consciousness of this unfinished state" (Freire, 1998, p. 100).

> *[P]roblem-posing education affirms human beings in the process of becoming - as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality . . . [P]eople know themselves to be unfinished; [and] they are aware of their incompletion. In this incompletion and this awareness lay the very roots of education. The unfinished character of human beings and the transformational character of reality necessitate that education be an ongoing activity (Freire, 2000, p. 84).*

Education is the process by which human beings "read the world," that is, become aware of their own unfinishedness (there is always more I can learn) and of the unfinishedness of the world (things can always be different), and work on the self and on the world. Education is simply the process by which we keep growing the self and keep changing the world. One way Freire described this process is that education is the practice of freedom (Freire, 1976). Another way he described it is that education is nothing less than becoming human, or the process of humanization. But that process always has those four aspects: critical awareness of self as unfinished and critical awareness of world as changeable and constructive work on the self and constructive

work on the world. In Freire's work, the word "critical" means, with an eye to what is right and wrong, true, and false, just and unjust, so that critical awareness always comes with an agenda for improvement, reconstruction, or constructive work to be done.

**Becoming critically aware of the self as unfinished.** According to Freire (2000) an individual's notion of self is socially and culturally   constructed over time.  Similarly, William James (2000) contended that consciousness is not a *thing*, but a *function* and a relationship between thought and thing, subject and object, reason and desire, etc.  James also suggested that our subjectivity is best understood as residing in and flowing from our concrete historical and cultural circumstances.  Therefore, awareness of oneself as unfinished drives from our efforts to probe, expose and understand our own subjectivity including preferences, fears, agency, and personal biases.

In education and elsewhere, interactions between individuals whose upbringing and experiences are different is unavoidable, and for this reason, becoming aware of the self as unfinished is essential for both teachers and students.  This awareness allows one to perceive and acknowledge oneself as both "affecting and being affected by others" (Kondrat, 1999, p.18).  As a purpose of education, becoming aware of the self as unfinished begins with facilitating student engagement in a process of analyzing and evaluating their own experiences with and in the world around them.  This process enables students to challenge what they perceive as true and false, right and wrong, just and unjust, beautiful and ugly – in essence, to think.  In addition, becoming *critically* aware of the self as unfinished allows individuals to contest, redefine, and re-narrate their existence and relationships to their circumstances, in terms of both their own judgments

about what is true, just, right, and beautiful, and in terms of the kind of person they wish to become in relation to what is true, etc.

Freire's term *conscientization* refers to this process of becoming aware of one's political and social conditions, especially in preparation for challenging and changing what is unjust or immoral about them. *C*onscientization is a portmanteau, a combination of *conscience*, involving an awareness of right and wrong, and consciousness, a perceptive and intelligent awareness of oneself and one's world (Freire, 1998, p.55). Accordingly, an individual's critical consciousness is "never a mere reflection of, but a reflection upon material reality" (1985, p. 69). Additionally, Freire claims that conscientization "is one of the roads we have to follow, if we are to deepen our awareness of our world, of facts, of events, of the demands of human consciousness to develop our capacity for epistemological curiosity" (Freire, 1998, p. 55). Conscientization also involves a meta-awareness of one's powers of reflection, problem-posing, exploration, and action. For example, when those who are oppressed acquiesce to their oppression, they develop a seemingly immutable emotional dependence on their oppressors. Conversely, when conscientization occurs, individuals come to know themselves as capable of growth and begin to strive for liberation. Freire is clear that it is only through the critically conscious participation of masses of people in their own liberation that dehumanization can end (2000, p. 33).

Freire contends that "conscientization occurs within the literacy or post-literacy process" (1985, p. 59) which involves practices of unearthing real needs and existing obstacles to fulfilling them, dialogue, and problem-solving. If children cannot think on

their own and make such critical self-assessments, they are more susceptible to being dominated by others, thus destroying their efficacy and their sense of self. Plainly put by Freire, "Education as the exercise of domination stimulates the credulity of students, with the ideological intent (often not perceived by educators) of indoctrinating them to adapt to the world of oppression" (2000, p. 139). In contrast, an education that involves engaging in a cyclic, critical assessment of self enables students to actualize themselves as moral and reasonable human beings and thus to be agents of their own human identity. Subsequently, "as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality," students are in a position to re-articulate their purposes and their participation in the process of self-transformation (Freire, 2000, p. 45).

For this to happen, however, teachers need to be willing to step away from the classroom board, close their teacher's edition textbooks, and step towards their class with an open mind. A schism has been created between teachers and students because it is believed that teachers know everything and students know nothing. In Freire's words,

> The teacher's thinking is authenticated only by the authenticity of the students' thinking. The teacher cannot think for his students, nor can he impose his thought on them. Authentic thinking, thinking that is concerned about reality, does not take place in ivory tower isolation, but only in communication. If it is true that thought has meaning only when generated by action upon the world, the subordination of students to teachers becomes impossible (2000, p. 130).

Consider a too-typical scenario in which students sit neatly in classroom rows with their backs turned to their peers, but facing the back of their teacher who either

remains planted at the front of the classroom spitting out facts and scribbling points to be remembered on the board, or sits at the teacher's desk rhythmically clicking through a PowerPoint of prepackaged information. Students in this situation may develop a self-perception of being "unfinished" in the sense of being empty or devoid of knowledge or intelligence, but cannot develop the kind of critical self-awareness of being agents of their own growth that Freire proposed as a purpose of education. The latter can only happen in a classroom setting in which students sit facing each other, challenging ideas amongst their peers and their teachers alike. In effect, becoming critically aware of the self as unfinished expedites praxis. That is, critical awareness of self as unfinished leads us to self-reflection and self-evaluation, which leads us to examining one's place in the world, which inevitably leads to transformation of oneself and one's world.

**Becoming critically aware of the world as unfinished and changeable.** Freire wrote that the "'critical' dimension of consciousness accounts for the goals men assign to their transforming acts upon the world" (Freire, 1985, p. 69 – 70). To achieve its liberatory purposes, education must involve students in "the dialectical movement back and forth between consciousness and world" (Freire, 2005, p. 104). This involves what Freire called learning to "read the world."

> Reading the world always precedes reading the word, and reading the word
> implies continually reading the world. As I suggested earlier, this movement
> from the world to the word and from the word to the world is always present,
> even the spoken word flows from our reading of the world. In a way, however,
> we can go further, and say that reading the word is not preceded merely by

reading the world, but by a certain form of *writing* it or *rewriting* it, that is, of transforming it by means of conscious practical work (Freire & Macedo, 1987, p. 23).

However, seeing the world as unfinished is different from being *critically* aware of its potential for remaking. Concomitant with the ability to read the world is the ability to recognize injustice and oppression, and to learn how to work against them. Becoming socially aware, recognizing that a problem exists, and changing the way in which individuals view their social reality to understand the problem and how it can be addressed, is an act of liberation. This often involves understanding how humans' political discourse has been taken hostage by an overarching ideology of oppression. It is in waking up to social injustice that the potential to transform social reality most abounds, thus making liberation an overarching purpose of education. As Freire expounds:

> Human existence cannot be silent, nor can it be nourished by false words, but only by true words, with which men and women transform the world. To exist, humanly, is to name the world, to change it. Once named, the world, in its turn reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new naming. Human beings are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection. (1970, p. 88).

The objective in this kind of education is "to make the students unquietly critical, challenging them to understand that the world that is being presented as given is, in fact, a world being made and, for this very reason, can be changed, transformed, reinvented"

(Freire, 1993, p. 24). The teacher's responsibility in this kind of education is much more than broadcasting information, or teaching literacy divorced from conscientization:

> How can I teach . . . without helping them understand the reasons why thirty-three million of them are dying of hunger? . . . I think teaching peasants how to read the word hunger and to look it up in the dictionary is not sufficient. They also need to know the reasons behind their experience of hunger.... What I would have to tell these thirty-three million peasants is that to die from hunger is not a predetermined destiny. I would have to share with them that to die from hunger is a social anomaly. It is not a biological issue. It is a crime that is practiced by the capitalist economy of Brazil against thirty-three million peasants. I need to also share with them that the Brazilian economy is not an autonomous entity. It is a social production, a social production that is amoral and diabolical and should be considered a crime against humanity (Freire & Macedo, 1995, p. 379).

Critical awareness of the world as unfinished requires the examination of the racial, cultural, class and gender attitudes and stereotyping that evolves out of individual's cultural, racial, socio-economic, sexual/gender identification. That examination should uncover positions of privilege and under-privilege in each of these domains, as well as the causes of these inequalities. This is not something that comes naturally to students (or teachers) who are the creatures of cultural habits that tend to make people blind to injustice. In point of fact, Freire contends that "as women and men, simultaneously reflecting on themselves and world, increase the scope of their perception, they begin to direct their observations towards previously inconspicuous

phenomena" (Freire, 2005, p. 10).  Hence, a liberating education fosters this kind of

critical reflection in combination with praxis, that is, the process of reflection and action

(Freire, 2005).  Indeed, a "liberating education consists in acts of cognition, not

transferals of information.  It is a learning situation, in which the cognizable object (far

from being the end of the cognitive act) intermediates the cognitive actors – teacher on

the one hand and students on the other" (Freire, 2005, p. 106).

Freire has made it clear that an important correlation exists between advancing

and deepening the democratic socialist project and our access to discourses that

encourage self-reflexivity about the literalness and otherwise unrecognized and passively

accepted meanings of our own reality and those of our fellow human beings. He argues

that we need to understand the historical contexts, social practices, cultural forms, and

ideologies that give these discourses shape and meaning. Freire teaches that

contradictions in the larger social order have parallels in individual experience and that

educators for liberation must restore the political relation between pedagogy and the

language of everyday life (McLaren & Leonard, 1993, p. 53).

For Freire "conscientization is natural because unfinishedness is integral to the

phenomenon of life itself, which besides women and men includes the cherry trees in my

garden and the birds that sing in their branches" (Freire, 1998, p. 55).  Awareness of

oneself and the world are mutually dependent and perpetually unfinished.  Freire

contends, "if it is true that consciousness is impossible without the world that constitutes

it, it is equally true that this world is impossible, if the world itself in constituting

consciousness does not become an object of its critical reflection" (1985, p. 69).

Conscientization, or critical awareness of oneself and the world occur simultaneously.

**Constructive work on the unfinished self.** In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire

argues that "education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate

integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about

conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women

deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the

transformation of their world" (2000, p.34). According to Freire, education can either

serve as a tool that is used to expedite obedience and enable the assimilation of students

and teachers into an oppressive system, or serve as a means to for them to practice

freedom. That practice includes constructive work on the self as unfinished and full of

potential, which also enables individuals to participate creatively and consciously in the

transformation of their world. According to Freire (2000), education is political in part

because it presents the opportunity and the conditions for students' constructive work on

the self as unfinished, consisting of the opportunity to critically self-reflect, self-manage,

and ultimately to achieve the capacity to act in any given environment with full agency.

This is not to say that there will not been a great deal of struggle in order to achieve such

change, however, such is the nature of change: it does not come easy (Freire, 2000). This

constructive work on the self, in turn, strengthens the awareness of the self as an agent in

generating transformation.

While people have no choice as to which race, sex, gender, or social and

economic status into which they are born, constructive work on the self by means of

reflection and action allows them to move past their ontological reality to create new opportunities. Constructive work on the self both presupposes and strengthens a person's self-awareness of agency. *"No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption." (Freire, 1970, p. 54)* Transformation and liberation cannot simply be willed or declared into existence by another; but can only be achieved by means of constructive work on the self, which requires effort, determination, and persistence.

Freire argued that constructive work on the self necessarily involves "discovering [oneself] to be an oppressor," which requires identifying and addressing issues that are "objectively verifiable," such as inequalities of "an unjust social order," and the oppressor's "false generosity, which is nourished by death, despair, and poverty" (2006, p. 50). For Freire, "The oppressor is in solidarity with the oppressed only when he stops regarding the oppressed as an abstract category and sees them as persons who have been unjustly dealt with, deprived of their voice, cheated in the sale of their labor – when he stops making pious, sentimental, and individualistic gestures and an act of love" (Freire, 2006, p.50). Thus, the central concern in doing constructive work on self, as proposed by Freire, is getting individuals to recognize "the way things are" and transforming those oppressive ideologies that engendered those beliefs in the first place (2006, p. 68).

However, for Freire, constructive work on self involves more than identifying, defining what is unjust, immoral, or ugly in one's thinking, speech, desires, or actions.

One must work to change that so that as a person, one becomes more just, moral, and so

forth. For Freire, this is achieved "not through intellectual effort alone but through praxis

– through the authentic union of action and reflection" (Freire, 2006, p. 48).

> True generosity consists precisely in fighting to destroy the causes which nourish
>
> false charity. . . True generosity lies in striving so that these hands – whether of
>
> individuals or entire peoples – need be extended less and less in supplication, so
>
> that more and more they become human hands which work and, in working,
>
> transform the world. This lesson and this apprenticeship must come, however,
>
> from the oppressed themselves and those who are truly in solidarity with them . . .
>
> They will not gain this liberation by chance but through the praxis of their quest
>
> for it . . . (Freire, 2006, p. 45).

**Constructive work on the unfinished world.** Freire explains that "a more

critical understanding of the situation of oppression does not yet liberate the

oppressed. But the revelation is a step in the right direction…. The person who has this

understanding can engage in a political struggle for the transformation of the concrete

conditions in which the oppression prevails" (Freire, 2000, p.23). Education, as a

political and social practice, provides the awareness, skills and social interactions that

enable students to explore themselves and the world as unfinished, while expanding and

deepening their understanding of their ability to perform constructive work on the world

and the promise of transformation. In fact, for Freire, education, as a process that creates

critical awareness and collective action, is nothing less than engaging in this constructive

work on the world. For Freire, that work demands far more from students than rote

learning that is coupled with the acquisition of "core" skills. Freire is quite adamant that education, optimally, is not about strict adherence to unyielding methods or set techniques, nor does it involve repression, coercion, or indoctrination. Constructive work on the world means consistently engaging in questioning, analyzing, and evaluating one's social and personal experiences with the world in order to undertake transforming it, from a perspective of conscientization and a position of agency.

Moreover, for Freire, education as constructive work on the world requires that students' experience, personal stories, and daily lives become integral parts of school lessons and classroom learning activities so that students come to understand the limits often imposed on them by their conditions while developing "a deepened consciousness of their situation … as an historical reality susceptible of transformation." (2000, p. 52). This means that the transformative work done by students on their world cannot be dictated by the school or the teacher. "No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption" (Freire, 2000, p.54).

Hope is both a requirement and a result of education as constructive work on the world. Hope is the state of being critically aware of oneself and the world, because it means there is still a chance to work on both. Indeed, "it is our awareness of being unfinished, principally, it is our understanding that there is more to learn, that things can be different, and that things can change that makes us eternal seekers. Eternal, because of Hope" (Freire, 1998, p. 58). Essentially, hope arises from humans "eternal" or perpetual

search, which is a result of beings' incompleteness (Freire, 1998). As Freire explained, "the absence of hope is not the normal way to be human" (1998, p.68). "Hope is a natural, possible, and necessary impetus in the context of our unfinishedness," and "hope-giving search" is one of the fruits of our unfinishedness; a fruit that, according to Freire, begins as knowledge and with time transforms into wisdom" (1998, pp.58 - 69). Thus, according to Freire, hope is a fundamental foundation of our educational practice and preparation. Furthermore, Freire proposes that "it would be a grave contradiction of what we are if, aware of our unfinishedness, we were not disposed to participate in a constant movement of search, which is its very nature an expression of hope" (1998, p.68).

Clearly, Freire regards education as the process of raising one's awareness of the potential in oneself for liberation, and the potential in one's world for transformation. In this regard, he suggests that "we should devote ourselves humbly but perseveringly to our profession in all its aspects: scientific formation, ethical rectitude, respect for others, coherence, a capacity to live with and learn from what is different, and an ability to relate to others without letting our ill-humor or our antipathy get in the way of our balanced judgment of the facts (Freire, 2001, p. 24). Accordingly, Freire contends that the purpose of education, in the context to the phenomenon of hope, should be the practice of freedom, making individuals capable to look critically at the world and enabling them to change it.

**Freire's Theory of Learning in Relation to Hope**

Because individuals are incomplete beings (Freire, 1998), the humanization and dehumanization of individuals is possible. Correspondingly, if the fundamental purpose of education, as discussed, the previous section, is to foster in individuals an understanding of the human condition, then any educator or educational system that ignores the history or the perspective of its learners, or that does not to adjust its teaching practices to benefit those unique learners is impeding their learning and humanization. This amounts to inequality of opportunity (Freire, 1991, 1998).

Accordingly, it is impossible to discuss Freire's descriptive account of learning, in relation to the phenomena of hope and hopelessness, "without talking about respect for students, for the dignity that is in the process of coming to be, for the identities that are in the process of construction, [and] without taking into consideration the conditions in which they are living and the importance of the knowledge derived from life experience, which they bring with them to school (Freire, 1998, p.62). Freire further suggests: "One of the tasks of the progressive educator, through a serious correct political analysis, is to unveil opportunities for hope no matter what the obstacles may be" (1992, p. 9). In this regard, Freire emphasizes that teachers must teach the way people learn if they do not learn the way the teachers teach and this frequently requires considering the entire constellation of those factors that comprise the overall human condition:

> What I have said and re-said, untiringly, is that we must not bypass . . . that which
> educands, be they children coming to school for the first time, or young people
> and adults at centers of popular education, bring with them in the way of an

understanding of the world, in the most varied dimensions of their own practice in

the social practice of which they are a part. Their speech, their way of counting

and calculating, their ideas about the so-called other world, their religiousness,

their knowledge about health, the body, sexuality, life, death, the power of the

saints, magic spells, must all be respected. (1994, p. 85)

Correspondingly, as described by Freire, "one of the essential tasks of the teaching

process is to introduce the learners to the methodological exactitude with which they

should approach the learning process" (1998, p. 69).

As opined by Newark, N.J. Mayor Ras Baraka, "We have a lot of people coming

out of these schools that know how to pass a test but can't think" (AFSA Blog on July 25,

2015). "The oppressed, having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his

guidelines, are fearful of freedom" (AFSA Blog on July 25, 2015). Students in urban

schools have become schooled into passively storing the information deposited into them

and consequently, their critical consciousness that would help them intervene in the

world has become dormant. As argued by Freire (1998), educators and educational

systems that consider banking to be the most expedient learning process do not realize

that they are serving only to dehumanize the learners and the teachers. For example, a

supervisor with the Hackensack Board of Education issued the following mandate to

ELA Teachers:

In preparation for the PARCC, please discuss with your team a plan to provide the

students with PARCC readiness practice lessons. The 2/22 and 3/7 PLC

guidelines sent to all the grades asked each team to create and introduce an RST

to present to the students the week of 3/7.  Unfortunately, after reviewing the

lesson plans this week, it was noted that this was not followed across all grade

levels.  The follow up guidelines for 3/7 asked that your respective team complete

3-4 prompts detailing 1 prompt per week in your plans moving forward....  In an

effort to ensure that everyone is on the same page I am asking that each team do

the following: All teams need to plan on covering a PARCC prompt each week

leading up to the PARCC testing date....  For example, this week, your lesson

plans should have noted 5 days of instruction for the RST.  This task would

require the students to receive step by step guidance to fully understand the

process.  The expectation is that the curriculum will still be followed.  However,

evidence of the infusion of PARCC readiness skills should be included in all

lesson plans….  Remember to include multiple choice in your planning as well....

Note that walk-throughs will be conducted to assess how students are responding

to the test prep exposure and to provide you with support as well (Soto-Holland,

2016).

 In this instance, using the banking concept by way of teaching to the PARCC test, these

educators are ignoring the fact that humans learn by problematizing their experience and

then doing inquiry into the problems they see (Freire, 1998).  "Pedagogy . . . subordinated

to the narrow regime of teaching to the test coupled with an often harsh system of

disciplinary control, both of which mutually reinforce each other," reduces classroom

teachers to the status of mere "technicians" (Giroux, 2010, p. 1).  For Freire "teaching

cannot be a process of transference of knowledge from the one teaching to the learner.

This is the mechanical transference from which results machinelike memorization ....

Critical study correlates with teaching that is equally critical, which necessarily demands

a critical way of comprehending and of realizing the reading of the word and that of the

world, the reading of text and of context" (1998, p. 22).

What educators must accept is that thinking is not to be found in the precinct of a

carefully penned lesson plan or a teacher's edition textbook. According to Freire,

thinking must be produced by the learner in communion with the teacher. Problem-

posing does not dichotomize the activity of teacher from that of the student. In problem-

posing, the students – no longer docile listeners – are now critical co-investigators in

dialogue with the teacher. The teacher presents the material to the students for their

consideration, and re-considers her earlier considerations as the students express their

own. Students, as they are increasingly posed with problems relating to themselves in the

world and with the world, will feel increasingly challenged and obliged to respond to that

challenge (1998, p.43).

Freire elaborates on the principles and practices inherent to the banking concept,

which can be found in almost any inner-city school:

(a) [T]he teacher teaches and the students are taught; (b) the teacher knows

everything and the students know nothing; (c) the teacher thinks and the students

are thought about (d) the teacher talks and the students listen–meekly; (e) the

teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined (f) the teacher chooses and

enforces his choice, and the students comply; (g) the teacher acts and the students

have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher; (h) the teacher chooses

the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it; (i) the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which she and he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students; (j) the teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects (1970, p. 73).

If it is assumed that the teacher knows all and the student is an empty vessel to be filled with the teacher's knowledge, then the students can only have their intellectual being actualized through the teacher, who sets the parameters for the so-called learning process within the classroom. When this happens, the student can only act in accordance with the *Thou Shalts* (Nietzsche, 1886; 1973; 2003) established by the teacher. If the student is to learn it must be in accordance with what the teacher has established as permissible. The effect of the banking concept of education is that students lose their intellectual authenticity and become mere duplicates of the teacher.

As models of teaching and learning, banking theory and practice, as immobilizing and fixating forces, fail to acknowledge men and women as historical beings; whereas problem-posing theory and practice take the people's historicity as their starting point (Freire, 2005). Within the structure of the Banking Process, the learner is solely the object of the learning process, but not the subject. "The students are not called upon to know, but to memorize the contents narrated by the teacher. Nor do the students practice any act of cognition, since the object towards which that act should be directed is the property of the teacher rather than a medium evoking the critical reflection of both teacher and students" (Freire, 2005, p. 51). "Hence in the name of the 'preservation of

and knowledge' we have a system which achieves neither true knowledge nor true culture" (Freire, 2000, p.80). Under these conditions, knowledge is consumed without any criticism, and the learners experience a cultural alienation and become defenseless against cultural imperialism (Freire, 2005; Mayo, 2011; Druakoglu, 2013). "The students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating the teacher issues communiques and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat" (Freire, 2011, p. 51). The scope of action allowed to the students in the banking concept of education extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits (Freire, 2011).

This banking concept of learning is surreptitiously based on the assumption that there is a division between the individual and the world. According to this assumption, the individual merely exists in the world, but is not as one with the world (Freire, 1998; 2000). Furthermore, this assumption rejects that the individual is a sentient (intellectual) being. If learning is based on this assumption, it causes "alienation" and hopelessness rather than humanization (Freire, 2000; Druakoglu, Bicer and Zabun, 2013).

Freire (1998, 2000) describes the banking approach to education as dehumanizing and designed to serve the purpose of the oppressors. His account of that approach to education is clarified the following quotations:

1. "In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others ... negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry. The teacher presents himself to his students as

their necessary opposite; by considering their ignorance absolute, he justifies his own existence.... The teacher teaches and the students are taught; the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing" (Freire, 2000, p. 58).

2. "Those truly committed to liberation must reject the banking notion . . . adopting instead a concept of men as conscious beings.... They must abandon the goal of deposit-making and replace it with the posing of the problems of men in their relations with the world" (Freire, 2000, p. 66).

In relation to learning and antithetical to hopelessness, hope, is humanizing for it can, potentially, foster safe spaces for creative possibilities to improve the classroom practices of inner-city teachers and students. However, most importantly, hope does not mean sitting and passively waiting for answers, remedies, , or solutions to be deposited in one's grasp. Beings can have hope only if they struggle (Freire, 1998; 2000). Within the context of learning, the struggle is exemplified in the framework of a problem posing education.

In summary, Freire's elucidation of problem-posing education incorporates a theory of learning that includes the following principles:

1. The activity of learning presupposes a (classroom) environment that demonstrates or cultivates an understanding of the learner's history and learning needs.

2. The activity of learning presupposes that the learner's physical, physical and socio-emotional wellbeing are protected and nurtured in such a way as to reinforce the learner's dignity and to create social bonds between the teacher and learner and among the other learners.

3. Learning takes place as a response to the identification by the learner of her or his felt needs, both in relation to problems and opportunities in her or his lived experience, and to relevant information that is both known and unknown.

4. Learning is never the mere acquisition of new ideas, value commitments or skills, but is always an extension and reconstruction of previous ideas, value commitments and skills.

5. Learning is a response to the recognition that one's previous knowledge and/or values are inadequate to new problems and opportunities that have arisen in one's experience.

**Freire's Normative Approach to Teaching, in Relation to the Phenomenon of Hope**

Freire warned against "fast track" approaches to teacher education that fail to provide new teachers with sufficient pedagogical training and support (1998, pp. 23 and 46). In this regard, Kirylo and McNulty (2011) note that,

> These types of programs focus on 'teacher training.' Teachers become mere 'technicians' who uncritically abide by a standardized or a one-size-fits-all model of doing things. In short, the trivialization of teacher education programs and the emphasis on fast-track programs ominously minimize the complex art and science of teaching, the importance of human development theories, the nature of learning and knowledge, the impact of social and cultural forces on teaching and learning, critical thinking, the theory-practice connection, and the inherent political nature of education" (p. 315).

The practical pedagogical suggestions Freire made must be understood in this larger context of a teacher education that is theoretically rich, politically committed, and open to the needs, concerns, and insights of teachers themselves.

In all of the primary and secondary literature I studied in relation to this research question, I was able to identify four distinct normative approaches or practical educational practices to teaching Freire recommended in order to achieve the purposes for education I outlined above. These practices are: 1) problem posing, 2) dialogue, 2) praxis, 3) building community, and 4) building self-confidence. As I will argue in the next chapter, each of these practices serves to directly ameliorate the phenomena of hopelessness in US urban schools. However, Freire warned that even the most "well-intentioned professionals … eventually discover that certain of their educational failures must be ascribed, not to the intrinsic inferiority of the 'simple men of the people', but to the violence of their own act of invasion. Those who make this discovery face a difficult alternative: they feel the need to renounce invasion, but patterns of domination are so entrenched within them that this renunciation would become a threat to their own identities." (Freire, 2005, p.156). The practice of Freire's Pedagogy of Hope entails a paradoxical risk that actions taken by the teacher with the intention of liberating the student may, in fact, have the opposite effect. In discussing each of these practices, therefore, I will also draw on Freire's insights into how each of them might inadvertently be turned into instruments of oppression.

**Problem posing.** "No one can be in the world, with the world, and with others and maintain a posture of neutrality. I cannot be in the world decontextualized, simply observing life" (Freire, 1998, p.73). As discussed above, problem-posing education is Freire's antidote for what he labeled as 'banking education,' which involves the transmission of ideas into students as docile recipients, who then reproduce these ideas in an uncritical fashion.

In problem-posing education, the teacher and students are what Freire calls "co-investigators" (2000, 81). "The problem-posing educator constantly re-forms his reflections in the reflection of the students. The students - no longer docile listeners - are now critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher. The teacher presents the material to the students for their consideration, and re-considers his earlier considerations as the students express their own" (2000, p. 81). In sum, in a problem posing education the "teacher-student with students-teachers" (Freire, 2000, p. 80) will:

1. introduce the issue, or pose the problem

2. dialogue about what they know, do not know, need to know in order to solve the problem, thus

3. develop a problem statement, in which

4. significant themes that emerge are identified, and then

5. engage in problem-solving the process, which may require learners to gather additional information by-way-of research, learners discuss recommendations, that is, what they know to solve the problem.

As clarified by Shor and Freire, problem posing "situates the learning in themes, knowledge, cultures, conditions, and idioms of students" (1987, p. 44). As a method of teaching, problem-posing involves "listening, dialogue, and action" (Wallerstein, 1987, P. 35). That is, the learners listen to each other and to the teacher, reflect on the information and questions shared, engage in dialogue, connect themes, and think creatively about the meaning of the topic and what to do about it. Commonly, when problem posing, a "single question can generate further inquiries as learners formulate additional hypotheses that they are eager to test" (Brown & Walter, 2013, p. 128). Because this kind of learning is situated in the language and the experiences of the students and their diverse cultures (Shor & Freire, 1987), and because the problems posed and questions addressed spring from the experiences and shifting views of the learners, no one knows the questions that will be asked or the possible solutions that will be offered and tested, thus making the teacher and the students co-investigators in the problem-posing, problem-solving process.

Freire (2005) warned that educational processes that require self-exploration and promote critical examination of the world may leave students dissatisfied, because traditional, consumerist education, while disempowering, is comfortably familiar and less demanding for students. For one thing, critical pedagogical methods may be seen as subversive of local, state and national educational methods and standards. Students engaged in problem-posing education may feel they are becoming mal-adapted to the educational system, and may wonder if they are "getting what they paid for," or if they are being sufficiently prepared to compete in the economic market. In addition, students

may find problem-posing education to be confusing, disorienting and psychologically uncomfortable. Students who are accustomed to the banking model are used to having teachers to tell them what to think (or at least repeat on a test) and may resent the extra effort that problem-posing requires of them. Further, they may not trust that their critical questioning and thinking will be rewarded in the education system. Finally, even students whose lives are beset with numerous oppressive conditions typically find it unsettling to openly criticize those conditions, especially in the beginning, and especially if parents, teachers, religious leaders and others they trust and look up to are in some ways complicit with those conditions. This is part of what Freire meant in arguing that freedom does not mean the absence of contradictions or tensions (1998, p. 99).

Freire advocated problem-posing education for students who struggle with racial, sexual, and economic oppression. In the U.S., as in Brazil, black children, in particular, face a systemic challenge that requires an approach to education capable of addressing something more than the acquisition of knowledge and vocational training, and one that directly addresses the systemic mechanisms of racial discrimination (Morrell, 2008 p. 319). However, Freire also warned that, "The oppressed must not, in seeking to regain their humanity … become in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but rather restorers of the humanity of both" (2005, p. 44).

**Dialogue.** Perhaps the most important educational practice Freire recommended is to provide opportunities for students to engage in dialogue as a practice of freedom. Freire suggests dialogue, broadly, as a model of education in general, in which the teacher and the learners jointly undertake the acts of questioning and knowing. As he

explained, "Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other" (1998, p.140). Dialogue in which participants openly share their questions and discuss their ideas and value commitments and work to resolve disagreements among themselves and problems they have encountered together, is the method by which this can occur. Knowledge and knowing is never complete, and both arise from dialogue and "engagement with the messy realities of life" (Roberts, 2000, p. 35. See also Deneulin & Shahani, 2009).

Accordingly, the act of knowing includes a dialectical movement from action to idea and from thinking on action to a new action (Freire, 2005; Deneulin & Shahani, 2009). In dialogical education, students probe into the nature of the issue, inquire into whether they have relevant data and information, consider alternative interpretations of the information, analyze key concepts and ideas, question assumptions being made, and, trace out the implications and consequences of what they are saying. Thus, the collective contributions of the learning community are reasonably and conscientiously dealt with by following up all responses with further questions, and by electing questions which advance the discussion, in order to reach a collective understanding that is practical, i.e., directed at constructive work on the world.

Not every kind of teacher-to-student or student-to-student talk counts as dialogue. Dialogue derives its significance from the word, which is the substructure upon which dialogue is built; but, the word can be further broken down into two constitutive elements: reflection and action. Reflection is the process of enhancing our

understanding of the world in which we live in order to transform our social reality. Therefore, the power of the word lies in its ability to shape our perception of the world and influence our actions. And, it is because of the word's ability to influence the way in which we view the world that dialogue can also exist as a function of power.

Dialogue presupposes equality amongst participants. Each must trust the others. There must be mutual respect and love (care and commitment). Each one must question what he or she knows and recognize that through dialogue existing thoughts will change and new knowledge will be created. Authentic dialogue entails the kind of teacher-student or student-student talk, in which, "the students – no longer docile listeners – are now critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher" (Freire, 1998, p. 81). In practical terms, dialogue is a means of social interaction by which students can effectively express and communicate their ideas to one another. Consequently, Freire's suggestion of providing opportunities for students to engage in dialoguing could be the starting point in re-visioning the quality of inner-city students' learning experiences.

Freire also warned against the misunderstanding and misuse of dialogue. Numerous teachers mistakenly understand the practice of dialogue in the classroom as a method of indirect instruction in which the teacher subtly (or not-so-subtly) leads the students to pre-determined conclusions. In that kind of "dialogue" criticism and questioning are suppressed and alternative ways of understanding the world actively discouraged. Learners remain passive spectators rather than participants in their own learning process. Of this phenomenon, Freire wrote,

Those who steal the words of others develop a deep doubt in the abilities of others

and consider them incompetent. Each time they say their word without hearing

the word of those whom they have forbidden to speak, they grow more

accustomed to power and acquire a taste for guiding, ordering, and commanding.

They can no longer live without having someone to give orders to. Under these

circumstances, dialogue is impossible" (Freire, 2005, p. 134).

On the other hand, there are teachers who mistake dialogue for "sharing time" in

which students tell stories and exchange ideas without any process of critical

interrogation of the world, their own experiences, or one another's thinking. Both

misuses of dialogue lose sight of the goal of dialogue as the application of critical

questioning and critical thinking to problems and opportunities the students find

meaningful (Freire, 1998, p.96). That goal requires that teachers invite and support – and

in some cases, join – a process of critical inquiry without steering it to any outcomes

favored by the teacher or the curriculum. Thus, Bohm explains that "The object of a

dialogue is not to analyze things, or to win an argument, or to exchange opinions. Rather,

it is to suspend your opinions and to look at the opinions—to listen to everybody's

opinions, to suspend them, and to see what all that means.... We can just simply share the

appreciation of the meanings, and out of this whole thing, truth emerges unannounced—

not that we have chosen it" (2004, p.30).

In addition to being a discrete classroom practice, dialogue is also characteristic

of every other practice that constitutes Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope*. Thus, in a hope-filled

classroom, critical reading is a dialogical activity among teachers, students and text.

Critical thinking depends on the critical co-interrogation of students and teachers and the co-construction of new knowledge and meaning. Critical writing involves co-authorship and peer review. And constructive action is a process of collaborative deliberation and cooperation. These activities invite students not only to "speak" with their own voices, but to challenge, exercise and cultivate those voices in dialogue with each other, their teachers and the voices of their tradition represented in the curriculum and the school system. Because speech/voice and freedom are intimately connected, a hope-filled education must involve learners as agents in a dialogical and critical approach to their lives.

**Praxis.** For Freire, it is because humans are "beings of praxis" that we are capable of transforming the world (Freire, 1998, p.32; Deneulin & Shahani, 2009). Freire's notion of praxis is a synthesis of reflection and action. Consequently, the second normative approach to teaching I found in Freire's work is that teachers must engage students (and themselves) in action and thinking that interact with each other. Reflection is a necessary precondition for action, but reflection alone is not sufficient for individuals to transform the environments in which they live. According to Freire, "reflection is meaningless without action; if there is no action, there can be no praxis" (2006, p. 88). In view of that, "within the word we find two dimensions, reflection, and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed–even in part–the other immediately suffers. There is no true word that is not at the same time praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world. These two items are so connected to each other that even if one of them is sacrificed only partially, the other would be damaged" (Freire, 2006, p. 87).

For Freire, praxis is not an educational experience following dialogue, but is already inherent in the meaning of dialogue. The word, the foundation upon which dialogue is built, can only be authentically sustained through the act of naming, in which we construct our social reality as a problem. Thus, dialogue is also a commitment to actively transform our social reality, for, naming the world without a commitment to act turns dialogue into verbalism (Freire & Macedo, 1995, pp.379-382). In educational terms, praxis means that teachers help students both to extend their questioning, thinking and dialogue into action, and to engage in action as a part of inquiry. Freire warned that when reflection becomes divorced from action or theory from practice, "theory becomes simply blah, blah, blah, and practice, pure activism" (Freire, 1998, p.30).

Indeed, according to Freire, we become more fully human when we engage in critical, dialogical praxis, and we dehumanize ourselves and others when we neglect or actively prevent this. For example, during my twenty-nine years as an urban educator, I would be a wealthy woman if I had a dollar for each time I have heard a teacher say, "You know better than that; you're in high school now; you know that high school students don't act like that!" Statements such as these presuppose that the student should somehow have known what kinds of behaviors are expected of high school students, should have accepted them unquestioningly, and should have been able to adapt to them unproblematically. However, this is quite silly. Being advanced to a higher grade does not automatically allow for students to reflect upon their former selves. Nor do human beings grow by simply erasing a former way of acting and immediately picking up a new way. Most importantly, constructive work on the self cannot consist of conformity to a

prefabricated parameter or restrictions designed to control or influence the agent of action.

Student growth requires engagement in praxis: critical reflection on one's former self, a critical reading of one's current situation, and action that aims at realizing one's hopes. As Freire observed, "Hope … does not consist in crossing one's arms and waiting" (1998, p. 92). This requires the space, the opportunity, and the tools to do so. However, for many inner-city students and their teachers, knowing as the outcome of praxis is an alien concept. A new grade merely symbolizes a new year; whatever was done in the past is history and that is that. As suggested by Freire, only a process of praxis allows individuals to naturally acknowledge problems of their past behavior and to creatively construct new kinds of behavior. And in problem-posing education, the expectations of the teacher and the school are as likely to be revised in the process of praxis, as are the behaviors of the students. Individuals change when they are giving the space, tools, and opportunity to express their hopes for meaningful experience in new situations, not because they enter a new or higher grade. "In problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world in which they find themselves" (Freire, 2005, p.83).

Moreover, as Freire noted, teachers must themselves engage in praxis, with one another and with their students. Teachers must be models of reflection and action. "Right thinking is right doing. The teacher who really teaches, that is, who really works with contents within the context of methodological exactitude, will deny as false the hypocritical formula, 'do as I say, not as I do.' Whoever is engaged in 'right thinking'

knows only too well that words not given body (made flesh) have little or no value" (Freire, 2005, p.39).

As with dialogue, the process of praxis is liable to be misused by teachers who either have pre-determined goals for student action or who fear giving students the agency to direct their own action, even collaboratively. For instance, a teacher I was observing exhorted her students to ask "insightful questions," but when a student asked a question that he believed was perceptive, the teacher remarked something to the effect of, "learn to think outside the box, and understand that, in order to prepare for the test, the class has to stick to the curriculum . . . you need to accept the responsibility of remaining on task in order to get through the study questions."

This teacher's action exemplifies the use of teacher authority to manipulate students and exert control over what they learn, when they will learn it, and how. In my experience teaching and working with teachers, however, the motive behind this kind of teacher behavior is more one of fear than of tyranny. Many teachers are simply afraid of the silence that seems to scream when students do not have a ready response to prefabricated study questions. Many are also afraid of students asking questions that require a response beyond the teacher's carefully-written notes. This fear is largely of appearing ignorant or unprepared in front of the students, which many teachers take to be a diminishment of their power. Confronted with this fear, many teachers react by manipulating and in fact, de-skilling students by limiting their curiosity and creativity and teaching to the test. Freire's notion of praxis ameliorates this kind of fear by asking teachers to re-cast their authority, not as one who knows all the answers and can guide

students to high academic marks, but as one who is deeply curious about her students and the meaning of the curriculum, and one who knows how to think critically and to inquire helpfully into questions and problems that arise. Praxis is, therefore, as necessary for teachers and communities of teachers as it is for students with teachers. It is a kind of therapy against the fear that holds many teachers back; that paralyzes their own curiosity, imagination, and compassion.

**Community.** Many educators detach themselves from the world of their students, not only with physical proximity, but with psychological and cultural barriers. For example, look at the landscape of almost any urban classroom in the United States of America and you will see the teacher's desk strategically located at the front the classroom – a symbol of authority and a metaphoric buffer between the teacher and students. Against such an arrangement, Freire argues that "Educators need to know what happens in the world of the children with whom they work. They need to know the universe of their dreams, the language with which they skillfully defend themselves from the aggressiveness of their world, what they know independently of the school, and how they know it" (1998, p 72). This entering of the world of the student by the teacher is as important for the teacher as it is for the student. As Freire explains, "It is in this dialectic movement that teaching and learning become knowing and reknowing. The learners gradually know what they did not yet know, and the educators reknow what they knew before" (Freire, 1998, p. 90).

Thus, the third normative approach to teaching suggested by Freire is the creation of community (Freire, 1998). Human beings do not exist within a vacuum. Each of us is

a history within a history.  Each of us lives within the history of the community in which

we were born and of the communities we have since joined.  To exist at all is to exist as a

part and extension of an historical and moral tradition that provide part of the meaning

and purpose of our lives.   Thus, constructive action on the self and on the world is only

meaningful if understood within the historical context of an account of a human life.

Alasdair McIntyre explains this phenomenon:

> In what does the unity of an individual life consist?  The answer is that its unity of
>
> a narrative embodied in a single life.  To ask 'What is the good for me?' is to ask
>
> how best I might live out that unity and bring it to completion.  To ask 'What is
>
> the good for man?' is to ask what all answers to the former question must have in
>
> common (2007, pp. 218-19).

For MacIntyre, the good life is not an end, but the perpetual pursuit of reflective

inquiry about how one should live.  But such inquiry presupposes the context of a moral

– that is, a value-oriented – tradition, which entails the notion of community:

> The story of my life is always embedded in the story of those communities from
>
> which I derive my identity.  I am born with a past; and to try to cut myself off
>
> from that past, the individualist mode, is to deform my present relationships.  The
>
> possession of an historical identity and the possession of social identity coincide.
>
> (2007, p. 221)

The individual derives the purpose of her/his life and meaning of her/his existence within

the larger context of the communal traditions in which she/he is rooted. There can be no

individual without a community.  The pre-established culture of a community, in

conjunction with the moral tradition of that community, is essential in shaping any coherent conception of the self, which, however, seeks to transcend the limitations of that community.

It is somewhat paradoxical that one's actualization as a human being is not possible by oneself, and yet a fundamental prerequisite for one engaging within one's community is an adequate understanding of one's own hopes, dreams, and aspirations. The relationship between the community and the individual resembles that of a cell to an organism. While a cell may be a single entity, the collective history of entire organism is embedded within the cell by means of DNA (Berg, 2007). Each cell attempts to maintain its own good while performing its own function for the good of the organism. The contribution of each cell ensures the maintenance and survival of the organism. However, due to some oppressive condition, a cell may become deformed and not function well. Similarly, as pointed out by Freire (1985; 1998; 2000) conditions that oppress or exclude individuals deform the entire community. There can be no communal accomplishments without individual contributions. And the growth of the community and its ability to adapt and survive over time depends on the strength and responsiveness – the humanistic education – of its members. By developing her/his existence within the context of the community, the individual creates her/his personal history and co-creates the larger communal and societal history. Correspondingly, the history of the community that we occupy shapes us as well, in a continuous cycle of personal and social historical re-reconstruction.

However, one's engagement with a community does not guarantee that others will support or even recognize one's hopes, dreams, and aspirations as legitimate. Some communities, as MacIntyre observed, "are nastily oppressive" (2007, p. 225). Therefore, the building of community as an educational practice, as suggested by Paulo Freire, requires opportunities for teachers and students to engage in democratic dialogue as a practice of freedom. Dialogue with diverse members of our community, who hold varying beliefs and values not only broadens our perspectives about the topics we investigate, but opens multiple alternatives for projects of constructive work on the world and on the self. Only by encountering beliefs, values and ways of life different from our own can we critically examine our own perspectives, and determine which aspects of these differing perspectives it would be worthwhile to assimilate (Deneulin and Shahani, 2009). Dialogue is the primary method in which community can be developed and refined in problem-posing education.

   **Self-confidence.** A fourth normative approach to teaching that Freire suggests is that teachers build self-confidence in students. To do so, teachers need to be genuinely curious about the experiences, values, views, feelings, and aspirations of students. Freire advises, "What is important in teaching is not the mechanical repetition of this or that gesture but a comprehension of the value of sentiments, emotions, and desires. Of the insecurity that can only be overcome by inspiring confidence. Of the fear that can only be abated to the degree that courage takes its place" (Freire, 1998. P.47). Freire tenders an illustration of instilling self-confidence by way of a personal anecdote. He relates that one of his teachers affirmed in him "a self-confidence that obviously still had much room

to grow, but it inspired in me a belief that I too had value and could work and produce

results—results that clearly had their limits but that were a demonstration of my capacity,

which up until that moment I would have been inclined to hide or not fully believe in"

(Freire, 1998, p. 47).

Teachers affirm self-confidence in students' ability to learn "insofar as learners

become thinking subjects, and recognize that they are as much thinking subjects as are

the teachers" (Freire, p. 90).  If teachers recall their own experiences in school, many

may remember how those in authority were often intolerant of discussions among

students.  Constraining natural tendencies to interact with one another and engage in

dialogue interrupts learning and connects with what Dewey (1916) called a miseducative

experience.

Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope* calls for the development of self-confidence, "critical

consciousness," and "human agency (i.e., their capacity to act as agents in the world)" not

only in students, but in teachers also (Freire, 2005. p. 56).   Freire contends that

"Confidence in themselves is so indispensable to their struggle for a better world!" (2005,

p. 116).  Indeed, the growth of the teacher's self-understanding and agency is one of the

most important aspects of Freire's famous dictum that, "The teacher is no longer merely

the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in

turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in

which all grow" (2005, p. 81).

Although building self-confidence is not a discreet pedagogical practice but an

aspect of all classroom practices and interaction, I discuss it separately because it is

possible for a teacher to engage in problem-posing, dialogical, and community building activities without also building self-confidence.  Dialogue, for instance, may be critical and rigorous without drawing on or otherwise relating to student experience and so, without helping students and teachers get to know each other more meaningfully.  On the other hand, authentic classroom dialogue can result in meaningful interactions and dialogues and can potentially build strong connections and meaningful student to student and student to teacher bonds (Rose, 2007, p. 45).

Over the years, I have worked with teachers whose impeccably-written lesson plans leave little doubt with anyone reading them, that these plans engage students in the kind of critical thinking required to demonstrate mastery of the Common Core Standards, which are designed to develop students' "College and Career Readiness Skills." However, often when observing the implementation of these teachers' plans, it has become apparent to me that these teachers fail in building community or in developing students' self-confidence, which impacts their persistence and ultimately their social and academic success.  Nor do some teachers seem to realize that when students are not given the opportunity to build persistence and the confidence needed to take an academic risk, they give up thinking for themselves.  Freire calls this a culture of silence, which is born out of the relationship between those who are dominated and their dominators, in which the dominated learn to mimic the voice and even the thoughts, of their dominator.

For example, during one observation of a teacher I conducted, the students were at the computers engaging in an inquiry-based learning activity when a student asked the teacher, "What is an idiom?"  The teacher directed her reply to the class, "What do you

guys think? Can anyone tell us what an idiom is?" The teacher's query was met by student stares and silence, which didn't last long, because, like a knee jerk reflex, the teacher summarily explained the term. As argued by Freire, "Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, and with each other" (2000, p. 72). Problem posing and problem solving are essential in developing students' critical thinking (Freire, 2000, p.92). However, an essential attitude for the development and use of critical thinking skills is persistence, which is related to self-confidence (Reason, 2009). When the student asks the question and the teacher supplies the answer, the development of persistence, which fosters self-confidence, is impeded. In this instance, and as I explained to the teacher later, there were many ways she might have shifted the onus of the learning to the student, such as allowing the silence following her remark to the class to lengthen and become pregnant, seeing if the class could work out a definition on their own, and as a last resort, even allowing the students to use a computer to supplement their definition (an accommodation even cited in the teacher's lesson plan). Stepping back and supporting this kind of self-directed inquiry, even on such a simple question, takes time, but is necessary to encourage students to become self-reliant and develop the persistence needed in order to build the self-confidence required to take academic risks when approaching unfamiliar learning experiences (Reason, 2009).

Different teacher, different situation, but a similar outcome to the above example was observed when a teacher, in a rush to get through the information, missed the opportunity to build a student's self-confidence and community. Again, the teacher's

impeccably-written lesson plan detailed a problem-posing learning activity in which he endeavored to engage the class in a dialogue that had them confronting the concept of propaganda and how various forms of propaganda are used to influence perspectives. Included on one of the teacher's PowerPoint slides was a picture of a dollar bill (showing the pyramid with an eye at the top) to explain how memory works with transference. During the teacher's presentation, a student raised his hand and asked the teacher, "Why does that pyramid have an eye?" The teacher seemed to think about the student's question for a few seconds, but then abruptly responded, "I don't know. . . just let's get through this information, so you'll be ready for the next part of the activity I've planned." He moved to the next slide and continued to explain the concept of transference as a means of propaganda. The student obediently put his hand down, which was soon followed by the student's head lying down on the desk for the remainder of the lesson. Not only did this teacher miss an opportunity to connect the curriculum to student interest, support student-led inquiry and build the student's persistence and self-confidence, he also failed at community building. Time is always a premium in any classroom, so I recognize why a teacher may be tempted to keep the lesson moving. However, Freire's theory of education as a process of humanization exposes the contradictions between these teachers' actions – based, though they were, on problem posing lessons – and student learning.

Freire's theory of consciousness further illuminates the two examples just given. Freire described the shift from intransitive or magical consciousness to transitive consciousness, which progresses from naïve to critical consciousness (1998). Per Freire,

the first shift occurs when the interests and concerns of the people begin to extend

beyond simple survival, so that they can begin to give attention to the myths and themes

that characterize their social world. In the above example, the interest and concern of the

learner who asked the question about the pyramid had extended beyond his intransitive

consciousness of simple survival, that is to say, the accruing of information in order to be

prepare for the next set of directions the teacher will bestow upon the class, to transitive

consciousness, in which he had taken notice of a ubiquitous and significant artifact of

social meaning common to his experience. This marks a momentous occasion for any

learner, and any teacher on the lookout for opportunities to support student questioning,

self-confidence, and community. Additionally, as per Freire, both the elite (in this case,

the teacher) and the masses (the students) have a glimpse of the possibility of freedom,

but the elites (teachers) typically respond to such glimpses by allowing only superficial

transformations which are designed to prevent any real changes in power relations (1998)

– as symbolized in this example by the head of the questioning student, now silent, lying

on the desk.

**Chapter 4: Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of Hope and the Phenomenon of Hopelessness**

**in U.S. Urban Schools**

**Introduction**

Many educational policies and teaching strategies devised to address the phenomenon of hopelessness of inner-city students in the U.S. have been derived from the work of Brazilian educator and philosopher Paolo Freire.  However, we do not know, on the whole, how effective that work has been.  Therefore, the first purpose of this dissertation was to determine whether Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope* theoretically responds to what is known of the kinds of hopelessness that beset students and teachers in inner-city U.S. schools.  To that end, Research Question 1 called for the construction of a model of Freire's Pedagogy of Hope that addresses the phenomenon of hopelessness in U.S. inner-city schools described in the introduction and that is coherent and clear enough to guide practices in schools and guide the identification of empirical studies of such practices.

The first task in answering that question, addressed by Research Question 1a., was to produce a construct of the phenomenon of hopelessness in U.S. inner-city schools by identifying its most salient and recurring aspects.  These were enumerated and discussed in Chapter One.  In inner-city school adolescents, hopelessness is a psycho-social construct consisting of a number of inter-related negative academic, social and

psychological attitudes and behaviors, the most important of which are:

1. Giving up on academic work;

2. A lack of respect for the authority of the teacher and the school;

3. Poor social interactions, including episodes of intense rage and acts of violence; and

4. Negative self-concept, loss of self-confidence and even the desire to commit suicide.

The phenomenon of hopelessness in inner-city schools also manifests in teachers, as:

1. Feelings of stress and job dissatisfaction;

2. Messages teachers communicate directly and indirectly to students about their inevitable failure;

3. Regimented teaching styles that equate teaching with control and learning with submission; and

4. Abusive behavior toward students.

The second task in answering Research Question 1 was to construct a model of Freire's Pedagogy of Hope. As formulated in Research Question 1b, that model had three components:

1. Freire's normative philosophy of the purposes of education in relation to the phenomenon of hope. As discussed in Chapter Three, Freire saw education as the process of humanization, which has four aspects:

a) Critical awareness of the self as unfinished, where "critical" means, with an eye to what is right and wrong, true and false, just and unjust;

b) Critical awareness of the world as changeable;

c) Constructive work on the self; and

d) Constructive work on the world.

2. Freire's theory of learning in regard to the phenomenon of hope. As discussed in Chapter Three, Freire's theory of learning includes the following principles:

a) The activity of learning presupposes a (classroom) environment that demonstrates or cultivates an understanding of the learner's history and learning needs.

b) The activity of learning presupposes that the learner's physical, physical and socio-emotional wellbeing are protected and nurtured in such a way as to reinforce the learners' dignity and to create social bonds between the teacher and learner and among the other learners.

c) Learning takes place as a response to the identification by the learner of her or his felt needs, both in relation to problems and opportunities in her or his lived experience, and to relevant information that is both known and unknown.

d) Learning is never the mere acquisition of new ideas, value commitments or skills, but is always an extension and reconstruction of previous ideas, value commitments and skills.

e) Learning is a response to the recognition that one's previous knowledge and/or values are inadequate to new problems and opportunities that have arisen in one's experience.

3. Freire's normative approach to teaching, in relation to the phenomenon of hope. As discussed in Chapter Three, Freire's approach to teaching encompasses four normative educational practices designed to achieve the purposes for education I outlined above:

a) Problem posing

b) Dialogue

c) Praxis

d) Building community, and

e) Building self-confidence.

So as to accomplish the first purpose of this dissertation, it remains in this chapter to address Research Question 1c, which calls for the identification of aspects of the phenomenon of hopelessness in inner-city U.S. schools that are, and are not ameliorated by the components of Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope*. It may be argued that every component of Freire's pedagogy in some way addresses every aspect of the phenomenon of hopelessness, especially because, as I have argued, those components are intricately and substantially inter-related. However, my analysis reveals that some pedagogical

components address some aspects of hopelessness much more directly than others, and, consequently, that some aspects of hopelessness are ameliorated much more effectively than others. My analysis has also shown that Freire's normative approaches to teaching were designed to fulfill his philosophy of the purposes of education, and to accommodate his theory of learning. Therefore, in each of the sections that follow, I will discuss which of Freire's normative approaches to teaching most directly address a particular aspect of the phenomenon of hopelessness in inner-city U.S. schools, with some reference to his philosophy of education and theory of learning.

**Students Giving up on Academic Work**

Freire provided an explanation as to how "banking education, which was used in Latin America as a tool specifically to exclude the peasants and keep them from thinking, is used in the West now to train people in the kind of passivity and alienation required for successful participation in this society" (Freire, 1998, p. 85). The first aspect of hopelessness in U.S. urban schools that I identified was that students give up on academic work. They are aware of their environment, and they are aware that their economic status and racial or ethnic identity has positioned them at the bottom rung of the socio-economic ladder, from which there is little movement upward. More significantly, for the purpose of this dissertation, they see the school system as part of the social environment that works to keep them in their disadvantaged position, so that they see no connections with their present lives and schooling. Therefore, they view academic work as a waste of time. The components of problem posing and building confidence, two of Freire's

normative approaches or practical educational practices to teaching, directly address this aspect of hopelessness.

Problem posing as a teaching method provides the freedom for two primary experiences to occur in a classroom. First, the teacher creates a safe space for students to explore internal issues and voice their experiences and concerns about the reality of their daily lives and the possible relevance of the curriculum to it. Second, the teacher and students work as co-investigators in generating and testing possible solutions to the problems they have raised, and all cooperate in "the act of teaching [and] the act of learning" (Freire, 1998, p.9). Problem posing does not hide from students the harsh realities of their racial, ethnic, gendered, and socio-economic positions in society but invites them to see this as a problem to be solved, rather than a permanent and unchangeable situation. It invites them to see the world as changeable and in need of constructive work. Problem posing also invites students to question their existing assumptions about themselves, their place in their community; they develop a critical view of society, and their own possibilities; and, thus, shift their self-defined boundaries (Freire, 2000).

A "problem-posing education sets itself the task of demythologizing" (Freire, 1998, p.85). A problem posing education liberates the oppressed from the myths upon which their social reality is built, fostering the opportunity for individuals to comprehend the system of oppression in which they have become entrapped, to understand the outcome if they do not change their course of action, and to seek how to transform their social reality (Freire, 1998). Therefore, problem posing uses the curriculum to

problematize the students lived experience – for instance, to understand its causes and dimensions in history, mathematics, science, linguistics, and media.   Likewise, it invites students to consider the curriculum, the teacher, and the other resources of the school system as resources to be used in addressing the problems they find when reading the world and their own experiences of it critically.  Therefore, contrary to seeing schoolwork as meaningless and something that positions them as powerless, they see it as a means of taking constructive action on the world and on themselves.   In these ways, problem posing education alleviates the causes of students giving up on their academic work and, so, makes that aspect of hopelessness much less likely to occur.

However, seeing the world as changeable and even seeing academic work as a means of critical action on the world is not enough to motivate academic work, for students who do not see themselves as capable.  Gaining confidence is essential for the hopeless to overcome major problems.  We repress ourselves by imposing boundaries, by internalizing the cultural norms of our oppressive institutions, and belief systems (Freire, 2000).   Students who give up on their academic work may not be hopeless about the intransigency of external factors that oppress them, as much as they are hopeless about their own agency and capacity to create meaningful change.  Therefore, pedagogy of building confidence is essential to support student engagement in their academic work. Problem posing and building confidence are thus mutually reinforcing components of the pedagogy of hope.  In order to maintain their commitment to academic work, students must understand oppressive conditions as problems to be solved, must understand education as a means of doing so, and must believe in themselves as capable of doing so.

**Students' Lack of Respect**

The second aspect of hopelessness in U.S. urban schools that I identified was that students demonstrate a lack of respect for the authority of the teacher and the school. They are at times overtly antagonistic, less likely follow the teacher's direction, and resistant to efforts by teachers to involve them in classroom activities. They disrupt the work of those students who do want to participate, and initiate conflicts with those students who are engaged in the learning. This aspect of hopelessness is addressed by dialogue, praxis and building community, in Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope*.

Dialogue, a reciprocal exchange, is interconnected to problem posing, in that although the physical act of problem posing may have ceased, the effects of the dialogue subsists. Regardless of whether the students recognize this as a product of their problem posing, ideas that affect actions have been formed about their perceptions of reality. The practice of dialogue in a classroom ameliorates students' lack of respect for the teacher and the school because it makes the classroom a meeting place where knowledge is not merely diffused by the teacher but sought by all. Dialogue draws one out of oneself to consider the experiences and perspectives of others, making it difficult not to empathize with them, and this includes the teacher. Also, because one is treated as a reasonable person, one is more likely to treat others this way. As Freire argued, "Attempting to liberate the oppressed without their reflective participation in the act of liberation is to treat them as objects that must be saved from a burning building" (1998, p.65). Finally, in dialogue one experiences directly that one's own understandings, ideas, and values are

never complete or without error, so that one must rely on the understandings of others in order to correct and complete one's own, and this includes the teacher.

Dialogue is also based on the questions and ideas of the individuals who participate, and the arguments that are generated from their interaction. This generative aspect is particularly apparent in inquiry dialogue, or dialogue conducted as a collective inquiry into a shared problem or question. Inquiry dialogue entails "originality. . . breakthrough . . . imaginativeness, inspiredness, [and the] capacity to synthesize" (Lipman, 1991, p. 205), in contrast to the circularity of mere conversation, and to the call-and-response exchange typical of many classrooms (i.e., the teacher calls out a question and the student responds), which Freire refers to as 'verbalism'.

One of the most successful practices of inquiry dialogue for classrooms in the past fifty years is the "community of philosophical inquiry" designed by Matthew Lipman and Ann Margaret Sharp as the method of Philosophy for Children (Lipman, Sharp, Oscanyan, 1985). Philosophical dialogue has a particular purpose – the arrival at sound judgments about the issue under discussion – which shapes the problem-posing/inquiry process. The substantive nature of this dialogue and its meaningfulness derives from the invitation for students to critically examine their own experiences in ethical, political, aesthetic, and other philosophical terms, to question the meaning of that experience and construct plausible solutions to problems they recognize. Additionally, the community of philosophical inquiry fosters critical thinking, and, similarly to Freire's notion of praxis, calls for individuals to actively participate in reflection and action. In the community of philosophical inquiry, the reflection can be realized in the form of both an activity and

disposition. For example, individuals can engage in a theoretical or conceptual analysis, generate plausible solutions to problems they recognize, and then create a plan of action to test those solutions in experience. Further, as Lipman (1991) argues, engagement in a process of critical thinking with a group of peers, which progresses from problem-posing to the generation of reasonable judgments can be deemed a form of social action. Thus, the community of philosophical inquiry is one practice that initiates Freire's call for classroom dialogue and community building.

Praxis will not be achieved by dialoguing about the realities of daily life, and acquiring an awareness of those social realities will not alone change unfair, oppressive practices. To achieve praxis individuals must couple action with the awareness. Accordingly, this method reflects the connection between individual and change, between critical awareness and history, between notions and facts, between reflection and action. Praxis ameliorates students' lack of respect for the teacher and the school because praxis demonstrates that the commitment of the teacher and the school to act on problems that are meaningful to the student is not just talk. Praxis demonstrates that the teacher and the school respect the students' intelligence, including the ways that students problematize their experiences and the possible solutions they create to address those problems, and so students tend to return that respect to the teacher and the school.

Building community is at once a pre-condition for, a means of, and a product of, the classroom community engaging in problem posing. The message is conveyed to the students that their views are valued and important enough to receive the teacher's and the classroom community's attention. Building community in a classroom ameliorates

students' lack of respect for the teacher and the school because like dialogue, building community means that one is treated as a reasonable person so one is more likely to treat others this way. Like praxis, building community demonstrates that the teacher and the school respect the students' intelligence, including the ways that students problematize their experiences and the possible solutions they create to address those problems, and so students tend to return that respect to the teacher and the school. Building community helps one experience directly that one's own efforts are not sufficient to create meaningful and lasting change in the world, so that one must learn to collaborate with others who have shared understandings of a problem and a shared commitment to work to change it, and this requires mutual respect.

**Students' Poor Social Interactions**

The third aspect of hopelessness in U.S. urban schools that I identified was that students develop poor social interactions, including episodes of intense rage, and acts of violence. Incidents of verbal and physical abuse, often resulting in minor to serious injury, directed by students against other students, teachers, and school staff, are common occurrences in urban schools across the country. This aspect of hopelessness is addressed by problem posing, dialogue and building community, in Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope*.

Problem posing fosters the space and opportunity for a genuine form of thought and action to be produced. Problem posing ameliorates students' poor social interactions because it invites students to become aware of their thoughts and their desires for changing their circumstances, and to express themselves within a social context in the process of negotiating those desires with their peers and the school administration. This

process requires communication on a more authentic level than is typically experienced in a school context, and opens the possibility for students and teachers to relate to each other as human beings, and get to know who they genuinely are. Thus, problem posing is the key to advancing change. More importantly, by problematizing past events, behaviors, and actions, students can come to understand the meaning of their own rage as a reaction to oppressive circumstances and a lack of agency. Once students experience their own capacity to make meaningful change in their circumstances, they can begin to direct their anger and frustration into constructive work on themselves and on their world. Problem posing can reveal to students that their rage does not need to be suppressed or eliminated, but reconstructed as passionate struggle against injustice.

Likewise, dialogue and community building enable the learners to begin to perceive the political structures that maintain their oppression. Dialogue ameliorates students' poor social interactions because it requires authentic communication with peers and teachers about what they value, what they believe, and what kinds of change would be the most meaningful in their circumstances. In this process, students are likely to discover that many of their desires for change are shared among their peers and teachers. Community building ameliorates students' poor social interactions because it reveals that working for meaningful change is as a social activity. A classroom that reinforces the attitude of 'we are all in this together, so we are here to help each other,' establishes a cultural norm, not merely of mutual respect but of mutual caring. Once students experience their need for peers and teachers to collaborate in that change process, they are less likely to direct their anger and frustration at one another, but, in fact, to see one

another as related in their experience of injustice, and as intelligent agents of change with whom they can form solidarity. Community building also provides students and teachers the chance to self-correct their agendas for change. As Sharp argues, "knowledge is the growth in our capacity to care [and] what we care about reveals to others and to ourselves what really matters to us" (2004, p.10). Any collaborative change effort is bound to reveal tensions among the objectives of individuals in the group. Addressing these tensions in a way that increases the group's power to enact change requires that individuals be willing to modify their objectives by learning from their peers what is best for the group.

**Students' Negative Self-Concept**

The fourth aspect of hopelessness in U.S. urban schools that I identified was that students develop a negative self-concept, loss of self-confidence and even the desire to commit suicide. They experience negative views of themselves and their future, amounting to a lack of belief that they can accomplish personal goals, a lack of expectation that their lives can improve, and even a lack of belief that they deserve a more meaningful life. At its most extreme, this lack of self-confidence can manifest as suicidal ideation. This aspect of hopelessness is addressed by problem posing, dialogue, praxis, and building community, in Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope*.

Problem posing involves students and teachers in the sharing and critiquing of common experiences. This is a powerful way of establishing links between their perceptions of their personal lives and their growing understandings of systems of oppression. This is the meaning of consciousness raising. By critiquing established

social norms and reshaping an understanding of these norms in dialogue with members of the classroom community, consciousness raising results in changes in student's attitudes and perception of themselves. Problem posing ameliorates students' negative self-concept because it invites students to problematize the very conditions – the history, the environment and the patterns of thinking – that have created that negative self-concept and silenced them. For this to occur, it is necessary for students to reflect on, and problematize their own negative self-concept. Where did these feelings originate? What are the sources of such messages in their lives? What evidence can they find, what stories can they tell, of their own resilience, intelligence, and agency? Who benefits from students succumbing to feelings of helplessness? How does negative self-concept reinforce systems of injustice?

Dialogue is implicit in the practice of problem posing, and an important aspect in trying to ensure that all member of the community receive equal treatment, that is, to avoid a hierarchy of voices heard. Dialogue ameliorates students' negative self-concept because it presents the opportunity to engage them in examining their beliefs and thoughts in which they recognize unhealthy, negative behaviors and perceptions and, in turn, substitute healthy ways to guide them academically and in their daily lives. More importantly, dialogue includes the powerful experience of being listened to carefully, and responded to, which are signs of being respected. Even when one is disagreed with or challenged in a dialogue, nevertheless one feels respected, because others clearly assume one can defend one's position reasonably.

Praxis ameliorates students' negative self-concept because it provides a system for acting on the self and on the social world, where beliefs about the value of oneself are problematic. Through reflection, the negative student is fostered a means of developing a critical awareness of the self as unfinished, which allows the student to discern what is true and false about their social boundaries, and a critical awareness of their world as changeable, and the plan to act. Perhaps most importantly, the process of taking deliberate action to effect some kind of meaningful, constructive change in one's circumstances forces one to see oneself as a change agent. Even if one is acting in collaboration with others, and even if one is not entirely successful in achieving one's objectives, the process of problematizing one's circumstances, planning a meaningful change and acting on that plan reveals oneself to oneself as a capable agent of change. This is perhaps the most significant aspect of consciousness raising.

Building community is a collective process in which the community of learners moves through co-investigation toward a common awareness of a shared problem or opportunity and shared vision of possible alternative outcomes. Building community ameliorates students' negative self-concept because in the process of forging shared awareness and shared vision, students find themselves contributing relevant aspects of their own experience, ideas and desires for change. Even if a student's vision is idiosyncratic, a thoughtful community will find ways to incorporate that vision into the shared vision of the group, and likely be grateful for the growth that requires. Freire's notion of building community necessitates that every member of the community not only have a say in its deliberations but see something of their own vision in the collective

action taken by the community. In this way, building community links personal development, that is to say, constructive work on the self, with community concerned with action, that is, constructive work on the world.

These components of Freire's pedagogy of hope that respond to students' hopelessness are designed to raise students' and teachers' consciousness regarding themselves, the world, and the education system. But raising consciousness by means of these pedagogical approaches also calls for praxis by teachers: a process of constantly submitting the reality of the classroom for analysis and the strategies needed for change. This kind of pedagogical praxis requires teachers who nurture emotional connections, to additionally, listen to unspoken words of students. These teachers are fully committed to the lives of their students, and are hopeful that their own lives and the lives of their students will be enhanced by the subject matter taught.

**Teacher's Feelings of Stress and Job Dissatisfaction**

The fifth aspect of hopelessness in U.S. urban schools that I identified was that teachers suffer feelings of frustration, stress and job dissatisfaction. They experience these things because of the lack of basic classroom resources, the lack of support of their school in taking action in dealing with students' disrespectful or violent behavior, and the lack of confidence in their own abilities to cope with these problems and experience teaching as meaningful work. This aspect of hopelessness is addressed by problem posing and praxis, in Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope*.

An important aspect of problem posing is when the teacher-student reflects about her own experiences and realities and becomes empowered to imagine them differently.

Problem posing enables the teacher to inquire into the causes of their particular experiences of stress and job dissatisfaction, and then to explore which of their own beliefs about their work situation are rational, and which are irrational and perhaps contribute to the problems or otherwise prevent the teacher from experiencing job satisfaction. Problem posing invites teachers to consider the lack of basic classroom resources, the lack of support of their school in taking action in dealing with students' disrespectful or violent behavior, and the lack of confidence in their own abilities to cope with these problems and experience teaching as meaningful work as temporary, changeable conditions. As discussed earlier, there are political dimensions to these conditions, but teachers who see them as mutable problems or challenges can also recognize opportunities for personal and political constructive work to transform them. By changing irrational beliefs into rational beliefs teachers can positively transform the nature of their lives.

As previously discussed, Freire contends that the purpose of education, in the context of the phenomenon of hope, should be the practice of freedom, making individuals capable to look critically at the world and enabling them to change it. Problem posing and praxis require teachers to understand themselves, others, and the cultural norms of the school, the school district, the community, and society in which they live, in order to achieve congruence between their reflection and action. In pedagogical practice, the teacher who has engaged in critical reflection about her teaching and her situation in a school finds ways to act that may bring about critical change. Praxis is indispensable to critical awareness of the self, that is, to analyzing and

understanding the roots of the feelings of stress and job dissatisfaction, and to developing a plan as how to rip the problem out by the root, that is, actions to take in mitigating or eliminating the causes of the feelings of stress and job dissatisfaction

It has been my experience that teachers who do not include students in the learning view teaching as just a job, fixed to inescapable frustrations, stress and disappointment. For example, throughout my twenty-nine years with the Newark Public Schools, I have worked with teachers who view co-investigation or collaborative learning with their students as impractical in fulfilling the requirements of the curriculum and an impediment to students' academic progress. These teachers control everything right down to ensuring that all classroom interactions are solely focused on meeting the instructional objective. They impose the learning task, choose the resources and materials, designate what product will be yielded, ask all the questions, give the lion's share of the feedback, and make the suggestions about revisions. The students are aware that if they pause at a word in a sentence, the teacher immediately defines the word, decodes the sentence, or explains the concept. Then, I have witnessed these very same teachers frequently verbalize their disappointment about the correctness of their students' answers to assessments, their frustration about students' academic progress, as well as the quality of the products students generate, and the stress brought on by their students' unacceptable classroom decorum.

For many years, I have coached teachers in Newark on a problem posing pedagogical approach and facilitated their new understanding that using a banking approach chiefly engages students in surface learning, that is to say, students engaged in

well-structured "drill and kill" workbook collection exercises are typically unable to do more than simply recall content. In my work as a teacher mentor, I have witnessed that teachers who come to understand the banking approach to instruction as means of substantiating problematic assessments which yield dubious data that is used to indicate students' poor academic ability and progress, at the same time come to understand the root of their feelings of work-related stress. Many teachers I have mentored have shared with me their dawning understanding that, pedagogically, a banking approach induces in students 'learned helplessness' in which they take a passive role in learning (Beers & Beers, 1980; Cummins, 1984). These teachers become excited to see how a problem posing pedagogical approach empowers students by affording them greater control over setting their learning goals and actively collaborating with their peers in achieving those goals. Unlike the teachers who are in control but remain filled with job dissatisfaction, these teachers who understand the roots of their feelings of stress and job dissatisfaction find opportunities to employ praxis necessary that will allow them to eliminate its source.

**Messages of Failure**

In this regard, O'Cadiz, Wong and Torres (1998) emphasize that, "One of the basic tenets of an emancipatory educational paradigm, which takes seriously the presuppositions of critical and emancipatory pedagogy, is the adoption of a 'language of possibility.' This utopian outlook forms the core of progressive pedagogic thought and is the philosophical premise of Paulo Freire's own vision" (2000, p. 13). In contrast to this tenet, the sixth aspect of hopelessness in U.S. urban schools that I identified was that teachers communicate messages directly and indirectly to students about their inevitable

failure.  They use discourse that insidiously transmits an implicit attitude of hopelessness

to other educators, and both tacitly and directly conveys a message to inner-city parents

and their children that they lack promise.  This discourse can be extremely subtle, as in

the following example.  During a conference with a teacher I was supervising, the

discussion was framed around the disengagement of some of the boys in her class.  The

teacher interrupted me mid-sentence, hastily declaring, "I don't see color in my

classroom; I see all my students the same."  I reminded the teacher that since most her

students are black, I would almost guarantee that her students recognize the fact that she

is white. Though she was endeavoring to make the point that she did not allow race to

stand in the way of learning in her classroom, saying that she did not see black students

or the students' race was ultimately a form of passive racist behavior.  Professions of

racial "color blindness" by white teachers implicitly suggest to African American

students that the white teachers possess the power and privilege to recognize or deny an

essential part of these students' culture and self-understanding, thus rendering part of

their identity to nothingness.  Moreover, it suggests that African American students who

fail in school systems design to privilege white students have only themselves to blame,

that they have no additional barriers overcome on their path to educational success than

white students have.

     The aspect of hopelessness of teachers communicating messages of failure to their

students is addressed by dialogue and building community in Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope*.

No matter what the topic being discussed, dialogue always informs the participants as

much about each other as about that topic.  Therefore, dialogue is an indispensable tool

for teachers to seek information about their students.  It is also an important tool for evaluating the outcomes of their teaching and learning as a basis for reflecting on, and revising practice.  They engage in dialogue with colleagues, students, and themselves within the school as support for reflection, problem-solving and new ideas, actively sharing experiences, seeking feedback that will serve as an avenue for change.  Dialogue affords teachers the opportunity to better understand their students and themselves as complex, talented, flawed human beings, for each of whom the work of teaching and learning involves confronting unique challenges.  In the example above, dialogue would be a way for the white teacher to exercise curiosity about her African American students, which might raise her consciousness about her own white privilege and how that is a factor in their educational experience.  Of course, dialogue cannot ameliorate the transmission of messages of failure to students unless it is part of a process of praxis, in which teachers' reflection upon how they derive meaning from the world and how they can acquire alternative ways of understanding what they do, is combined with constructive actions that alter their teaching practice.

One important kind of such action is building community in the classroom. Building community alleviates the phenomenon of teachers communicating messages of failure about students because as reflective practitioners, teachers continually evaluate the effects of their speech and actions on others. When building community in the classroom, it's neither helpful nor respectful to deny or ignore students' sexual, religious, or racial identity, for to do so is to deny who they are.  Building community is not a homogenizing activity in which individuals abandon their uniqueness.  Rather, it is an opportunity for

individuals to both express and construct their uniqueness by means of mutual association. To signal to students that their racial, sexual, or cultural identities are unwelcome or irrelevant aspects of their participation in classroom communities is to establish the underlying tone of the classroom as an environment that is not emotionally safe.

It has been my experience working with white educators in Newark, whether as a colleague or administrator, that a majority of them share how they do not notice a student's race, and how all of their students are treated the same. To me the question remains: the same as what? The same as if they were all: White? Black? Hispanic? Heterosexual? Homosexual? Gender fluid? Christian? Muslim? Hindi? Atheist? The experiences of students with these identities are not the same. Not all of these students see themselves reflected in school textbooks or visual media, or, indeed, in mainstream popular media. Some of them do not see themselves reflected in the school personnel, including faculty, staff and administrators. Some of them take absences from school for religious holidays never discussed in school, let alone recognized by a school closure. Some of these students are called names that the other children do not hear themselves being called. So, for teachers to unreflectingly remark that they treat all students the same is to say that they are not acknowledging the reality of their students' day-to-day experience. Indeed, it is neither helpful nor respectful to deny racial, sexual, linguistic, economic, religious, or cultural identity, for to deny these is to perpetuate the "invisible man syndrome" (Ellison, 1952). It is neither truthful nor complimentary to be erased in order to be embraced (Tatum, 2003). Therefore, to pretend not notice, or to act as though

differences do not exist is to deny significant aspects of the humanity of members of their classroom communities, and to stymy building of the classroom community (DeGruy, 2009).

It has been my experience that teachers in Newark schools – including white teachers – who successfully build community come to recognize that children come to their classroom with many differences, fears, and misunderstandings, and fears about those differences, and so do they (teachers). Acknowledging students' differences, perhaps, is not the most radical actions that impact building community, but it is certainly a significant portion of it. Building community in the classroom that fosters recognition of difference requires teachers and students to have hard conversations. This requires courage and establishing an underlying tone that the classroom environment is emotionally safe. I supervise teachers, who endeavor to understand and sincerely embrace their students' differences and in embracing differences, they are modeling open-mindedness, and build trust with their students. These teachers are the teachers whose classroom are filled and bustling with students engaging in dialogues and learning activities well beyond the closing bell at the end of the school day.

**Regimented Teaching Styles**

The seventh aspect of hopelessness in U.S. urban schools that I identified was that teachers adopt regimented teaching styles that equate teaching with control and learning with submission. They hold that absolute obedience to authority and the suppression of students' thinking is the foundation of all education in order to avert intractability and disobedience. Consequently, the teacher's thoughts are folded into the thoughts of the

students, exemplifying a banking education. This aspect of hopelessness is addressed by problem posing, dialogue, and building confidence, in Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope*.

Problem posing ameliorates the phenomenon of teachers using regimented teaching styles because it invites teachers to see the academic and personal struggles of their students in relation to their curriculum and pedagogy, as a complex phenomenon that is capable of being transformed. Problem posing levels the authority of teachers and students to the extent that the teacher does "not separate the act of teaching from the act of learning" (Freire, 1998, p.9). The banking concept of education imposes a schism between a person (teacher and/or student) and the "real world", resulting in the demise of his or her true consciousness, since consciousness can only be raised through education that connects the curricular material to lived experience.

Problem posing is particularly powerful in a community of teachers who collaborate in the search for more meaningful educational experience. This requires dialogue among teachers and between teachers and students, parents and school administrators. Dialogue ameliorates the phenomenon of teachers using regimented teaching styles because knowledge about teaching methods can be acquired and revised through dialogue. Dialogue necessarily involves open, mutual questioning. It therefore allows for consideration of how teachers think about themselves and their teaching. By reflecting on their teaching experiences, habits and belief, teachers acquire an understanding about what is important, what in unimportant, what is working, and what is not working, and the tools to transform their regimented practices.

During a weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC) meeting among a group of Newark teachers, I was mentoring, one teacher explained how a lesson he was teaching from the Newark Public School's English Language Arts (ELA) Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) Collections (a prepackaged lesson) went wrong from the very beginning.  Because of the diverse learners in his class there were concepts that some of the students needed to know in order to understand the lesson, while some of the other students had read the novel in the eighth grade, and were familiar with the literary terms being introduced.  Out of sheer frustration, this teacher abandoned the lesson and allowed the students to work on a different task at the computer stations.  He knew the lesson was not working, but he was too frustrated to figure out what to do to get the lesson and the students back on track.  As he told his story, the other members of the PLC listened carefully and sympathized with his frustration.  They asked him critical questions that prompted him to problematize the situation and to consider it in different ways.  In the process of reconstructing his experiences for his peers, this teacher was able to see the potential of the lesson rather than the constraints and to brainstorm with them various ways he could have modified the lesson, including concreate activities he could now use to make the lesson more accessible to student.  This peer dialogue facilitated this teacher's reconceptualization of his own pedagogy, which led to significant changes in his way of knowing, thinking and being, thus exemplifying praxis.

When confidence is built within a classroom, students begin to take responsibility for their own learning process and to understand that process as richly changeable.  They begin to empower themselves by building trust in their own ideas.  Building confidence

ameliorates the phenomenon of teachers using regimented teaching styles because as

students become actively engaged and assume responsibility for their own learning, they

more readily ask questions, pose challenges to the established curriculum and pedagogy,

and even experiment on their own with creative educational experiences.  Students who

are confident, who see themselves as capable, unfinished human beings, hold themselves,

their peers and their teachers accountable for the culture of the classroom.  The prevailing

myth of a banking education suggests that such participation by students as co-partners in

their learning, or learning on their own is meritless and unreliable. The consequence of

this illogical belief is that the teacher must control the learning process in order for the

students to be empowered (Freire, 1998; Illich, 1970).  Students acting on their

confidence to challenge their educational status quo fits Page and Czuba's (1999)

definition of empowerment, which is a process that fosters power in people for use in

their own lives, their communities and in their society, by acting on issues they *define* as

important.

For example, in 2015 alone I witnessed Newark Public School students stage

protests on such issues as the closing of numerous neighborhood schools, the collocation

of schools, the opening of numerous new charter schools, the implementation of new

policies such as One Newark, the misappropriation of the Zuckerberg donation without

public involvement or accountability, the disappearance of other funds, failure to

implement fully funded programs, and the elimination of positions such as attendance

counselors, coupled with the hiring of numerous consultants for exorbitant salaries.

Students carried signs with messages such as, "Save Our Schools" and "We Have

Rights," in protest actions including school walkouts, a sit-in at the office of former State

District Superintendent Cami Anderson, and rallies held on the steps of City Hall, at

District Advisory Board meetings and at major thoroughfares in Newark. These actions

demonstrate that young people whose confidence remains in tact are capable of critically

reading the political dimensions of their educational experience, and of planning and

executing creative, constructive work on their world.

**Abusive Behavior**

The eighth aspect of hopelessness in U.S. urban schools that I identified was that

teachers enact abusive behavior toward students. They demean students with put downs,

interact with students in biased ways, dominate and manipulate students, use intimidation

against them, and distance themselves from students emotionally. This aspect of

hopelessness is addressed by praxis, in *Freire's Pedagogy of Hope*. Praxis ameliorates

the phenomenon of teachers using abusive behavior toward students because for

educators, the challenge is to "interrogate the descriptive nature of the discourse on race

and ethnicity" in order to "unveil the inherent description that hides how ethnicity [and]

cultural differences are reshaped around a racial identity [giving rise to] a hierarchy that

subcategorizes while devaluing groups of people that are designated 'racial others,' or

'ethnic outsiders'" (Bartolomé & Macedo,1997, p. 224).

In education, there are many abusive behaviors that support a system of advantage

that might be described as passively racist or bigoted. Because racism and bigotry can be

denied by those who contribute to it and ignored by those who have not experienced it, its

elusive nature makes it the most pervasive and detrimental form of narrow-mindedness

and abuse. For example, In the late 1980's, while working at Weequahic High School in Newark, I overheard an exchange between two white colleagues that to this day, I have never forgotten. One white teacher suggested to the white French teacher, whose students were "out of control," that if she would stop sitting at her desk reading the newspaper and eating during class time, and try to teach the students something, then, maybe there would be less chaos in her class, to which the French teacher responded, "It's hard to treat animals like anything. Why should I teach them? They'll only end up trying to compete with white children." Another incident that I recall was with a white teacher who proudly shared with me his classroom management technique. He bragged about how he greeted his students at the classroom door with, "Take the handout, complete it, drop it in the basket when the bell rings. Now sit your asses down, and don't say shit to me." Praxis is necessary for such teachers to raise their own consciousness and critically self-correct their thinking and behavior in order to become a beneficial presence in the lives of students.

**Aspects of Hopelessness that are not Addressed by Pedagogy of Hope**

According to Freire (1998), liberating people from myths begins with critically reflecting about, and addressing the social reality of the people's lives. To undertake this, "...the point of departure must always be with men and women in the 'here and now', which constitutes the situation within which they are submerged, from which they emerge, and in which they intervene" (Freire, 1998, p. 66). The oppression that urban students face has a particular nature and form. As described in Chapter One, this oppression manifests itself in almost every facet of urban life. This means that it is all the

more important that individuals learn to "read" this oppression for what it is. The means by which inner-city students are being oppressed is a manifestation of a master-slave morality in conjunction with the perpetuation and reinforcement of myths that blind individuals (students and educators) to the discrepancy between what they perceive to be true and would like to be true, and what is actually true. Once these individuals employ a wakeful intelligence and identify the means by which they are being oppressed, they can expose and combat those means of oppression.

Consequently, education will allow individuals to recognize and expose the failings and injustices of society for what they really are, and name their social reality as a problem to be posed to society and subsequently solved. The discrepancy between what individuals perceive to be true and what is true will only be solved once they dispel the myths, upon which, our society is built. For example, people need to be able to say that welfare is institutionalized poverty; and people need to be able to say that much of inner-city schooling is intellectual welfarism. A truly liberating education will allow many inner-city students and educators to neither honestly assess the society, in which they live and read the world and develop the language needed to expose the means of oppression. They cannot name their world, and, therefore cannot transform it. Likewise, urban educators have become ensconced in an ideology of oppression that keeps them cloaked in a cold comfort of lies. The prevailing myth of an oppressive urban institution of education suggests that students engaging in a discussion to resolve a problem, sans teacher directives, is irresponsible; that learning on one's own is unreliable; and, the practice of depositing information is the most efficient approach to education. The

consequence of such a perverted logic is the belief that educators must maintain

oppressive practices in order to be empowered; this justification tends to be quantitative

in nature, suggesting that the more controlling practices equal more empowerment.

Consequently, urban educators have taken this perverted logic to its extreme by

creating increasingly oppressive practices, all the while creating more and more

disenfranchised students. These oppressive practices have become destructive of the ends

of authentically engaging students, in accordance, "creating unauthentic forms of

existence, creates also unauthentic forms of thought, which reinforce the original

dichotomy" (Freire, pp. 87-88).

One of the defining characteristics of the research on the pedagogy of hope and its

implications for inner-city schools is the lofty nature of the language used to describe the

process. Indeed, high expectations have simply been eliminated from the schooling

equation in favor of a status quo that promotes complacency and apathy. In order to

restore hope and high expectations to impoverished and disadvantaged learners requires

more than empty talk or unctuousness promises from educators and policymakers.

For educators, the argument that even the most "liberated" individual can be

"liberated" further in a hostile world assumes relevance when considering marginalized,

young learners whose lives have been characterized by little or nothing to truly hope for,

and low expectations (Freire, 2000, p. 33). As previously discussed, Black children face a

challenge that requires an approach to education that not only addresses the acquisition of

knowledge, but the systemic mechanisms of racial discrimination. Therefore, an

authentic pedagogy of hope with relevance for inner-city students must be fully grounded

in what is known to them and how education can be reasonably expected to transform their lives. In this regard, Giroux (2004) adds that, "For hope to be consequential it has to be grounded in a project that has some hold on the present. Hope becomes meaningful to the degree that it identifies agencies and processes, offers alternatives to an age of profound pessimism, reclaims an ethic of compassion and justice, and struggles for those institutions in which equality, freedom, and justice flourish as part of the ongoing struggle for a global democracy" (p. 64).

African American students have a different relationship with authority than other students, in general. They expect authority to justify itself. It is not enough to say do it because I said so. You must believe that the authority is in your best interest. And then you must believe that the authority is legitimate, as in intelligent enough to be taken seriously. Rapport is the most important thing to establish when teaching an African American child, and the rapport must be based on fundamental fairness and respect.

Freire maintains that "It is absurd for teachers to imagine that they are engaged in right thinking and at the same time to relate to the student in a patronizing way" (1998, p. 40). In general, many teachers establish a master-slave relationship with inner-city students, that is, a 'do what I say do because I said do it' relationship (Freire, 2005). During my twenty-nine-year tenure in an inner-city school district, I have notice that non-African American students have a better time simply being quiet and obedient, in spite of the repressive relationship. This is especially true with African American males. Repressive authority clashes with fledgling definitions of masculinity and creates a toxic environment. The older an African American child gets, especially males, the more he

recognizes that his body is feared. Sagging pants and adopting fashion most associated with prison thugs is a direct reaction to the perception people would have, no matter how they dressed.

Authority, schools, non-African Americans, and even African Americans have an ontological relationship with Black males that define their bodies as dangers that must be dealt with. Clearly, it is because of Freire's admonition that "The more alienated people are, the easier it is to divide them and keep them divided…" (2005, p.145) that I included Black-on-Black relationships in my claim. Therefore, the justness of the authority and rapport are so important. In schools, authority (teachers) have a relationship with the black body that says they will either connect or they will be afraid. Connection for a Black child means being able to justify our (teachers') authority, and to prove that teachers, as figures of authority figures, have legitimacy on three levels, which are: Are we smart enough to teach them? Are we respectful enough to teach them? Do we care enough to teach them? I don't believe that it is enough to have only one or two of those questions answered successfully. I believe that to successfully teach African-American males, whose bodies are targeted, teachers must work on all three levels to establish their authority before the teaching can begin.

Some studies argue that Blacks learn differently. I don't think it is about "learning differently" as with special education; but, I do believe there are serious differences in the way Blacks negotiate authority. The ultimate problem is that few people teach Black American students how to successfully negotiate authority, or the levels of communication that must be had if authority is to be dealt with well. That is why Black

American students are more likely to question the rules of school and challenge the curricula that the state, the teacher, the school administrator, the perceived oppressor wants to implement.

African Americans are rooted in Civil Rights. This means that we are extremely idealistic about authority and America and most disappointed and devastated at the unfairness of things. We believe we can either change things to make them fair or go out trying. It will also mean that we will test authority.   Freire cautions those who surreptitiously oppress that "The dominators try to present themselves as saviors of the women and men they dehumanize and divide. This messianism, however, cannot conceal their true intent: to save themselves" (2005, p.145).   Hence, oftentimes, a Black student sags his pants solely to gauge a teacher's reaction; and, he will ignore a teacher to see how the teacher will interact with him. Will the teacher demand obedience based on threats? Will the teacher even be able to follow through on those threats? Often this student knows that the teacher will blow up, over react, and the teacher looks bad. That is entertainment for this student.

"Intellectuals who memorize everything, reading for hours on end, slaves to the text, fearful of taking a risk, speaking as if they were reciting from memory, fail to make any concrete connections between what they have read and what is happening in the world, the country, or the local community. They repeat what has been read with precision but rarely teach anything of personal value" (Freire, 1998, p. 34).   Clearly, what is missing from many teachers' training is how to deal with urban students, especially urban minority students, as well as teaching teachers not to be asses. Teacher

must understand that to be persuasive, they must justify their authority. If they do not or cannot justify their authority beyond do what I say, they cannot successfully teach African-American children. They begin to reflect the master - slave dynamic that becomes a layered insult. Students are forced to deny their instincts to be functional in your class.

Consequently, the aspect of Freire's pedagogy that may not easily be translated into urban classrooms across America is the link between praxis, reflection and action, and social change. Because of the political apparatus at hand, that is, as long as teachers fear meeting the requirement of Student Growth Objectives (SGOs) that affect their annual evaluations and jobs, seldom in inner-city schools will the liberatory education directly influence social change. Bureaucratic educational systems impose their own logic on Freirean practices, therefore emancipatory practices have become little more than learning circles that promote dialogue, peer interaction that use students' knowledge as the curriculum prescribes. For teachers mired in the system, social and political empowerment as a collective goal is replaced with the more anemic goal of individual student enrichment.

Many educators view or tend to approaches an emancipatory education simply as a variation of another pedagogical technique that is to be used to assist students with achieving the College Readiness Skills mandated by the Common Core Curriculum Standard. This rhetoric has proven acceptable to traditional school bureaucrats as a 'buzz word' that enables them to continue to maintain static traditional schools. For poverty pimps, the education consultants who eat up inner-city funding with claims of feeding

teachers the training required to engage students in problem-based learning techniques and inquiry-based approaches, and the profiteers who produce prefabricated collection of lessons, and digital learning exercises.

As I previously argued, student growth requires engagement in praxis: critical reflection on one's former self, a critical reading of one's current situation, and action that aims at realizing one's hopes.

Freire's education model for hope would enable students and teachers to challenge the constraints of their world and reflect on their historical experience, wake an understanding of their past reality, their present reality and, most importantly, and plan for a future.

Again, praxis requires the space, the opportunity, and the tools to do so. However, since what is the most expedient and practical plays a determining role in inner-city schools and schooling education, for many inner-city students and their teachers, knowing as the outcome of praxis is an aspect that will remain an alien concept. Because urban education, whether for students or teachers is a top-down model that fosters obedience and conformity this aspect of Freire's theory may be impossible to be realized in inner-city classroom.

**Chapter 5: Critiques and Merits of Freire's Pedagogy of Hope**


In the previous chapter I conducted a theoretical analysis of which components of Paolo Freire's Pedagogy of Hope addressed various aspects of the phenomenon of hopelessness in U.S. urban schools. I found that while a few of those aspects of hopelessness were not fully addressed by Freire's pedagogy, they were all addressed to some extent, and some were addressed extensively. Some of the secondary literature I studied in relation to each of my research questions included various criticisms of Freire's pedagogical model. As part of my analysis I noted and summarized these. (See Appendix B.) I distinguished a total of eight different criticisms of Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope*:

1) That Freire used language too lofty, vague, or utopian to describe his ideas;

2) That the dichotomy Freire presented, that *you're either for or against the oppressed*, is too strident and unrealistic;

3) That Freire's accounts of problem posing and banking education are actually so similar as to be indistinguishable in practice;

4) That Freire's pedagogy is more suited to adult education or andragogy than to the education of children and adolescents;

5) That Freire's pedagogy actually enacts a subtle form of indoctrination under the guise of problem-posing;

6) That Freire's account of roles of the teacher-as-student and the student-as-teacher are too obscure to inform classroom practice;

7) That Freire's pedagogy is inadequate to liberate people with chronic illiteracy and apathy; and

8) That because Freire's pedagogy was designed to address socioeconomic forms of oppression, it is ineffective in addressing oppression relating to sexuality and gender.

To conclude this dissertation, in this chapter I will offer responses to each of these criticisms, based on my interpretation of Freire's writing, arguments drawn from the secondary literature, and my own experiences teaching in the Newark Public School District.

In addition to discussing criticisms, in this chapter I discuss what the literature reveals about the effectiveness of components of Freire's pedagogy relevant to those criticisms, in ameliorating one or more aspects of hopelessness in U.S. urban schools. (See Appendix C.) In the previous chapter I analyzed which components of Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope* theoretically address various aspects of the phenomenon of hopelessness in U.S. urban schools. The relevance of Freire's work to education in the U.S. has been the foundation of numerous curricular, programmatic and policy efforts in the United States that attempt to apply various aspects of Freire's pedagogy in U.S. schools. However, few studies have directly examined the effectiveness of Freire's Pedagogy of Hope in actually ameliorating hopelessness among inner-city youth and educators, with the result that we do not know, on the whole, how effective that work has been. My analysis provides a clearer understanding of the extent and relative strength of that relevance for various aspects of hopelessness in U.S. urban schools.

**Freire's Language**

Freire has been criticized for using language that is either too lofty (academic), lacking in clarity, and/or too utopian to describe his ideas, especially for the teachers he hoped would experiment with them.  Regarding his use of academic language, on the one hand, Freire himself addressed this concern in his work after *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, by adopting a more conversational tone, as illustrated by the accessible language used by Freire in explaining his concept of man's materialistic existence in the world:

> The oppressor consciousness tends to transform everything surrounding it into an object of its domination. The earth, property, production, the creations of people, people themselves, time—everything is reduced to the status of objects at its disposal . . . In their unrestrained eagerness to possess, the oppressors develop the conviction that it is possible for them to transform everything into objects of their purchasing power.  Money is the measure of all things, and profit the primary goal. For the oppressors, what is worthwhile is to have more—always more— even at the cost of the oppressed having less or having nothing. For them, to be is to have and to be the class of the "haves" (2000, p.58).

Therefore, Freire's endeavors to write in accessible language should not be understood as a validation of this criticism.  Rather, the criticism itself must be problematized.  First, as Macedo has argued, there is reason to believe the criticism is ideologically biased.  Freire tells the story about preparing the English translation of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* for the general public while he was at Harvard.  To check for understanding and to see how the book would be received, Freire gave a poor, under-

educated African American woman a chapter from *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which

had been translated to English, to read.  In the following days, he asked the woman if she

had read the chapter.  Macedo described the woman's response, in the introduction of

*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*:

> She enthusiastically responded, "Yes. Not only did I read it, but I gave it to my
>
> sixteen-year-old son to read.  He read the whole chapter that night and in the
>
> morning said, 'I want to meet the man who wrote this.  He is talking about me.'"
>
> One question that I have for all those "highly literate" academics who find
>
> Giroux's and Freire's discourse so difficult to understand is: Why is it that a
>
> sixteen-year-old boy and a poor, "semiliterate" woman could so easily understand
>
> and connect with the complexity of both Freire and Giroux's language and ideas,
>
> and the academics, who should be the most literate, find the language
>
> incomprehensible?  I believe the answer has little to do with language and
>
> everything to do with Ideology (2000, p. 23).

Freire too suspected that this criticism of his written language originated in a certain

privileged class and functioned to disempower people who speak and write in non-

standardized ways.  Thus, regarding the alleged vagueness in his writing, Freire offered

the following response:

> I am often amazed to hear academics complain about the complexity of a
>
> particular discourse because of its alleged lack of clarity.  It is as if they have
>
> assumed that there is a mono-discourse that is characterized by its clarity and is
>
> also equally available to all.  If one begins to probe the issue of clarity, we soon

realize that it is class specific, thus favoring those of that class in the meaning-making process" (2000, p.22).

It is significant that Freire here makes the issue of clarity in writing a matter of meaning-making more broadly. The point of his response could just as easily be made by students to teachers who judge their writing as vague. Freire's argument is that vagueness and clarity are necessarily relative to a specific context of meaning-making, which is an activity that takes place between people. A lack of understanding between writer and reader should be the occasion for further exploration, questioning and dialogue. It may, of course, be that the writer has not sufficiently understood the reader in order to make her meaning clear, but the reverse is just as possible.

To critics of his use of utopian language, Freire responded that, "In order for the oppressed to be able to wage the struggle for their liberation, they must perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform" (2000, p. 34). In other words, Freire's pedagogy cannot be meaningfully implemented for non-utopian ends. Therefore, as O'Cadiz, Wong and Torres (1998) argue:

> One of the basic tenets of an emancipatory educational paradigm, which takes seriously the presuppositions of critical and emancipatory pedagogy, is the adoption of a 'language of possibility.' Thus, developing a language of possibility is part and parcel, that is, an essential element of what makes a person critical (p. 32).

Freire's response to being accused of being too utopian was to embrace the accusation and in fact to point out that his pedagogy seeks to make students and teachers comfortable in using their own utopian language.  As Giroux puts it, the aim of the critical educator should be "to raise ambitions, desires, and real hope for those who wish to take seriously the issue of educational struggle and social justice" (Giroux 1988, p. 177).  Indeed, one of the defining characteristics of the research on the pedagogy of hope and its implications for inner-city schools is the lofty nature of the language used to describe the process.  But this phenomenon must be understood in the context that high expectations have simply been eliminated from the inner-city schooling equation, in favor of a status quo that promotes complacency and apathy.  Of course, restoring hope and high expectations to impoverished and disadvantaged learners requires more than empty talk or unctuous promises from educators and policymakers, but utopian vision and speech are at least necessary, if not sufficient to that purpose.

Another important response to the criticism of Freire's writing as "too lofty" is that many of his most important concepts, such as "emotional learning" and "building self-confidence," are set out in terms that are simple and immediately accessible.  Indeed, research on these concepts has overwhelmingly supported his claims about them.  In a widely-cited article on social-emotional learning, Van Velsor (2009) explained that social-emotional learning is the process through which individuals become socially and emotionally intelligent. Social intelligence is the ability to understand and deal with people and to act judiciously in human relationships. There is no specific agreed-upon definition of emotional intelligence. However, Van Velsor identified the core elements of

emotional intelligence as: (a) awareness of and appropriate expression of one's own emotions, (b) the ability to understand others' feelings to establish satisfying relationships, (c) successful adaptation to change and its accompanying emotions for effective problem solving, and (d) the ability to generate positive emotions and self-motivate.

Based on their work with the Collaborative to Advance Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), Elias and Weissberg (2000) have argued that emotional learning is critical to success in school and the workplace, and to sustaining healthy relationships with family and friends. They distinguish a number of essential social and emotional skills that would ameliorate aspects of hopelessness in US urban schools, such as feeling disenfranchised, dehumanized, and/or disempowered. Those skills include: 1) communicating effectively; 2) ability to work cooperatively with others; 3) emotional self-control and appropriate expression; 4) empathy and perspective taking; 5) optimism, humor, and self-awareness, including strengths; 6) ability to plan and set goals; 7) solving problems and resolving conflicts thoughtfully and nonviolently; and 8) bringing a reflective, learning-to-learn approach to all domains of life.

Snyder's (2000) *Handbook of Hope* provides extensive evidence, through multiple studies, that building self-confidence was effective in ameliorating the negative self-concept aspect of hopelessness in U.S. urban schools. Snyder shows that health, broadly defined, is positively correlated with high hope, while physical and psychological struggles are correlated to low hope. Hope is a cognitive process with emotional sequelae and correlates. Snyder's work shows that increases in hopeful thinking empower young

people to articulate healthy (one might say, 'utopian') goals, and to behaviorally engage those goals.

Giroux (2004) contended that building self-confidence was effective in ameliorating messages of failure, an aspect of hopelessness in U.S. urban schools. He observed that there is a long history in the United States of hope as a subversive force. Examples are evident in the struggles of the Civil Rights and feminist movements in the 1950s and 1960s against racism, poverty, sexism, and the war in Vietnam. More recent examples can be found among young people demonstrating against multinational corporations and the World Trade Organization in cities as diverse as Melbourne, Seattle, and Genoa. Hope was on full display among organized labor, intellectuals, students, and workers protesting together in the streets of New York City against Bush's policies and his followers at the Republican National Convention (Giroux, 2004). A politics and pedagogy of hope is [not] a blueprint for the future. What hope offers is the belief, simply, that different futures are possible. In this way, hope can become a subversive force, pluralizing politics by opening up a space for dissent, contingency, indeterminacy.

**Being Either With or Against the Oppressed**

Some critics have expressed concerns about Freire's contention that one is either with or against the oppressed. This contention is read as being too strident and unrealistic as, in practice, everyone, even the oppressed, participates in systems of oppression. If taken literally, Freire's position can result in a naïve, one-dimensional political analysis, as if all the guilty could be stacked up on one side of the fence and all the innocent on the other. Similarly, some educators have even argued that Freire's dichotomy of

"oppressor" and "oppressed" is too simplistic and reveals a failure on his part to recognize the multiplicity of subjectivities involved in the learning process (Steiner, Krank, Mclaren & Bahruth, 2000, pp. 276-277).  In my estimation, this is a naïve, literalist reading of Freire.  While descriptively it is true that every human agent participates in both freedom and oppression, and that pedagogical practices intended for liberation may unwittingly result in further oppression, there is every reason to distinguish, as Freire does, the willingness to work to resist oppression from the willingness to capitulate to it and even to intentionally perpetuate it in order to preserve the status quo of injustice.

This distinction manifest in a dramatic and complicated way a few years ago, in the high school where I taught, which is a magnet school with a focus on science.  At that time, the District's "College and Career Readiness" (CCR) policy mandated that all students follow the same curriculum within each grade, including the same pacing guide and the same tests.  This policy ignored dramatic differences in students' academic abilities within grade levels.  Some students in grade 11 in the district were reading at a 4th, or even a 1st grade level. The principal of my high school refused to follow this oppressive, one-size-fits-all policy because he recognized that students in this science magnet high school were not being challenged, and was subsequently pressured to resign. A teacher at the school was promoted to acting principle, who was willing to follow district policy fully.

The school's teaching staff were then divided between those who supported the previous principal's efforts to ensure academic rigor and those who saw that our students

would easily meet the CCR standards, and preferred to follow district directives in order to avoid trouble with the superintendent.  The former group of teachers recognized themselves and their students as capable of growth.  Their conscientization was evidenced by their willingness take professional risks, beginning with their work to organize a search committee they believed would conduct a rigorous and fair search, thus foiling the District from installing a principal who would fall in line.   And in fact, after a year of recruitment, interviews and observations, two candidates were chosen as finalists, each of whom demonstrated excellence and integrity.  At this point, however, the other group of teachers demonstrated their willingness to capitulate to this episode of oppression by inviting the entire school staff to sign a letter of support for the acting principal, with the assurance that it would never leave the school, and then sending the letter to the Superintendent as a petition to have the acting principal made permanent principal – which the superintendent then did.  The following letter (excerpted) was sent out to parents and students by of the teachers in the former group, expressing the collective regret of those teachers at this corruption.

> So to every staff member who signed, many of your signatures are being used in a
> way that you did not intend. I told a few staff members this already and most were
> upset and felt betrayed. . .. One teacher I spoke to did not get the seriousness of
> this breach. So, for those who don't get it. . . How can you teach children about an
> honor code if you are okay with benefitting from dishonor? We punish cheating
> and plagiarism because integrity is important. It is difficult to keep a student out

of the I.B. Program for cheating when they could say, "But isn't that how you got

your job?" (Alston, 2015).

While it is true, of course, that no individual teacher, principal or superintendent is

"ideologically pure" in the sense of never acting in ways that are complicit with

oppression, episodes like this illustrate how high the stakes can be in choosing to act with

or against oppression inside our schools.

**Distinguishing Problem Posing from Banking Education**

Banking education resists dialogue; problem-posing education regards dialogue as

indispensable to the kind of cognition that unveils reality (Freire, 2000). A banking

education involves the transmission of ideas – from teacher to students, in which students

are treated a as docile recipients, who then reproduce these ideas in an uncritical fashion.

Whereas, with a problem posing education, students - no longer docile listeners – they are

co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher. The teacher presents the material to the

students for their consideration, and re-considers his earlier considerations as the students

express their own" (2000, p. 81). Nonetheless, some critics have argued that Freire's

accounts of problem posing and banking education are actually so similar as to be

indistinguishable in practice. For instance, according to Torres, Freire's "initial point of

reference might be non-formal, but the educational encounters he explores remain

formal" (1993, p. 127). In other words, though Freire's educational approach is

dialogical in spirit, in practice teachers must still follow a prescribed Freirean curriculum,

in which "the teacher presents the material to the students for their consideration" (Freire,

2000, p.80). Thus, the process is curriculum-based, which entails transforming settings

into a particular type of pedagogical learning space and, akin to the banking concept, requires teaching and learning as a predefined process.

The force of this argument depends on what is meant by "predefined." Freire was clear that his *Pedagogy of Hope* was indeed pedagogy: a certain approach to teaching and learning that involved a theory of the aims of education and a number of methods designed to achieve those aims. In that regard problem posing education is indistinguishable from banking education. This line of criticism also plays upon the fact that there is a certain paradoxical tension in the phrase "liberatory pedagogy," in that the first term implies freedom while the latter term implies some kind of guidance. Freire's conception of freedom, however, is more positive (the freedom to do something) than negative (freedom from something) as is implied in his phrase "education as the *practice* of freedom."

However, problem posing education need not involve presenting students with pre-determined problems they are expected to solve using pre-determined methods toward pre-determined solutions. Indeed, such a 'banking' approach contradicts the intention of problem posing. The most important thing about a problem posing education is that it is a "liberating education that consists in acts of cognition, not transferals of information" (Freire, 2000, p. 79). Problem-posing education allows students to develop their cognitive /thinking skills, whereas the banking method stifles those skills in ways that have a negative residual impact. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire relates that while teaching farmers in Brazil, he noted that whenever the farmers would become involved in a lively conversation about the learning, they would "suddenly stop and say

. . . 'Excuse us, we ought to keep quiet and let you talk. You are the one who knows, we don't know anything'" (2000, p. 63). Freire's work demonstrates that true problem posing begins with the articulation by students of genuine problems that arise in their experience, and continues with the teacher offering curricular resources relevant to that problem, but with the expectation that those resources will not necessarily be adequate to that problem, and with the hope that the students and teacher can find ways of creatively adapting those resources in a project of addressing the problem in genuinely meaningful ways which may or may not be anticipated by standard methods of assessment.

This line of criticism also points to the important problem that, if done the wrong way, an ostensible exercise of problem posting can become an episode of banking education. Worse, as we saw in the previous chapter, almost any aspect of Freire's Pedagogy of Hope can be coopted by an educational system that is anti-liberatory. Because of the political apparatus at hand, that is, as long as teachers fear meeting the requirement of Student Growth Objectives (SGOs) that affect their annual evaluations and jobs, seldom in inner-city schools will liberatory educational practices result in meaningful social change. Bureaucratic educational systems impose their own logic on Freirean practices, therefore emancipatory practices have become little more than learning circles that promote dialogue, peer interaction that use students' knowledge as the curriculum prescribes. For teachers mired in the system, social and political empowerment as a collective goal is replaced with the more anemic goal of individual student enrichment.

In my experience, many educators view "emancipatory education" as a meaningless concept, as long as a fixed set of College Readiness Skills continue to be mandated by the Common Core Curriculum Standards. The rhetoric around standards has proven acceptable to traditional school bureaucrats as a 'buzz word' that enables them to continue to maintain static traditional schools.  It has also given rise to the phenomenon of "poverty pimps" (Sachs, 1991, p. 96), the education consultants who eat up inner-city funding with claims of feeding teachers the training required to engage students in problem-based learning techniques and inquiry-based approaches, but who continue to produce prefabricated collections of lessons, and digital learning exercises.  Clearly, this phenomenon also contradicts the intent of problem posing, which would provide for teachers themselves articulating genuine problems they perceive in their work and relationships with students, and work with other professionals to find meaningful ways to address those problems.

**Pedagogy as opposed to Andragogy**

A criticism sometimes made of Freire's pedagogy is that it is more suited to adult education or andragogy than to the education of children and adolescents.  Pedagogy is defined as "the art and science of teaching children" (Ozuah, 2005, p.83), derived from the Greek *paidos* for boy and *agogos* for leading or guiding.  Andragogy derives from the Greek *andros* for adult male (note the masculine gender of both terms).  Traditionally, pedagogical theory and practice have tended to assume that children as learners (1) are dependent on teachers, (2) prefer learning that is subject centered, (3) respond well to extrinsic motivators, and (4) do not have enough life experience for that to be relevant to

learning in the classroom (Knowles, 1980, p.43).  In contrast, andragogical approaches tend to assume that adult learners: (1) prefer to be responsible for their own learning and involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction, (2) can use their own life experience as a rich resource for learning, (3) prefer learning that is problem centered rather than content oriented, (4) respond better to internal, rather than external, motivators, and (5) need to understand the reason for, and importance of, all their learning (Knowles, 1980, p.43).

Freire's Pedagogy of Hope is a model of critical pedagogy, the primary preoccupation of which is social interactions, social justice, and setting in motion changes of unjust, inequitable, undemocratic, oppressive beliefs, procedures, and institutions.  As Giroux explains,

> Critical pedagogy is not concerned with simply offering students new ways to think critically and act with authority as agents in the classroom; it is also concerned with providing students with the skills and knowledge necessary for them to expand their capacities both to question deep-seated assumptions and myths that legitimate the most archaic and disempowering social practices that structure every aspect of society and to then take responsibility for intervening in the world they inhabit  (Giroux, 2010, p.8).

Considering the attributes of learners associated with each teaching model, it is understandable that Freire's teaching model is sometimes seen as more fitting for andragogical contexts.  It can be argued, for instance, that inquiry based, problem-posing learning, as it is described by Freire, is in many ways more of an andragogical teaching

strategy than a pedagogical one.  Indeed, Freire's model requires students to use more "adult" ways of learning while still at school. However, this criticism is founded on a naïve and biased philosophy of childhood.  Even young children, who experience intense feelings of right and wrong, fair and unfair, are capable of exercising curiosity about those feelings and the experiences that provoke them, and of learning to read their world in ethical and political terms.  As previously discussed, Black children in particular face a challenge that requires an approach to education that not only addresses the acquisition of knowledge, but the systemic mechanisms of racial discrimination.  Therefore, an authentic pedagogy with relevance for inner-city students must be fully grounded in what is known to them and how education can be reasonably expected to transform their lives. In this regard, Giroux (2004) adds that,

> For hope to be consequential it has to be grounded in a project that has some hold on the present. Hope becomes meaningful to the degree that it identifies agencies and processes, offers alternatives to an age of profound pessimism, reclaims an ethic of compassion and justice, and struggles for those institutions in which equality, freedom, and justice flourish as part of the ongoing struggle for a global democracy (p. 64).

The research literature is abundant with evidence that the use of Freirean pedagogical methods is appropriate for children and teenagers. Kress, and Elias (2006) found that the use of dialogue was effective in ameliorating poor social interactions, including episodes of intense rage and acts of violence as an aspect of hopelessness in U.S. urban schools. The context of the study was a large Midwest urban public

alternative high school. The students assigned to the school had experienced issues in traditional educational environments. These issues manifested in many ways such as: expulsions, truancy, dropping out, academic, social, and criminal difficulties. The purpose of the study was to examine unique teaching strategies used by teachers. Out of the 23 staff members invited to participate in the research study, 15 participated; and, each of the participant's interviews was 40 to 60 minutes long. This qualitative study found the process of dialoguing fosters emotional healing for adolescences by allowing them to process wounds and hurts from past relationships thus clearing the path that enables them to focus on their academic work.

**Indoctrination**

Some critics have argued that Freire's pedagogy enacts a subtle form of indoctrination under the guise of problem-posing education because the method of problem-posing, and the framework of liberatory education more broadly, surreptitiously introduces particular ideas and values that are not politically neutral (Torres, 1993; Taylor, 1993; Teacher Commons, 2008). However, this criticism rests on a false dichotomy: that educational practice is either politically neutral or a form of indoctrination. In fact, there is no such thing as politically neutral education, because education either perpetuates the status quo, including systematic injustice, or works to expose and alleviate those injustices. Freire elucidates:

In problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in

transformation. Although the dialectical relations of women and men with the world exist independently of how these relations are perceived (or whether or not they are perceived at all), it is also true that the form of action they adopt is to a large extent a function of how they perceive themselves in the world. Hence, the teacher-student and the students-teachers reflect simultaneously on themselves and the world without dichotomizing this reflection from action, and thus establish an authentic form of thought and action (2008, p. 252).

For Freire, a problem-posing education is the polar-opposite of indoctrination. For one thing, indoctrination implies that the one indoctrinated is essentially powerless to question or resist the indoctrination; she is utterly passive and in a sense, a victim. Freire's method of problem-posing is, at least theoretically, immune to being coopted for indoctrination, because a teacher who helps students wake up to their agency to problematize thereby makes her own educational theory and practice the object of student questioning and challenge. Freire was a pragmatist who saw that injustices are real and saw education as the only meaningful way of confronting them. In that sense, his pedagogy is utterly political. But Freire saw problem-posing education as the most *humanizing* way of allowing people to perceive the true nature of their reality, and to use those perceptions as the basis of their action for putting in motion states of change in dealing with injustices. To become more fully human, as described in Chapter 3, is to become inoculated *against* indoctrination.

Ironically, the mistrust of some critics of Freire's methods as indoctrinatory overlook the unique relationship African American students have with school authority.

African Americans are rooted in Civil Rights. This means that we are extremely idealistic about authority and about America, and, consequently, most disappointed at the unfairness of things. We believe we can either change things to make them fair or go out trying. This means that we will test authority. Freire cautions those who surreptitiously oppress that "The dominators try to present themselves as saviors of the women and men they dehumanize and divide. This messianism, however, cannot conceal their true intent: to save themselves" (2005, p.145). Hence, oftentimes, a Black student sags his pants solely to gauge a teacher's reaction; and, he will ignore a teacher to see how the teacher will interact with him. Will the teacher demand obedience, based on threats? Will the teacher even be able to follow through on those threats? Often this student knows that the teacher will erupt with anger or in some other way over-react, which diminishes the teacher's authority. That is entertainment for this student. In essence, African American students are already engaged in their own form of anti-indoctrinatory problem posing, which a Freirean pedagogy could build on.

Some literature claims that Blacks learn differently (Gordon, 1999; Herrnstein and Murray, 1996; Hale-Benson,1986), as if warranting a kind of special education. In my experience, Blacks do not learn differently, but there are serious differences in the way Blacks negotiate authority. The ultimate problem is that few people teach Black American students how to successfully negotiate authority, or the levels of communication that must be had if authority is to be dealt with well. That is why Black American students are more likely to question the rules of school and challenge the

curricula that the state, the teacher, the school administrator, the perceived oppressor wants to implement.

In a study of 219 students from a Midwestern liberal arts university, Jackson, Weiss, Lundquist, and Hooper (2003) found that the use of problem posing was effective in ameliorating students' negative self-concept – an aspect of hopelessness.  This study found that hope is a cognitive-motivational construct reflecting the interaction of 1) successful agency (goal directed determination) and 2) pathways (planning of ways to meet goals). Hope is associated with measures of problem-focused coping, among other positive outcomes.  This suggests that a Freirean pedagogy of problem posing could strengthen the ability of African American students to question authority – including the authority of teachers and school administrators – in productive ways that, at the same time, inoculate them against indoctrination.

**Teacher-As-Student-As-Teacher**

Some critics have argued that Freire's account of roles of the teacher-as-student and the student-as-teacher are too obscure to inform classroom practice (Teacher Commons, 2008).   Freire addressed this possible concern head-on:

> The problem-posing method does not dichotomize the activity of the teacher-student: he is not "cognitive" at one point and "narrative" at another.  He is always "cognitive," whether preparing a project or engaging in dialogue with the students.  He does not regard cognizable objects as his private property, but as the object of reflection by himself and the students.  In this way, the problem-posing educator constantly re-forms his reflections in the reflection of the students.  The

students are no longer docile listeners are now critical co-investigators in dialogue

with the teacher. The teacher presents the material to the students for their

consideration, and, re-considers her earlier considerations as the students express

their own.  The role of the problem-posing educator is to create; together with, the

students, the conditions under which knowledge at the level of the *doxa* is

superseded by true knowledge, at the level of the *logos* (2000, pp. 80-1).

From this quote, it is clear that Freire wished to undermine the difference between

traditional teacher and student roles in important ways.  He wished to undermine the

dichotomy in which the teacher is the one who thinks and narrates, and the student is the

one who passively receives the narration.  In short, problem-posing education does not

form a separation between the teacher and the learner.  It is a misunderstanding, however,

to see this as dissolving any differences in teachers and student roles. In point of fact, the

direct opposite occurs; the teacher-learners form a dynamic partnership.  It is still the

teacher's responsibility to "present material" she believes will be meaningful in helping

students to see themselves and their world as unfinished, and to see possibilities for

constructive work on both.  But that judgment by the teacher is only hypothetical, as the

teacher must work with students to find out what meaning they can / will make from the

material. In this process, the teacher learns new meanings from the material herself.  As

Freire explained in the text above, because there is a continuous state of shared learning

both the teacher-student and student-teacher are then empowered.  Indeed, the fact that

Freire used the terms teacher-as-student and student-as-teacher indicates that their roles,

while complimentary, are in fact different.

Dialogue is one of the most effective methods for teachers and learners to share learning and, not coincidentally, as Alonso, Anderson, and Theoharis (2009) found, the use of dialogue is effective in ameliorating messages of failure aspect of hopelessness in U.S. urban schools. They conducted ethnographic studies in urban schools in New York and Los Angeles and their work is based on direct quotes from disaffected students in these urban environments.  They found that by paying attention to what students have to say about their own education, we make it much more difficult for teachers and policy makers to ignore them, for two reasons. First, the practice of dialogue with disaffected students makes it difficult for school staff and the American public more broadly to continue to dismiss these teenagers as "thugs" and "whores" and to distance themselves from those "Other" people who live in the "dangerous inner cities." Second, when teachers and other citizens enter a dialogical relationship with disaffected urban students, they are more likely to communicate the issues of urban schooling to educational policy makers and to hold those policy makers accountable.

**Illiteracy and Apathy**

Some critics have argued that Freire's pedagogy is inadequate to liberate people with chronic illiteracy and apathy (Schugurensky, 1998; Taylor, 1993).  Freire once recounted that, "my parents introduced me to reading the word at a certain moment in this rich experience of understanding my immediate world.  Deciphering the word flowed naturally from reading my particular world; it was not something superimposed on it" (Freire and Macedo, 1998, p.9).  Unfortunately, unlike Freire, that is not the case in the majority of urban homes.  In fact, in my long teaching experience, I have found that it is

easy to discern which children have been exposed to this kind of reading in their homes and which children have not. Being shown how, and encouraged, to read words in relation to reading the world of one's own home is a crucial educational experience, because it expands vocabulary (which expands the meanings of one's experiences), it nurtures one's naturally (humanly) inquisitive nature, and it casts the experience of exercising curiosity and learning new things as enjoyable, because it is immediately meaningful.

Obviously, children who have been read to or exposed to reading in such a context are better off for it. However, the issue of literacy is complicated. Many children and adults acquire only "functional literacy," which Collins and O'Brien (2003) define as the minimum needed to meet personal and social needs in general education. Many others are functionally illiterate, meaning that they may have learned to recognize simple words and write simple sentences, they are incapable of decoding the written language beyond a 4.9 grade level in the twelfth grade (Simpkins, 2013). Functionally literate and functionally illiterate people tend to accept what is handed down to them by the privileged, without questioning it. Per the National Institute of Literacy (2015), there are 23 million American adults who are functionally illiterate and 13% of all American 17-years-olds are functionally illiterate.

Additionally, the illiteracy rate in major American inner-cities is as follows:

1. Miami FL: 63%                    13. Gary IN: 46%

2. East LA CA: 57%                  14. East Palo Alto CA: 45%

3. East St. Louis IL: 56%           15. Orange NJ: 45%

| | |
|---|---|
| 4. Compton CA: 55% | 16. Passaic City NJ: 45% |
| 5. Newark NJ: 52% | 17. Paterson NJ: 45% |
| 6. Brownsville TX: 50% | 18. Augusta GA: 43% |
| 7. Union City NJ: 50% | 19. Elizabeth NJ: 42% |
| 8. San Fernando CA: 49% | 20. Atlantic City NJ: 42% |
| 9. Camden NJ: 49% | 21. Miami Beach FL: 41% |
| 10. Detroit MI: 47% | 22. Hartford CT: 41% |
| 11. Laredo TX: 47% | 23. East Chicago IN: 41% |
| 12. East Orange NJ: 46% | 24. South Miami Heights FL: 40% |

(National Institute of Literacy, 2015)

In terms of *conscientization*, functional literacy means reading at a level of mere decoding that is largely disconnected from the reader's lived experience. For these individuals, understanding of their social reality is limited to what they are tacitly taught or openly told to accept and believe. Freire points out that:

> In a culture of silence the masses are 'mute', that is, they are prohibited from creatively taking part in the transformation of their society and therefore prohibited from being. Even if they can occasionally read and write because they were 'taught' in humanitarian - but not humanist - literacy campaigns, they are nevertheless alienated from the power responsible for their silence (2000, p. 30).

For individuals of the inner-city, this silence is associated with apathy that grows because of their confrontation with imperceptible barriers against the prospect of liberation. A

(short or long) lifetime of such confrontation produces an ingrained, fatalistic belief in the inevitability of unjust existing conditions.

> These students, in order to boost their fragile or severely damaged academic egos, frequently engage in disruptive behavior and adopt an attitude of 'Who needs school?' It is not unusual for them to turn to gangs and groups whose value system is antagonistic or negative towards school and society (Simpkins, p. 77, 2013).

In my experience, illiterate and functionally literate people tend to be apathetic and accept their reality or conditions as unalterably permanent; and, they tend believe that they cannot do anything to change it. As an educator in an urban school district, I have often witnessed this kind of defeatism, for example, in a parent's or guardian's failure to attend parent-teacher conferences, to proactively monitor their child's academic, social and emotional behavior in school, and in apathetic comments about political elections.

Given this phenomenon, it is understandable that some critics have proposed that Freire's literacy program is simply inadequate to alleviate this level of apathy. Some have argued that his pedagogy is actually filled with contradictions, in that,

> The rhetoric which announced the importance of dialogue, engagement, and equality, and denounced silence, massification and oppression, did not match in practice the subliminal messages and modes of a Banking System of education; and albeit benign, Freire's approach differs only in degree, but not in kind, from the system which he so eloquently criticizes" (Taylor, 1993, p. 148).

This may be true in practice, in some instances, but Freire would argue that a banking education does not provide people the opportunity to achieve a critical perception of their own social reality that enables them to know what is needed to take action to change. As I have witnessed repeatedly, when inner-city individuals are educated with an intention of raising their awareness and liberating them from an '*It is what it is'* apathetic attitude of acceptance of life and its dehumanizing effects, then education truly liberates, because it breaks such taciturnity and helps people become aware of their oppressed conditions and their democratic rights to participate in social change or transformation.

As I have noted, the problem of illiteracy and functional literacy in US inner cities is intricately tied to other problems: academic, economic, and social. It would therefore be naïve to suggest that Freire's approach to teaching literacy was some kind of magic bullet that can raise literacy rates regardless of those other, related problems. But this is no argument against the efficacy of that pedagogy. Teaching literacy must be undertaking in combination with a host of other methods for addressing the multiple problems facing urban schools I have discussed. For instance, in a study of one particularly successful inner-city elementary school, Cesarone (2006) evaluated the characteristics that contributed to this success. Teachers, the former principal, and an education consultant indicated that nine factors had a significant impact on the school's success, including: strong instructional leadership by the principal and teacher experts, a safe and structured school environment, high expectations for teachers and students, and a common vision. Four topics are also mentioned with respect to promoting learning in

inner-city schools:  (a) fostering educational resilience, (b) implementing practices responsive to student diversity and resilience development, (c) forging school connections with family and community, and (d) building on existing structures for education improvement.

In a case study of the Reading Partners Program, Manz, Power, Ginsburg-Block and Dowrick (2010) found that the use of community building was effective in ameliorating regimented teaching styles that equate teaching with control and learning with submission as an aspect of hopelessness in U.S. urban schools. This individual case study reported that school professionals in an urban setting faced the challenge of educating a disproportionately high number of vulnerable children who experience poverty and associated risks for academic failure. The authors call for an empirically validated, culturally responsive model of intervention that cultivates and supplements natural resources within the school. Interventions must bring schools and communities into partnership so that children profit from mentoring relationships with community members and school staff and to ensure that the cultural heritage of the students is valued and celebrated in schools. A community partnership model offers the advantages of expanding school capacity to provide educational interventions for students and the formation of developmentally salient linkages among children, members from families and communities, and educators.

**Freire and Gender**

Some critics have argued that because Freire's pedagogy was designed to address socioeconomic forms of oppression, it is ineffective in addressing oppression relating to sexuality and gender. In fact, notwithstanding his contributions to educational theory and practice and to critical pedagogy in particular, there is little in Freire's works that deeply deals with issues of sexuality, gender, or gender fluidity. This is a potential barrier to adapting his pedagogy to today's US inner-city schools, in which teachers, administrators, students, and school staff members may be heterosexual, gay, lesbians, bisexual, intersexed, transgendered and/or gender fluid. Considering that, as of this generation of children and going forward, gender is no longer understood as binary, there is nothing in Freire's work that deals with preparing teachers to create a safe classroom space for children, that is physically, socially, and emotionally safe for gay, lesbian, and gender fluid students.

On the one hand, it can be argued that the theory and practice of Freire's pedagogy of hope, though designed specifically to confront socioeconomic oppression and liberation, are general enough to confront other forms of human oppression, including those associated with gender and sexuality (Weiler, 2001). As Freire argues, educators have to transform all kinds of school curriculum into a "real act of knowing" (1995, p. 43) that is meaningful for students in their lived reality. On the other hand, adapting Freire's methods of problem posing, praxis, dialogue, building confidence and building community to the work of liberatory education for gender and sexual minorities

is work that has yet to be done. Consequently, these criticisms rightly point to the need to develop evidence-based practices that make this adaptation.

One continuing debate in education relates directly to gender issues. Singh, Vaught and Mitchell (1998) studied two same-sex and two co-educational classes in two inner-city schools (N=90 students) and found that supporters of coeducational schooling have relied on tradition in assuming that the coeducational system is the only viable option for public education. The proponents of single-sex class organization for African American males have also based their arguments on traditional beliefs, but they do not have enough empirical evidence to support their claims of the superiority of this arrangement. The results of the present study suggest a positive effect of single-sex organization on the attendance and grades of African American male students in inner-city public schools. However, the difference in grades was not statistically significant and there was no difference in standardized test scores. These results underscore the need for more research to fully understand the educational and motivational effects of same-sex classrooms. In addition to achievement test scores, subject grades, and attendance, other school-related variables such as academic motivation, interest in school, engagement in academic tasks, and educational aspirations should be examined to determine if single-sex classrooms promote positive academic attitudes and behaviors among these boys. This discussion becomes even more complicated with the recent widespread recognition that gender is not dichotomous.

Teaching social justice, a primary theme of Freire's work, is not just about economics and race. It relates directly to issues of gender and sexuality as well. As can

be inferred from the definition she uses in working with her teacher candidates, Darling-Hammond (2005) suggests that teachers for social justice need to understand one's identity, other people's background and their worldviews, and the sources of inequities and privileges. Sensitivity to these issues will be helpful in facilitating the learning of students authentically and making a difference in their lives. Bell (1997) explains in an even more global and philosophical sense that teaching for social justice means providing all groups in a society full and equal participation in meeting their needs: "Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure...Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others and the society as a whole" (p.1).

**Recommendations**

Based on the foregoing considerations and especially on my experience as a teacher and administrator in a US urban school district, I will make a number of recommendations for work by educators, researchers and community stakeholders, which I take to be consistent with Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope*. However, it must be understood that to make such recommendations for educational practices in inner-city US schools is in no way to underplay the importance of the historical trends that led to the deplorable conditions of those schools and the phenomenon of hopelessness that manifests in students and teachers there: 1) demographic shifts, 2) school funding/economic shifts, 3) labor market discrimination and institutionalized racism, 4) local cultures oppositional to educational achievement, 5) educational policies and

practices that exacerbated the disadvantages of minority students and 6) the distortion of inner-city schooling by local, state and national politics. It must be understood that my recommendations are only one part of a large political agenda that must confront those trends. Further, while it is tempting to simply recommend that federal and state policymakers come to their senses and allocate more money for America's schools in general and its inner-city schools in particular, absent dozens of more Bill and Melinda Gates Foundations and significantly revamped funding mechanisms, this would be an unrealistic recommendation. Therefore, pragmatic recommendations are called for that take into account the harsh realities that are facing many of America's inner-city schools.

Additionally, as Freire's work has informed my experience as a long-term administrator finding hopefulness in an urban school district, I propose these recommendations as subjects for further research. As a next step to this dissertation, I would study how several educational initiatives that I have otherwise learned about have succeeded, or are likely to succeed in alleviating the phenomenon of hopelessness discussed in this dissertation. This is the case even for those recommendations made below (for example, those involving public/private partnerships) that clearly transcend Freire's framework. A study of these initiatives would be beyond the scope of this dissertation, but would be next steps I would be interested in pursuing in further research. Based on the foregoing considerations, the following recommendations are provided:

1. Develop public-private partnerships between inner-city school districts and cultural and educational resources in the community. This recommendation derives from Freire's view that everything, and everyone is interrelated in the

human world. If schools develop partnerships with businesses, one way to avoid uncritical awareness of consumerism is to use the partnerships as an object lesson to test whether consumerism can sometimes be, strategically, economically desirable.  Such partnerships should involve students in joining with their peers to read their world by reflecting on local economic conditions, imagining better conditions, and then taking action to create them by way of these partnerships.

2.  Solicit sponsorships of inner-city schools by corporate leaders in the community that involve the sharing of expertise as well as monetary resources.  Freire's pedagogy seeks to transform society to rehumanize both the oppressed and oppressor.  Thus, through dialoguing, problem-posing, and praxis, stakeholders should explore the problems they face in their community, and then find solutions through gathering data and or information from their compeers, analyzing the information, and then taking informed action.

3.  Inner-city educators who want to improve the academic and social performance of their students should commit themselves to the long-term, that is, a new policy that all new urban educators (this means any newly hired teacher without five years' experience working in an urban school/district) be hired and nurtured with the expectations that:

    a)  They remain in the same school or district for a minimum number of fives.

    b)  First-year teachers are officially assigned a Master-teacher Mentor and attend biweekly coaching and mentoring sessions

with their immediate supervisor. Second year teachers remain with their Master-teacher Mentor and attend weekly coaching and mentoring sessions with their direct supervisor. Third year teachers are no longer assigned a Master-teacher Mentor, but continue to attend weekly mentoring sessions (coaching sessions when needed). Fourth year teachers continue to attend monthly mentoring sessions with their direct supervisor. Fifth year teachers receive extra support by attending mentoring sessions as needed.

c) All newly hired urban educators attend site-based professional development sessions with school historian (usually school librarian) acquainting them with history (e.g., mission statement, origin of school, student-body, staff, alumni, community partnerships, etc.) and culture of the school they are assigned to work.

4. Particular pedagogical frameworks need to be identified that are best suited to a given school system. Per Freire, education will not be changed in isolation, and experiences and struggles for social change belongs to the entire community; therefore, as a practical realization of Freire's idealism, this should be the work of the entire school community, including teachers, administrators, other school staff, students, parents and community stakeholders should actively participate in the educational process. As a practice of freedom, the staff, students, parents, and

community stakeholders develop a more equitable relationship, in which they, through dialoguing, problem-posing, praxis, and creative problem-solving, learn from each other. Accordingly, this would entail the staff, students, parents, and community stakeholders' participation in activities such as: the SLC (School Leadership Committee), school's parents' association, such as PTA, as well collaborating with teachers and staff and assisting with school site-based and off-site social and academic endeavors.

**Conclusion**

According to Freire (1998), liberating people from myths begins with critically reflecting about, and addressing the social reality of the people's lives. To undertake this, "...the point of departure must always be with men and women in the 'here and now', which constitutes the situation within which they are submerged, from which they emerge, and in which they intervene" (Freire, 1998, p. 66). The oppression that urban students face has a particular nature and form. As described in Chapter One, this oppression manifests itself in almost every facet of urban life. This means that it is all the more important that individuals learn to "read" this oppression for what it is.

Freire maintains that "It is absurd for teachers to imagine that they are engaged in right thinking and at the same time to relate to the student in a patronizing way" (1998, p. 40). In general, many teachers establish a master-slave relationship with inner-city students, that is, a 'do what I say do because I said do it' relationship (Freire, 2005). African American adolescent students, in general, have a different relationship with authority than other students, in general. They expect authority to justify itself. It is not

enough to tell them, "Do it because I said so." They must believe that the authority is in their best interest. Moreover, they must believe that the authority is legitimate, as in intelligent enough to be taken seriously. Rapport is the most important thing to establish when teaching an African American child, and the rapport must be based on fundamental fairness and respect. During my twenty-nine-year tenure in an inner-city school district, I have notice that non-African American students have a better time simply being quiet and obedient, despite the repressive relationship. This is especially true with African American males. Repressive authority clashes with fledgling definitions of masculinity and creates a toxic environment. The older an African American child gets, especially males, the more he recognizes that his body is feared (Coates, 2015). Sagging pants and adopting fashion most associated with prison thugs is a direct reaction to the perception people would have, no matter how they dressed.

It is not only non-African Americans, but also African Americans that have an ontological relationship with Black males that define their bodies as dangers that must be dealt with. Clearly, it is because of Freire's admonition that "The more alienated people are, the easier it is to divide them and keep them divided…" (2000, p.145) that I included Black-on-Black relationships in my claim. For that reason, the justness of educational authority and the rapport between Black male students and school authorities are tremendously important. In schools, authority figures (teachers, staff, and administrators) have a relationship with the black body that says they will either connect or they will be afraid. Connection for a Black child means being able to justify the authority of school personnel on three levels: Is the authority figure smart enough to teach me? Is the

authority figure respectful enough to teach me? Does the authority figure care enough to teach me? To successfully teach African-American males, whose bodies are targeted, teachers must work on all three levels to establish their authority before the teaching can begin.

The means by which inner-city students are being oppressed is a manifestation of a master-slave morality in conjunction with the perpetuation and reinforcement of myths that blind individuals (students and educators) to the discrepancy between what they perceive to be true and would like to be true, and what is actually true. Once these individuals employ a wakeful intelligence and identify the means by which they are being oppressed, they can expose and combat those means of oppression. Consequently, liberatory education will allow individuals to recognize and expose the failings and injustices of society for what they really are, and name their social reality as a problem to be posed to society and subsequently solved.

The discrepancy between what individuals perceive to be true and what is actually true will only be solved once they dispel the myths upon which our society is built. For example, people need to be able to say that welfare is institutionalized poverty; and people need to be able to say that much of inner-city schooling is intellectual welfarism. A truly liberating education will allow many inner-city students and educators to honestly assess the society in which they live and develop the language needed to expose the means of oppression. If they cannot name their world, they cannot transform it. Likewise, urban educators have become ensconced in an ideology of oppression that keeps them cloaked in a cold comfort of lies. One prevailing myth of oppressive urban institutions of

education suggests that students engaging in a discussion to resolve a problem, without teacher directives, is irresponsible: that learning on one's own is unreliable and that the practice of depositing information is the most efficient approach to education. The consequence of such a perverted logic is the belief that educators must maintain oppressive practices in order to be empowered; this justification tends to be quantitative in nature, suggesting that the more controlling practices equal more empowerment.

Consequently, urban educators have taken this perverted logic to its extreme by creating increasingly oppressive practices, all the while creating more and more disenfranchised students. These oppressive practices have become destructive of the ends of authentically engaging students, and, accordingly, "creating unauthentic forms of existence, creates also unauthentic forms of thought, which reinforce the original dichotomy" (Freire, pp. 87-88).

Freire's Pedagogy of Hope is the process of finding the voice needed to participate in society in meaningful ways, a process that is facilitated in environments that are characterized by justice and equality. For many students and educators, the pedagogy of hope may be limited to classroom praxis, but the vision of the pedagogy of hope is intended to help young learners and their teachers extend this voice to others, especially marginalized inner-city students who need the sophisticated skills set required for competing in the 21st century. Unfortunately, complex problems require complex solutions and my research was consistent in showing that the problems facing many inner-city schools are multifaceted and are the legacy of a lengthy series of events in American history that have created a "perfect storm" of challenges for educators and

policymakers alike. Across the board, though, there were instances of exemplary inner-city schools providing their students with the pedagogy of hope through various teaching modalities that are characterized by educators who understand the obstacles and barriers facing their young charges and who are willing to invest the time and effort necessary to encourage dialogues and questioning.  Perhaps the most important component of an inner-city teacher's effectiveness is her ability to cultivate and nurture the sense of hope among young learners in highly urbanized settings by setting high expectations and helping them find ways to achieve them.

Hope is a direct denunciation of the idea that either the individual or collective struggle is futile. It is the light at the end of the tunnel.

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**APPENDICES**

**Appendix A: Definition of Key Definition of Key Terms**

| Key Term | Definition & Source |
|---|---|
| Hopelessness as a phenomenon of US urban education | A bleak attitude about future circumstances, and a belief that failure is inevitable (Weinger, 1988; Bhavnagri & Prosperi, 2007).<br><br>A psycho-social construct consisting of a number of inter-related negative academic, social and psychological attitudes and behaviors, the most important of which are:<br>(1) Giving up on academic work;<br>(2) A lack of respect for the authority of the teacher and the school;<br>(3) Poor social interactions, including episodes of intense rage and acts of violence; and<br>(4) Negative self-concept, loss of self-confidence and even the desire to commit suicide. |
| Critical Pedagogy | A transformation-based approach to education preoccupied with setting in motion changes of unjust, inequitable, undemocratic, oppressive beliefs, procedures, and institutions. In the movement from naïveté to critical pedagogy, individuals grasp the social, political, economic, and cultural contradictions that subvert learning (Freire, 1995; 1998; 2000). |
| *Pedagogy of Hope* | A model of critical pedagogy developed by Paulo Freire that empowers students and teachers to respect each other's thinking and experiences, through the normative practices of: dialogue, problem posing, praxis, building confidence, and building community (Freire, 1995, 1998; 2000; Kincheloe, 2008). |
| *Conscientization* | The process of becoming aware of one's political and social conditions, in preparation for challenging and changing what is morally wrong, or unjust about them (Freire, 1998; 2000). |

| Critical Awareness | Recognizing what is right and wrong, true and false, just and unjust. Critical awareness always comes with an agenda for improvement (Freire, 1998; 2000). |
|---|---|
| Critical Consciousness | Teachers and students with a critical consciousness conceptually pull back from their lived reality to gain a new vantage point on who they are and how they came to be this way. With these insights in mind, they return to the complex process of living critically and engaging the world in the ways such a consciousness requires (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 166). |
| Educand | Latin origin, when translated means "educating," Freire's term for 'student' As a present tense participle the word conveys student's learning as an unfinished or ongoing process (Freire, 1970; 1998; 2000). |
| Banking Education | The transmission of ideas into students as docile recipients, who then reproduce these ideas in an uncritical fashion (Freire, 1998; 2000). |
| Dialogue | A normative practice of social interaction in which students are able to effectively communicate their ideas to one another. The goal of dialogue as the application of critical questioning and critical thinking to problems and opportunities the students find meaningful (Freire, 1998; 2000). |
| Problem Posing | A normative practice in which the students are critical co-investigators along with the teacher, into problematic aspects of the curriculum and of their experience. In problem-posing education, the learners listen to each other and to the teacher, reflect on the information and questions shared, engage in dialogue, connect themes and think creatively about the meaning of the topic and what to do about it (Freire, 1998; 2000). |
| Praxis | A normative practice that combines reflection with action in addressing problems identified by the practice of critical consciousness. Reflection promotes analyzing and understanding the roots of the feelings and developing a plan for how to eliminate the problem. Action is the behavior taken to transform our world, that is, the behavior to take in mitigating or eliminating the causes of the feelings or the problem (Freire, 1998; 2000). |

| Building Confidence | A normative practice in which teachers help students develop self-confidence in their own ability to learn and to trust their own ideas (Freire, 1998; 2000). |
|---|---|
| Building Community | A normative practice in which teachers and students engage in democratic dialogue and problem solving as a collaborative practice of freedom.  Building community fosters mutual respect, and one learns to collaborate with others who have shared understandings of a problem and a shared commitment to work to change it (Freire, 1998; 2000). |
| Socio-emotional learning | A normative practice that involves regulating and managing strong emotions (positive and negative). It also refers to listening and communicating accurately and clearly, in order to consider others' perspectives and sense their emotions (Elias, 2004, p. 53). |

**Appendix B: Normative Practices of Freire's Pedagogy that Respond to Aspects of Hopelessness in US Urban Schools**

| Aspects of Hopelessness Regarding Students | Freire's Normative Practices Addressing Hopelessness |
|---|---|
| 1. Giving up on academic work. | Problem posing and building confidence. |
| 2. A lack of respect for the authority of the teacher and the school. | Dialogue, praxis, and building community |
| 3. Poor social interactions, including episodes of intense rage and acts of violence. | Problem posing, dialogue, and building community. |
| 4. Negative self-concept, loss of self-confidence and even the desire to commit suicide. | Problem posing, dialogue, praxis, and building community. |
| **Aspects of Hopelessness Regarding Teachers** | **Freire's Normative Practices Addressing Hopelessness** |
| 1. Feelings of stress and job dissatisfaction. | Problem posing and praxis. |
| 2. Messages teachers communicate directly and indirectly to students about their inevitable failure. | Dialogue and building community. |
| 3. A regimented teaching style that equates teaching with control and learning with submission. | Problem posing, dialogue, and building confidence. |
| 4. Abusive behavior of teachers toward students. | Praxis. |

**Appendix C: Summary of Critiques of Freire's Pedagogy, Responses, and the Merits**

| Critiques | Description of Responses |
|---|---|
| 1. Freire's language is too lofty and vague (Mclearn & Leonard, 1993; Steiner, Krank, claren & Bahruthh, 2000). | Theoretical:1. Developing a language of possibility is essential (O'Cadiz, Wong and Torres, 1998). 2. Restoring hope and high expectations to impoverished and disadvantaged learners requires a utopian vision and speech (Giroux 1988; 2000). 3.Hopeful language affects hopeful thinking, and hopeful thinking creates utopian goals and the optimism to achieve them (Snyder's (2000). 4. Freire's most important concepts, such as "emotional learning" and "building self-confidence," are set out in terms that are simple and makes vague concepts immediately accessible (Van Velsor, 2009) |
| 2. Freire creates an artificial dichotomy in which one must be either for or against the oppressed (Steiner, Krank, Mclaren & Bahruthh, 2000). | Theoretical: Freire's dichotomy of "oppressor" and "oppressed" is too simplistic and reveals a failure on his part to recognize the multiplicity of subjectivities involved in the learning (Steiner, Krank, Mclaren & Bahruthh, 2000, pp. 276-277) |
| 3. Problem posing and banking education so similar as to be redundant (Torres, 1993). | Theoretical: 1. Freire's educational approach is dialogical in spirit, but in practice teachers must still follow a prescribed Freirean approach, in which "the teacher presents the material to the students for their consideration" (Torres, 1993; Deneulin & Shahani, 2009). 2. The term "liberatory pedagogy," is paradoxical in that the term 'liberatory' implies freedom while the term 'pedagogy' implies some kind of guidance (Grise-Owens, Cambron & Valade, 2010). |
| 4. Freire's pedagogy is more suited to adult education than to the education of children (Ozuah, 2005). | Empirical: One study found that the process of dialoguing fosters emotional healing (Kress & Elias, 2006). |

| | |
|---|---|
| 5. Freire's pedagogy enacts a subtle form of indoctrination (Torres, 1993; Taylor, 1993; Teacher Commons, 2008). | Theoretical: Because education either perpetuates the status quo, including systematic injustice, or works to expose and alleviate those injustices, the criticism rests on a false dichotomy (Freire, 2008). Empirical: One study found that hope is a cognitive-motivational construct reflecting agency and pathway to meet goals (Jackson, Weiss, Lundquist, and Hooper, 2003). |
| 6.Freire's account of the roles of the teacher-as-student and the student-as-teacher are too obscure to inform classroom practices (Teacher Commons, 2008). | Empirical: One study found that by paying attention to what students have to say about their own education better informs policy makers (Alonso, Anderson, and Theoharis, 2009). |
| 7.Freire's pedagogy is inadequate to liberate people with chronic illiteracy and apathy (Schugurensky, 1998; Taylor, 1993). | Empirical: Two studies show Freire's pedagogy to be effective in meliorating regimented teaching styles that equate teaching with control and learning with submission (Cesarone, 2006) and (Manz, Power, Ginsburg-Block and Dowrick, 2010). |
| 8.Freire's pedagogy is ineffective in addressing oppression relating to sexuality and gender (Weiler, 2001). | Theoretical: Freire's pedagogy, though designed specifically to confront socioeconomic oppression and liberation, are general enough to confront other forms of oppression, including those associated with gender and sexuality Hammond, 2005; Bell, 1997). Empirical: One study found that supporters of coeducational schooling have relied on tradition, assuming coeducation is the only viable option (Singh, Vaught and Mitchell, 1998). |

# Appendix D: Cami Anderson's Letter to NPS Families

**THE NEWARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS**
Office of the State District Superintendent
2 Cedar Street
Newark, New Jersey 07102-3091
Phone: 973-733-7334
Fax: 973-733-6834
www.nps.k12.nj.us

Est. 1676

Cami Anderson
State District Superintendent

Christopher D. Cerf
Commissioner of Education

November 12, 2013

Dear Families,

I am writing to update you directly on why the Newark Public Schools closed schools for students on November 7th and 8th at the last minute.

As you know, my team listens and embraces your hopes and dreams for your children. We know you want your child to graduate with the skills to succeed in college and in life. This is our mission and we strive towards it every day.

It is my job to serve you and to foster ideas, innovations, solutions and results. As I am sure you can agree, the persistent poor performance in Newark demands we have the courage to do things differently.

We - families and my team - know that instructional time matters. The more time your child has to learn, the greater possibility for success. We worked very hard to add more instructional time to our calendar: longer school days, more classroom time during the school year.

We were pleased to share this vision with the union. In organizing the 2013 school calendar, we consulted the Newark Teachers Union and unified around a number of new ideas.

For years, because of the annual New Jersey Educational Association Convention in Atlantic City, NPS closed its doors so teachers could attend. Families lost valuable classroom time. Many Newarkers believe this long-standing tradition simply doesn't make sense - for our students or our city. After all, the NJEA Union doesn't even represent our teachers in Newark. The NPS calendar had last Thursday and Friday as regular school days, just like most of the country.

Although the NTU signed off on this proposal, we were disappointed to learn last week that they were actively urging teachers to sign up and go to Atlantic City. This forced us to once again close our doors, hurting schools and making our city less safe.

These events are unfortunate and we apologize for the confusion it may have caused your families. With your continued support we will continue to fight to add more instructional time for our children.

Enclosed is an updated calendar for the school year,

Cami Anderson

**Appendix E: NPS Advisory Board Petition to State of New Jersey**

There is back up material to this testimony,
if you would like a copy please contact the
State Board Office at 609-984-6024.

**Petition**
**For Immediate Removal of Newark's State District Superintendent**
**Cami Anderson**

To:     Mark W. Biedron
        President
        New Jersey State Board of Education
From: Ariagna Perello
        President
        Newark Board Of Education

**DECLARATION** OF **PETITION**

We, the undersigned members of the Newark Board of Education, do hereby petition the New Jersey State Board of Education to use the power vested in you by the State of New Jersey to immediately remove State District Superintendent Cami Anderson from the position of State District Superintendent. " Termination for just cause shall be defined as inefficiency, incapacity, or conduct unbecoming a superintendent or other just cause pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:17-20.1." Examples and documentation of inefficiency, incapacity, and conduct unbecoming a superintendent are inclusive of, but not limited to the following 10 offences against the children of Newark:

1. State District Superintendent Cami Anderson's One Newark Plan has forced placement of special education students in schools without the services and supports required by students' IEPs. Numerous examples of such violations, including placement of emotionally disturbed students in a school without a Behavioral Disabilities program, placing Learning Disabilities-Severe Freshmen in a school without a program to service their needs, lack of aides for autistic students and other increasing violations, exacerbate the level of non-compliance with IDEA and federal guidelines, and set Newark Public Schools up for failure. A chronological description of such violations at just one school is detailed by Central High School Principal Sharnee Brown in a recent letter to State District Superintendent Cami Anderson. Similar disparity is also evidenced in some schools in programs for English language learners. (Exhibit 1)

2. State District Superintendent Cami Anderson's Renew School conversion strategy has not improved student outcomes. Evidence of this failure was presented to this body (the State Board of Education) in comprehensive testimony by Dr. Leonard Pugliese, here in Trenton, on May 6, **2015.** Student achievement has in fact

dropped in the Renew Schools, and no benchmarks have been met. All student proficiency rates in the converted schools fell below 50%. In 13 out of 16 comparisons, student proficiency rates actually decreased after two years of Renew School conversion. None of the Renew Schools met the NJASK academic progress targets in LAL for school year 2013-2014. All 26 subgroups failed to meet the NCLB waiver LAL academic progress targets. None of the Renew Schools met the NJASK academic progress targets in MATH for school year 2013-2014. All 30 subgroups failed to meet the NCLB waiver MATH academic progress targets.

(Exhibit 2)

3.  During the course of her tenure, State District Superintendent Cami Anderson contributed directly to the current budget deficit via the creation of the Employees Without Placement Pool of professional certified educators

**Page 2**

(EWP,) most of whom were displaced as a **result** of the Renew **Schools** process. The Newark District budgeted approximately $10 million for both the 2012-13 and the 2013-14 school years, but actual costs for each year exceeded $20 million. For the 2013-14 school year, the actual cost was $22,573,340, and will exceed $20 million for the 2014-15 school year as well. A May 2015 report released to Newark Public Schools principals lists 193 teachers in the EWP pool — and this list accounts only for excessed teachers. Principals, Vice-principals and former department chairpersons have also been excessed. (NPS Source)

4.   During the course of her tenure, State Superintendent Cami Anderson hired numerous senior and executive level staff, and promoted and/or changed job titles for many other executive level staff, resulting in lucrative salary increases for these staff members. There has nonetheless been a high turnover of senior and executive level staff over the past 4 years. Neither the school board nor the public are notified of high level personal hires or separations, although the school board and the public have made and continue to make exhaustive requests to be notified of senior and executive level personnel changes and changes in organizational structure. There is no system in place to communicate major staff changes to the school board, thus creating an awkward and unprofessional situation where school board members are forced to inquire as to who new senior and executive level staff are. School board members are therefore greatly hindered in their ability to fulfill their obligation to observe and advise regarding the operation of the Newark District.

5.  State District Superintendent Cami Anderson has not attended a meeting of the Newark Public Schools Board of Education since January of 2014, and has been unavailable and unresponsive to inquiries from the school board or concerned residents made at school board meetings. Therefore, neither the board nor

members of the public have had any direct report from the State District Superintendent on district plans, programs, business, or progress for over a year.

6.　Over the course of the last four years, State District Superintendent Cami Anderson has systematically dismantled the structure of the Newark Publics Schools District, but has failed to replace it with a model that is functional or one that results in increased academic achievement for the neediest students. For example:

a. State District Superintendent Cami Anderson disbanded the Office of Attendance and eliminated attendance counselors, as part of her "Attend Today Achieve Tomorrow" attendance improvement plan. This program is a dismal failure. The District's own data shows that over 50% of Newark Public Schools elementary school students were chronically/severely absent in the 2013-14 school year, up 3 percentage points from the year before. 77% of Newark Public Schools' comprehensive high school students severely/chronic absent in 2013-14, up 5% from the year before. (Exhibit 3)

b. State District Superintendent Cami Anderson utilizes arbitrary and capricious methods for evaluating teachers and teacher tenure, resulting in a fearful and intimidating workplace environment for the teachers of Newark's most challenged children. The following is but one example: an April 20, 2015 NJSpotlight article highlights State arbitrator Tia Schneider Denenberg's assessment of the conditions under which Newark Public Schools teachers are recruited, (not) supported, evaluated and penalized. Regarding the 13th Avenue Renew School, and the Newark District's tenure charges against teacher Rinita Williams, Denenberg wrote," Teachers were recruited hurriedly and thrust into conditions that bordered on chaotic. Key curriculum materials were not even shared with teachers until mid-January —that is, after the observations of teacher Williams had been completed." She referred to the evaluation process as" arbitrary and capricious..." and concluded "...that all charges against the teacher must be dismissed." (Exhibit 4)

7. State District Superintendent Cami Anderson blatantly disregarded both Statute and District Policy by paying former Assistant Superintendent Tiffany Hardrick an amount of $12,115.05 for 18 sick days taken in June 2014, despite Hardrick's employment in the State of Arkansas during the month of lune 2014. The allegations, background, findings, and conclusions are detailed in the State of New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Fiscal Accountability and Compliance, Newark Internal Audit Unit Tiffany Hardrick Complaint investigation completed in September 2014. (Exhibit 5)

8.   **State** District Superintendent Cami Anderson, blatantly disregarded the findings of the Department of Education's Investigative Report Regarding Former Newark Public School Assistant Superintendent Tiffany Hardrick, when, on May 18, 2015, Anderson signed off on, and thereby approved, a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) that stated former Assistant Superintendent Tiffany Hardrick had returned to the District a requested amount of $2,243.59. Under the authority of the State District Superintendent, this CAP was presented to the Newark Board of Education at its May 19, 2015 business meeting, although said CAP did not call for full restitution of, or even mention the $12,115.05 that former Assistant Superintendent Tiffany Hardrick was paid for 18 sick days taken in June 2014, despite evidence in the Internal Audit findings verifying that Hardrick was employed as a school superintendent in the State of Arkansas for the month of June 2014. (Exhibit 6)

9.   State District Superintendent Cami Anderson, blatantly disregarded the findings of the Department of Education's Investigative Report Regarding former Newark Public School Assistant Superintendent Tiffany Hardrick, when, on May 26, 2015, at the school board's regular meeting, a revised CAP was presented on behalf of Anderson. The revised CAP determined that request had been made of former Assistant Superintendent Tiffany Hardrick to make restitution of an additional $5,201.44, which, when added to the original amount of restitution, $2,243.59, totals $7,445.03. $7,445.03. equals the net, not the gross, of the $12,115.05 illegally paid to former Assistant Superintendent Tiffany Hardrick for 18 sick days taken in June 2014. No mention was made in the revised CAP of the $4,670.02, which, when added to the $2,243.59 received and the additional requested restitution of $7,445.03, totals the gross of $12,115.05 that was given to former Newark Public School Assistant Superintendent Tiffany Hardrick. State District Superintendent Cami Anderson has not requested full restitution for monies illegally paid to Tiffany Hardrick. This lack of action is in blatant disregard of fiduciary responsibility vested in the Office of the Superintendent, and is in clear disregard and violation of Newark Public schools Policy FILE CODE: 3000/3010 CONCEPTS AND ROLES IN BUSINESS AND NONINSTRUCTIONAL OPERATIONS; GOALS AND OBJECTIVES, Fiscal Management (Exhibit 7)

     (Exhibit 8)

10.  Most telling is the current state of affairs in comparison to the conditions that existed prior to State Takeover. If the State Board of Education would care to review the extensive findings of the New Jersey State Department of Education's Comprehensive Compliance Investigation of July 1994, which precipitated the State Takeover of the Newark Board of Education, you would find that many of the areas of review which were deemed acceptable

prior to State Takeover, have regressed under the administration of State District Superintendent Cami Anderson.

In summation, we request the immediate removal of State District Superintendent Cami Anderson, because:

- She has betrayed the public trust and is unable to carry out the normal responsibilities of Superintendent. She does not exhibit the level of organizational skills, management skills, communication skills, sensitivity, or commitment necessary to lead the Newark Public Schools.
- Early in 2014, she abandoned, and refuses to reinstitute, direct contact with the Newark Board of Education and concerned Newark residents at school board meetings. She is unresponsive to normal and necessary requests for information.
- She is responsible for illegal payments made to former Assistant Superintendent Tiffany Hardrick and for a CAP and a revised CAP, neither of which address full restitution of the gross illegally paid to Hardrick.
- She fiscally irresponsible. She is responsible for the current Newark Public Schools budget crisis which is a direct consequence of her creation of the EWP pool via Renew Schools, forced charter school enrollment via the One Newark Plan.
- She continues to force reforms without regard for the negative outcomes, student needs, law, or policy. These reforms have had a particularly detrimental effect on comprehensive high schools, Special Needs students and English language learners. Student absenteeism is at a crisis level, and her Renew Schools have failed to meet academic benchmarks.

The broad base of constituent groups in Newark have been negatively affected by policies and practices of State District Superintendent Cami Anderson over the past 4 years, and have, via local, state and national level meetings, press conferences, town hall meetings, letters, petitions, op eds, demonstrations, walkouts, and votes of no confidence, expressed the need for a new Superintendent of Newark Public Schools. The Newark community has neither confidence

3

in nor respect for the level of leadership demonstrated by State District Superintendent Cami Anderson. The examples included in this petition are only a few of the injustices being imposed upon our children. In a recent statement, Newark Mayor Ras Baraka said, "The facts can no longer be ignored. Our schools are being failed. They are not failing: they are being failed." In June 3, 2015 article in the Washington Post titled," The ugly reform mess in Newark public schools — by a top Newark education official," Dr. Lauren Wells, Chief Education Officer for Mayor Baraka's Office of Comprehensive Community Education, succinctly describes the devastating effects of the forced reforms. Dr. Wells then says," The citizens of Newark want high standards, multiple assessments,

transparency, and collaboration. They want to send their children to neighborhoods schools that leverage the resources of their city and gifts of their communities. They want to exercise their right to choose these things. Our students deserve schools, interventions, and reform supported by consistent and validated research and not reckless experimentation. One way to give them what they deserve is through" community schools," which focus on academics, health and social services, social emotional development, and community development to simultaneously increase achievement and strengthen families and communities. Community schools are working in places such as New York, Cincinnati, and even our neighboring state operated district, Paterson." (Exhibit 9)

The broad spectrum of Newark residents want schools that are safe, comfortable, inclusive, that offer every child a vigorous academic learning experience, that nurture civic pride and engagement, that educate the whole child, and that guide and support families towards a brighter future. Cami Anderson's strategies have failed. She is unable and unwilling to work with the Newark parents and the education community. It is time to remove her. We urge that you take a stand, that you do not sit by silently, that you exercise the power vested in your office to do what the Newark Board of Education under State Control cannot do — remove Cami Anderson immediately and work with the Newark community to identify a suitable Superintendent for the Newark Public Schools.

Attached Exhibits:
Exhibit 1: Petition and letter by Sharnee Brown
Exhibit 2: May 6, 2015 Testimony to NJ State Board of Education by Dr. Leonard J. Pugliese pgs. 1-8.
Exhibit 3: NPS SAB Update January 2015, Attendance Data pgs. 13-20
Exhibit 4:" Latest Ruling Again Rejects School District's 'Arbitrary and Capricious' Criteria for     Denying Tenure," John Mooney, NJSpotIight, April 20, 2015
Exhibit 5: New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Fiscal Accountability and Compliance,   Newark Internal Audit Unit Report regarding former Newark Public Schools Assistant     Superintendent Tiffany Hardrick.
Exhibit 6: Corrective Action Plan (CAP) presented on May 19, 2015.
Exhibit 7: (CAP) presented on May 26, 2015.
Exhibit **8** : NPS Policy File Code 3000/3010
Exhibit 9: "The Ugly reform mess in Newark public schools — by a top Newark education official,"

Valerie Strauss,Washington Post, June 3, 2015. Featuring op—ed by Dr. Lauren Wells

Respectfully submitted on the 3rd day of June, 2015.


Ariagna erello
President
Newark Board of Education
Marques-Aquil-Lewis
Vice-president
Newark Board of Education

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Antoinette Baskerville- Richardson
Newark Board of Education
Dashay Carterg
Member, Newark Board of Education
Crystal Fonseca
Member, Newark Board of Education
Rashon Hasan
Member, Newark Board of Education

Donald Jackson
Member, Newark Board of Education
Khalil Rashidi
Member, Newark Board of Education
Philip Seelinger
Member, Newark Board of EducationAppendix E: Alston's Letter to Staff and Parents

**Appendix F: Exhibit 1: Petition and letter by Sharnee Brown**

Superintendent Cami Anderson
Newark Public **Schools**
10th Floor
**2** Cedar Street
Newark, New Jersey 07108

Dear Cami Anderson & Brad Haggerty,

As this exhausting school year comes to a close, and while I look at my information via Salesforce with complete dismay, I am disappointed that even this year, the district will not address a deep concern that I have had for the last three years about the overwhelming influx of students with special needs being matched to Central High School.

On June 2, 2014, I sent a three page letter to Dr. Katzman, Brad Haggerty, Dr. Honnick and you, Superintendent Cami Anderson, detailing my disagreement and resistance to the plan to send 70 students with disabilities out of 216 freshmen to Central High School. Of the 70 special needs students, 70% of them were improperly placed at Central High School, which is illegal under IDEA and federal guidelines. The reality is that there are no programs at Central to accommodate their needs. When students are inappropriately placed, we are immediately out of state compliance and unable to implement their IEPs. Central currently has two programs: in class support (RCI) and Autism. When I conveyed my concern and provided sound reasoning to my supervisors and to the director of OSE, I was met with resistance and even punished with poor evaluative comments on Competency 5 of my evaluation because I spoke up and addressed this issue. However, I cannot and will not sit idly by and witness the neglect of Central High School without trying desperately to get the district to hear my concerns about how we are being affected by these decisions.

Two school years prior in 2013-2014, we at Central High School have never recovered from the One Newark enrollment plan. It has taken toll on our teacher morale and energy. In 2013-2014, Central High School was adversely affected by the open student enrollment process. We submitted our projected budgets in February 2013, and six months later we received more students than anticipated. We went from accepting a freshman class of about 175 in 2012-2013 to accepting a class of 255 in 2013 — 2014. Of the 255 students, we received an unprecedented amount of special needs students, 58, to service. (58) Also, to compound the issue, many of the 58 special education students had classifications for which Central High School did not have the required programs to

accommodate their Individual Educational Plan mandates, which details their academic and emotional needs. For example, we received approximately 12 Emotionally Disturbed students, and we do not have a Behavioral Disabilities program to meet their therapeutic, socio-emotional and academic needs. Also, 14 Learning Disabilities-Severe freshmen were sent to us, even though, we do not have a program to service their needs. We are also out of compliance in the Autism program lacking a sufficient number of educational aides.

Our plea for adequate staffing has been an on-going struggle in the district. This struggle for adequate staffing has caused overcrowding with many teachers forced to teach extra classes. In addition other grade levels currently have substitute teachers due to a lack of staff, and SPED classes are out of compliance due to a lack of resources and staff. All of these compounded issues negatively impacted the culture, morale, and learning environment causing frustration to the teachers, students and administration. We are still trying to ameliorate many of the unresolved issues aforementioned.

As previously stated, Central High School only has two Special Education programs. We have an in class support program and a program for our autistic students. The autism program has had its challenges because it was started with little to no support or direction from the district. We have managed to endure. However, parents

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are still angry clue to the District's non-compliance. Two parents either sought out of district placement or have formed legal cases to ensure compliance. Being out of compliance is a serious matter! When the district makes decisions to send the students to Central inappropriately, I AM THE ONE WHOSE NAME APPEARS ON THE SUBPOENA, as well as the child study team when parents pursue legal action.

At best, we have the capacity to service about 25 to 35 SLD students on each grade level. Prior to the extreme school closings and prior to the open enrollment, accepting students from our feeder patterns allowed us to maintain a serviceable number of special education students. However with the open student enrollment process, Central High School received triple that number, forcing us to not service students because we do not have the programs, causing us to be out of compliance, adversely affecting school climate, and creating a major disservice to the students who will be improperly placed. It is the district's responsibility to place special needs students in their correct learning environments, especially since local schools do not have the authority or input regarding student enrollment. Compliance is not just important. It is the law.

This school year (2014-2015) was even more frustrating. Despite my concern and my many attempts to stop the influx of 70 SPED students at the beginning of the year, we continued to get students with disabilities everyday throughout the One Newark Enrollment process. In a normal year, we would receive only 25 to 35 freshmen SPED students, but our special needs population tripled! From 2012-2013 to 2013 to 2014, the

freshmen SPED enrollment increased by 120%. From 2013-2014 to 2014-2015, the freshmen special needs enrollment increased by 21%. For the 2014—2015 to 2015-2016, the freshmen SPED enrollment will increase by an additional 15% with no increase in staff clue to district mandated budget cuts at Central High School. Overall, within three school years, Central's SPED FRESHMEN POPULATION INCREASED BY A WHOPPING 220%. I have only included the increases of the freshmen class! All classes have increased exponentially. We did not have the resources, the correct number of special needs teachers nor did we have programs to meet the students' immediate educational needs. Not only did my concern go unheeded, but the Enrollment Center continued to assign us more special needs students when we were already out of compliance. The district has ignored our concerns and left this CHS administration and our teachers to fend for ourselves. Where is the district, when we are unable to meet a child's need when in crisis? Where is the district when due to being out of compliance, a student does not thrive academically? Where is the advocacy of the district, when a student enters with extreme challenges, late in the year, and is sent to a place where no one is trained or certified to meet his or her needs? Where is the district, when teachers leave school exhausted and frustrated because too many students with extreme needs are placed in one environment? Where is the district when teachers decide, I can no longer teach in a district that ignores the concerns of the professionals and experts that they hire?

This year, the projected number of incoming SPED freshmen increased yet AGAIN. The projected number is going to be 80 students. We are about to have a school where 29% of the Freshmen students will be students with special needs that we cannot accommodate properly. The district percentage of special needs is 15%, while Central High School is 29%. That makes it 93% over the district's percentage. Ignoring my concerns and not addressing this phenomenon is a blatant attempt to create hardships in comprehensive schools in order for them to fail. Central High School's SPED numbers prior to the One Newark Enrollment debacle were manageable. Prior to the closing of schools, there was much more efficiency. No one talks about the inefficiency and chaos that rapid school closings cause. For example, when students are sent from schools that close unexpectantly, the transferring of students hard files to the new school are affected. When the district closes schools, the next school does not receive the necessary information on the new student due to missing folders. The district has to be made aware of the chaos that poor decisions cause.

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Central had a very progressive and effective inclusion program, where our Special Education students were thriving. THE **DISTRICT** HAS TO STOP **IGNORING** THE DAMAGE IT IS **CAUSING!** THE **DISTRICT** IS NOT **FIXING** THE PROBLEM BY **CLOSINGSCHOOLS** AND **RUINING** THE **SCHOOLS** LEFT **OPEN!** THE **DISTRICT** CANNOT KEEP **CLOSING SCHOOLS** AND **MATCHING** THE **SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS** TO **COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS** IN **ORDER** TO **CAUSE HARDSHIPS** AND **ENVIRONMENTS WHERE STUDENTS FAIL.**

At Central High School, we have maintained a quality inclusion program until the district started One Newark Enrollment. We have to fix this problem immediately.

We demand that you end this One Newark Open Enrollment Debacle.

We are demanding that you come to the table and really hear our concerns about what is being done in this district with our special needs students.

We are demanding that the incoming number of **SPED** students for the 2015-2016 school year decrease to 39 special needs students.

We are demanding that when setting and running the algorithm, a cap for **SPED** capacity be set to the number of **SPED** students a school can accommodate and to the program that the school offered, especially based on state required classification and maximum capacity. NO **SCHOOL** CAN BE ALL **THINGS** TO ALL **STUDENTS.**

We are demanding that the district stop looking at out-of-district placement as a cop-out but as a solution to meet students' needs.

We are demanding that the district decreases the enrollment of **SPED** student to the district's percentage of 15%.

We are demanding that Central be allowed to grow and flourish as a viable educational environment that meets the needs of all its students.

We are demanding that we go back to prior feeder school patterns and stop closing neighborhood
schools.

Sincerely,


Principal Sharnee Brown **&** The Frustrated Central High School Family




CC:

**Appendix G: Alston's Letter to Parents and Staff**

## M Gmail

julia jackson <jayejuliajackson@gmail.com>

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### Sent to Our Staff and Parents
1 message

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Jonathan Alston <jaalston@aol.com>                                    Tue, May 31, 2016 at 2:26 PM
To: Julia Jackson <jayejuliajackson@gmail.com>

Our school is suffering right now and we are going to need to come together. It may get worse before it gets better.

The Process Worked Well But Currently Delayed / Unethical Behavior in the School

As you know, the Principal Search Committee for Science Park High School has been working for almost a full year recruiting, interviewing, and observing candidates. Assistant Superintendent Brad Haggerty and Sarah Yan from Talent Search (human resources) developed an inclusive, thoughtful process that included parents, students, teachers, alumni, and the important stakeholders in a school. Two candidates were enthusiastically and unanimously chosen as finalists. The finalists went to a rigorous day developed by Talent Search and again, the results were unanimous and enthusiastic. The results of this quality, collaborative process produced an excellence and integrity that real educators love and that the students and parents of Science Park deserve.

I would love to tell you the impressive results of our process now, but - sadly - the objective lack of integrity of some on our staff is delaying this process. The "Letter of Recommendation" that was passed around in March to show support for Mrs. Tierney to the committee was anonymously sent downtown and spun as a petition to override the process. In the March 29 meeting about the "letter of recommendation" the organizers assured the staff that they did not want to interfere with the process and that the staff would not have to worry about Chris Cerf or Brad Haggerty seeing the letter and taking it out of context because he (the organizer) would keep the letter himself. In the meeting we also discussed how some felt uncomfortable and awkward signing the letter and others wondered if this really was some type of loyalty test.

I blatantly said then that because of the power relationship between administration and staff, it is an inherently coercive document. It is difficult for a document like that to not be coercive and threatening, even when done with the utmost integrity.

The following is an excerpt from an email Brad Haggerty sent to myself and active parent Khadijah Olumbe, the other co-chair of the committee, about our May 24 meeting with Superintendent Cerf:

"There is one additional detail which makes this "face time" with the Superintendent important. As you likely know, the Superintendent and I each received a petition in support of Interim Principal Tierney with signatures from a significant number of current staff members."

This "letter of support' was spun as a "petition" to override this highly successful process. It was being read and looked over by Brad Haggerty and Chris Cerf, and they had the original document. It was anonymously delivered. Clearly I told them that even their looking at the document was using the signatures of those individuals for a purpose which they did not intend. I made clear that there was a sad, desperate lack of integrity among some of our staff members. No job should be worth someone's integrity.

Why This Breach of Trust is Bad / Politics Without Integrity Destroys Schools

So to every staff member who signed, many of your signatures are being used in a way that you did not intend. I told a few staff members this already and most were upset and felt betrayed. They felt that they could not trust their fellow teachers or administrators. The questions they raised were reasonable: Who knew about this? Did administrators know? How else will this list be used? Was it really a loyalty test? Did they plan on doing this from the beginning?

One teacher I spoke to did not get the seriousness of this breach. So for those who don't get it, let me break this down for you: How can you teach children about an honor code if you are okay with benefitting from dishonor? We punish cheating and plagiarism because integrity is important. It is difficult to keep a student out of the I.B. Program for cheating when they could say, "But isn't that how you got your job?"

Secondly, as teachers we know that politics without integrity destroys schools. One of the organizers of the "letter-spun-as-petition" is rumored to want to become a vice principal. Will he be rewarded for his loyalty? At Science, the excellence in education that parents and students and the people of our City have come to expect would be gone. It

would no longer matter how good you are or what you contribute to the school; it's about political favoritism. Only the semi-competent - the ones who can't compete with others fairly - would welcome that.

Some of the most hardcore supporters didn't even want to consider any other candidate, no matter who they were. No matter how smart or dynamic they were. It would not matter if parents, students, alumni, your union head, and other important stakeholders believed - through hundreds of hours of research - that other candidates would be best for the school. They only thought of their own narrow needs. That type of thinking about the next leader of your school is definitionally ignorant and potentially corrupt. It is self-interest to the detriment of our students.

Process Matters / the Newark Community Matters

Process matters. Integrity matters. Some of the conversations I've had with some teachers in this building  have been so disturbing. They rejected the process because parents, students, alumni, and other members of the Newark community were involved. Some of the teachers I've spoken to have said that parents aren't important, they make things worse. I've heard someone say that teachers are the most important constituency when choosing school leadership, but then have a criteria of "she doesn't give me a hard time."

The thought by some that teachers should be the deciding factor in who leads a school is arrogant and full of misplaced entitlement. Science Park High School is a Newark institution and most of our staff doesn't live here. We have a right to be treated fairly which our union is here to protect. Everything else comes from working with larger coalitions. We want a say in choosing our next principal, but we don't at all have a right to that as teachers. Parents can legitimately demand. Newark residents can legitimately demand. Broader coalitions of our community can legitimately demand. This is a public institution that is here to serve them, not us. It is only the exhausting work of a coalition that makes any of this possible. Your signatures were used to betray that coalition.

Brandon Rippey, our union representative, for years has been trying to get people to get involved. He has passed around petitions and led marches and organized and educated. And none of his efforts have ever been about himself. They have always been rooted in a deep sense of social justice with close ties to the Newark community. The Principal Search Committee is a coalition of community and parents that includes teachers. We are one part of the community and the most vulnerable without community support. We can not expect to be supported by the community if we think we are more important than them.

I clearly understand that most organizers of the letter were sincere and had good will. They fully supported the collaborative process and they also feel betrayed. But in the end, at least one organizer of the letter manipulated the rest of us because they simply wanted to get their way: self-Interest disguised as a cause.

The Process Worked Extremely Well / Let's Enthusiastically Support

The result that our committee and Newark Public Schools Talent Search produced is of the highest quality. This process also has the most integrity. When choosing the leader of our school, that is what we want. The best. The one who can compete with others, value integrity, and consistently rise to the top. That is what we claim to want in our students. That is what we should expect in our leaders. The person who sent the "letter" should never have assumed that our interim ever wanted their sleazy type of help. No job is worth one's integrity.

It is time that we started thinking about what is best for our school, community, and Newark as a whole. The City is watching the principal search at Science Park High School. It is a test to see if Chris Cerf's attempts at openness, inclusion, and local control are sincere. Did he give us a positive, but exhaustive process that we fought through, only to find an excuse to put in place someone to whom he promised the position before the process even started? Or does the lack of integrity lie squarely with some of the staff members at Science Park High, and Chris Cerf is simply trying to understand the nonsense in this building. "I am so sad and so disappointed. It's don't know people anymore," said one of our staff members when she found out.

But there is a way toward healing. Support the process. We need the entire Science community to support the process. We need the entire Newark community to support the process. The committee at Science supported two finalists 9 - 0. The Talent Search committee's results were  an enthusiastic 5 - 0. The collaboration between Newark Public Schools Talent Department, the students, parents, teachers, alumni and community worked. It really is a positive model for the City that we should all want to succeed. And we should want it to succeed soon. Our school needs to heal.

Note: I am writing this at potential personal risk; however, I am morally obligated to let you know how I witnessed your signatures being used. Also, to the people who organized this "letter" and feel bad about what happened, come talk to me. We'll be good.

Note II: PLEASE DO NOT SHARE WITH STUDENTS!!!  I am sending this to staff because there was such a public campaign to pass around this "letter" and we had two public meetings where this "letter" was exhaustively discussed. People have a right to know how their signatures were used. And I believe this may be a good lesson for teachers