

EDUCATOR IDENTITY, AUTHORITY, AND RELATIONSHIPS

How educators can position themselves to help students develop Critical Consciousness



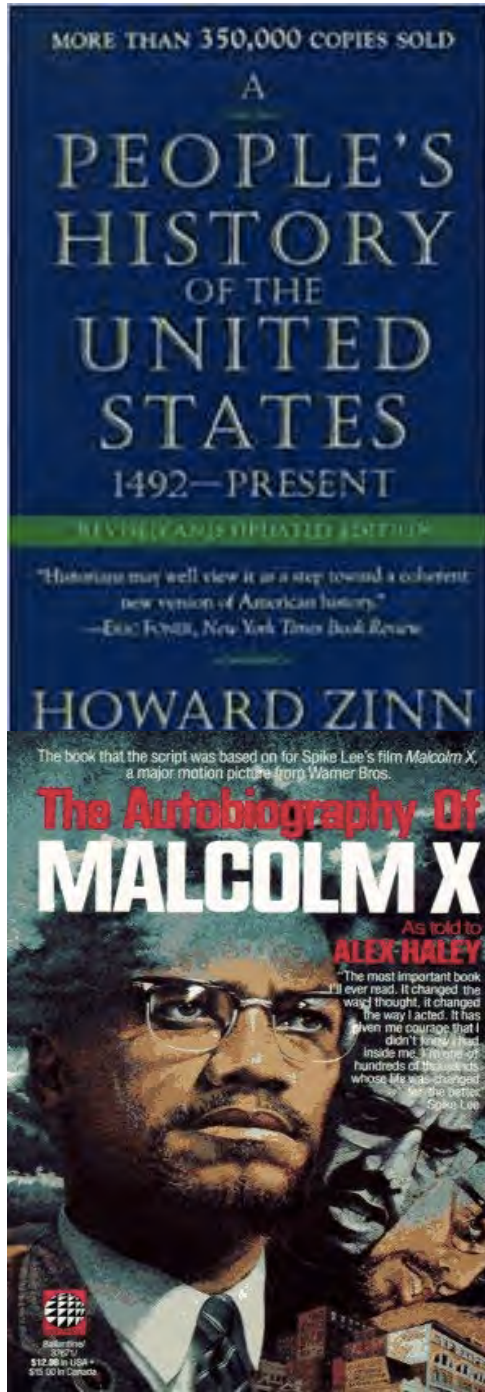
REFLECTION QUESTION 1

- Think of a time where you had an educational experience (in formal or informal setting) that helped you see your world in a new way. Take a few minutes to share what you learned, how you learned it, and what made it so powerful.



THE WORK OF MY PARENTS' GENERATION







We are overdue for a re-imagination of schooling

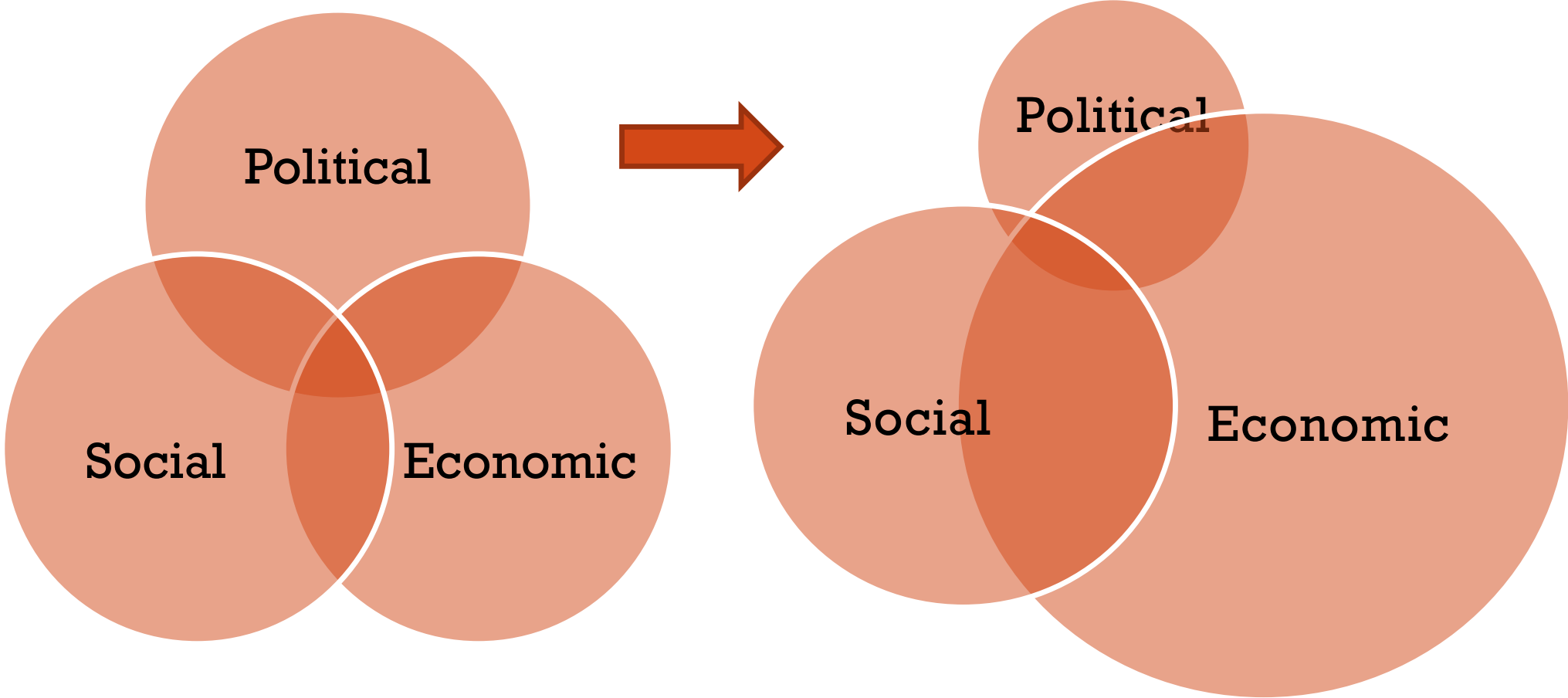
21ST CENTURY SKILLS
 HOW TODAY'S STUDENTS CAN STAY COMPETITIVE IN A CHANGING JOB MARKET

- Learning Skills:** Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, Communication
- Literacy Skills:** Information, Media, Technology
- Life Skills:** Flexibility, Leadership, Initiative, Productivity, Social

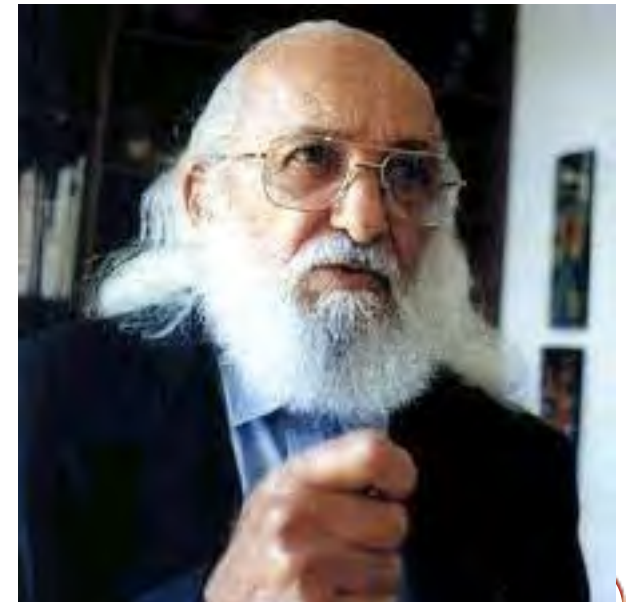
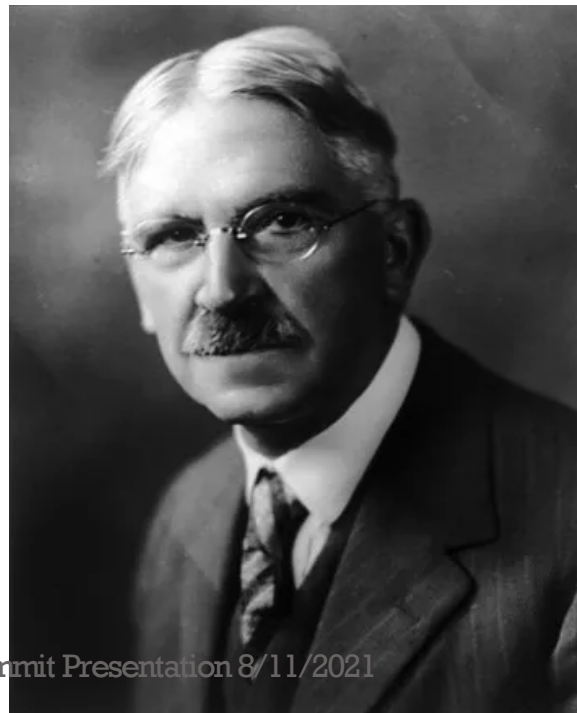
Applied educational systems



THE PURPOSES OF SCHOOLING



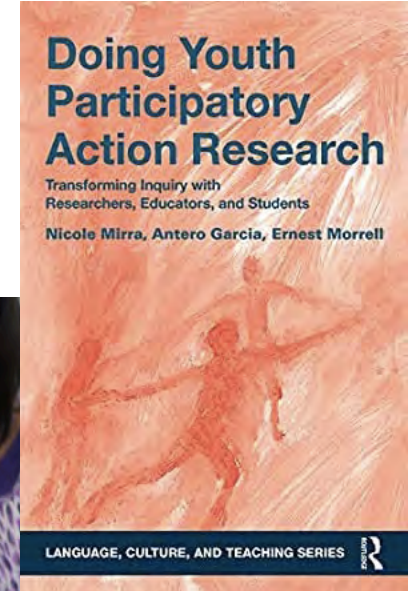
EDUCATION IS INHERENTLY POLITICAL



A SHIFT AWAY FROM THE POLITICAL PURPOSES...



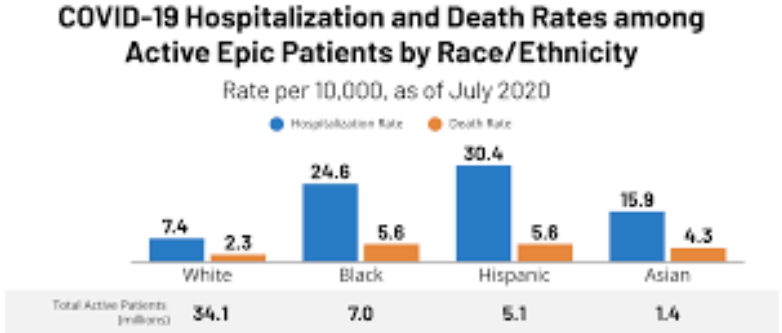
A SHIFT BACK TOWARDS THE POLITICAL PURPOSES



- “...the whole process of education occurs within a social framework and is designed to perpetuate the aims of society... The paradox of education is precisely this - that as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated.” – James Baldwin; A Talk to Teachers



YOUNG PEOPLE ARE LEARNING ABOUT SYSTEMS OF INEQUITY WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT



NOTE: Rates for Black, Hispanic, and Asian patients are statistically significantly different from White patients at the p<0.05 level. The race of Hispanic origin may be of any race but are categorized as Hispanic; other groups are non-Hispanic. Data for other racial groups not shown due to insufficient data.
SOURCE: Epic and KFF analysis of Epic Health Record Systems COVID-19-related data as of July 2020.

KFF



ADDRESSING THE PARADOX..

- What societal values or features would we like to socialize our students into through schools?
- What societal values and features do we explicitly want to position students to disrupt through schooling?



TEACHER IDENTITY AND AUTHORITY IN SCHOOLING FOR EQUITY



<https://simmons.kanopy.com/playlist/11508824>

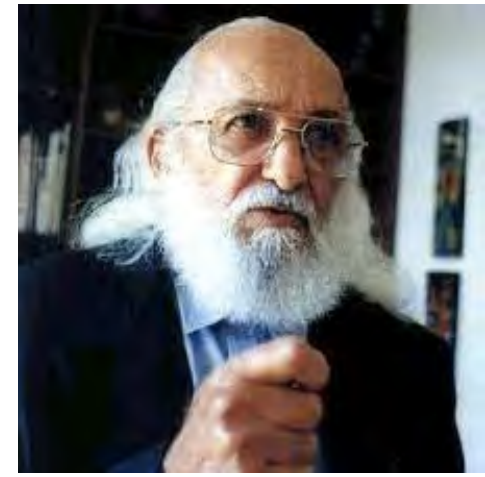
Graves Equity Education Summit Presentation 8/11/2021



REFLECTION QUESTION 2

- What kind of relationships did you see the teachers cultivating with their students and their families and communities?
- How, if at all, did you see teachers dealing with issues of academic rigor?
- What did the students seem to like about the teaching?
- What questions or concerns do you have about what you saw?





TEACHER AUTHORITY

- “The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one is [themselves] 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. In this process, arguments based on ‘authority’ are no longer valid; in order to function authority must be on the side of freedom, not against it.”



PERSONAL AUTHORITY OVER POSITIONAL AUTHORITY

Build authentic relationships with students:

- to position yourself to have the trust of your students as you engage in an important and potentially fraught learning journey
- to position yourself to understand the needs and strengths of your students as you engage in this work
- To position your students to be motivated to meet high levels of academic rigor



REFLECT ON YOUR POSITIONALITY

- We observed Mr. Kamin, a White man teaching an African American literature elective course at Tubman, re-orient his teaching after his students asked him to reflect on his positionality. **A group of African-American students in Mr. Kamin's class, "express[ed] some concerns about how his Whiteness was shaping the focus and nature of class discussions"** (Seider and Graves, 2020, pg. 184) of texts they were reading including works by James Baldwin.
- Melissa explained how powerful of an experience it was for her to see Mr. Kamin change his teaching after hearing their critique. **"He was really receptive to their ideas, and I think he's gonna work on changing it, cause this is like the first year that the class was made, so I think the feedback was really helpful,"** (Seider and Graves 2020, pg. 184).



REFLECT ON YOUR POSITIONALITY (CONT.)



“It’s essential that teachers take risks and share confessional narrative surrounding their own identities if they expect their students to do the same.” bell hooks - *Teaching to Transgress* (1994).

- In addition to reflecting on race/gender/sexuality identities, also think about how to disrupt adultism
- Engage students in a more reciprocal relationship



PAIR THE STUDY OF OPPRESSION WITH RESISTANCE

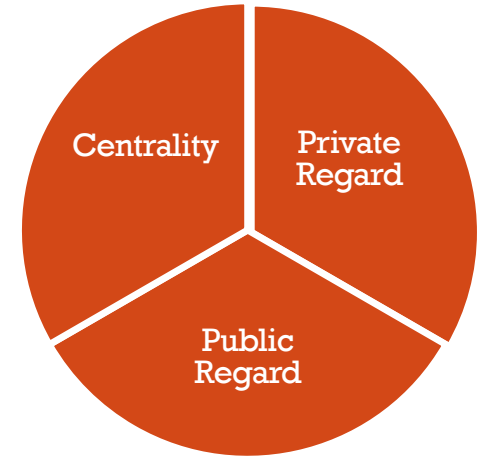
Angelina, a 9th grader at the time, reflected on a Haitian Revolution unit by saying,

“That was really cool how it was like a whole bunch of Haitians, like Black people, starting their own revolution, and I think the only nation that actually like, built themselves after the Europeans left, and built from there. Like they strictly took out all the White people, all the French people, I mean, from Haiti. The Haitian revolution was dope, like I wish I was [alive] back then. Not really but I do.” (Seider and Graves, 2020, pg. 119)



PAIR THE STUDY OF OPPRESSION WITH RESISTANCE (CONT.)

- Helps teach about minoritized communities through the lens of strength and resilience
- Will help the students develop agency/critical hope and stave off helplessness or hopelessness
- These learning opportunities should be building students will AND SKILLS
- Helps position students to develop positive/strong identities



Sellers et al., 2006



SCAFFOLD AUTHENTIC LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES WHEN STUDENTS TAKE ACTION AGAINST INEQUITIES

- After the dismissal of a key staff person of color, Black and Latinx students organized a walkout at their school to protest a lack of racial diversity in the faculty and staff.

“Um, I felt like the response at first was, [the school administrators] were mad. Like really mad, like they started to tell us that students wouldn’t get bus rides home because they’re not really like attending...they didn’t attend a class so they weren’t like counted as present at school...we weren’t provided lunch. We weren’t provided with privileges of using the bathroom ... But it’s like, there was really nothing they could do. It was like, it’s our right.”

- Olivia (one of the students who walked out



SCAFFOLD AUTHENTIC LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES WHEN STUDENTS TAKE ACTION AGAINST INEQUITIES (CONT.)

- When students learn about systems of inequity, expect them to see it and want to do something about it both inside and outside of school
- When students want to take action, balance the need to ensure safety with the opportunities to help students develop key academic and civic skills and dispositions
- The teacher's focus should be on students' skill and disposition development as well as helping them contextualize the kind of work they might want to do
- Be clear with your students (and yourself) about the values and ethics that inform what, why, and how you teach



THANK YOU!

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