HANDBOOK OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION

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The Social Justice Education Project
A Critically Compassionate Intellectualism for Chicana/o Students

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In the fall semester of 2001, 1,805 Chicana/o students began their freshman year in the Tucson Unified School District (TUSD). Four years later, the graduating class of 2005 consisted of only 1,133 Chicanas/os. Over the course of four years, the district had lost 37.3% of these students. This decrease in Chicana/o students is not an aberration. Every graduating class—throughout the last several years—reveals this pattern of attrition.

The district and national policy response to this situation might best be called the “Leave No Chicana/o Untested.” The logic behind this approach seems to reside in some hope that high stakes testing will improve academic performance, thereby augmenting graduation rates. However, research shows that high stakes tests may exacerbate Chicana/o student attrition (Valenzuela, 2005). The standard strategies of rote instruction, remediation, and grade level retention are more likely to make students uninterested in education than they are to raise test scores. Once they lose interest, students are sucked into a downward spiral of decreasing academic performance, diminishing expectations, and declining school perseverance. In TUSD’s previous six graduating classes, the average loss within the Chicana/o student enrollment has been 41%.

Given the high attrition of Chicana/o students within the district and a national high-stakes testing policy that seems to create more problems than solutions (Boger, 2002; Reardon & Galindo, 2002; Tippeconnic, 2003; Valenzuela, 2005), we decided to develop an educational program for TUSD that would generate success for Chicana/o youth. Our program, entitled the Social Justice Education Project (SJEP), embraces a three-prong educational philosophy that emphasizes cooperative learning, compassionate student–educator relationships, and social justice content. We call this educational approach critically compassionate intellectualism, as it aims to raise students’ critical awareness and their academic performance (Cammarota & Romero, 2006). Since the program began in 2003 it has demonstrated consistently positive results.

This chapter has three objectives. First, we discuss the theoretical underpinnings that inform critically compassionate intellectualism in the SJEP classroom. Second, we introduce aspects of the SJEP curriculum, which help to transform this theory into practice. Third, we demonstrate how the SJEP has increased the academic performance and educational attainment of the students in the program. We draw from a series of indicators to reveal the program’s effectiveness, including student interviews, student course evaluations, standardized test results, and graduation rates. The data from these indicators suggest a strong correlation between SJEP’s critically compassionate intellectualism and the academic achievement of the participants. We conclude the chapter by reflecting on our experiences as educators and defining the theoretical advancements required to enhance educational practices for Chicana/o students.
Toward a Theory of Critically Compassionate Intellectualism

A critically compassionate intellectualism approach combines three educational perspectives into one framework. Each perspective—cooperative learning, compassionate educator–student relationships, and social justice consciousness—carries a set of principles about learning and human advancement. Each of these is enhanced by the simultaneous presence and implementation of the others. We begin this section by examining the educational principles behind cooperation, then move to compassion, followed by consciousness. This sequence reveals the interrelationship among the three parts of critically compassionate intellectualism and the complicated wholeness to the theoretical framework.

Cooperation

Our perspective on cooperative learning is centered on principles derived from critical pedagogy (Darder, 2002; Freire, 1967/1994; McLaren, 1994). Although a variety of treatments and expressions of critical pedagogy exist, the core principle strives to level out hierarchy in the classroom to create greater equality in the production and exchange of knowledge between educators and students. The required first step toward engendering equality involves a critique of the traditional lecture style of instruction. This traditional style assumes that the educator possesses all the knowledge in the classroom while students are ignorant subjects passively waiting to receive this knowledge. The resulting dynamic from these assumptions is a classroom in which the educator is the sole authority of power while students lack any voice or input in their learning process. This classroom social organization reflects an undemocratic and hierarchical structure of the powerful and the powerless.

By encouraging students to create and pose questions as the basis for learning, this traditionally unjust power dynamic is challenged and dissolved. Thus, the use of questioning is a significant principle behind critiquing the traditional lecture style and generating a just classroom dynamic. Within the questioning mode, what Freire (1967/1994) calls the “problem-posing method,” lessons start with questions that originate from students’ concerns or experiences—posed by either the educator or students, or sometimes by everyone. The attainment of knowledge should never occur from the distribution of an absolute, irrefutable fact, but rather as process of discovery in which educator and students work collectively and democratically. The problem-posing method infers a collective—not single—authority in the construction and attainment of knowledge. The intended consequence of sharing authority in knowledge production is a classroom that models a democratic social organization.

The sharing of authority in the classroom is not easily accomplished. Many students, particularly adolescents, have numerous years of experience with the traditional lecture style and have learned to be passive observers. The objective of collective learning is for students to become active citizens. Sharing authority and encouraging students to expand their roles in the classroom meets this objective. Role redefinition requires the students’ liberation from the narrow confines of passive dependency and ascendance into the endless possibilities of active leadership.

However, students, especially students of color, rarely have leadership opportunities in classrooms and thus have limited knowledge of how to take on leadership roles inside the classroom. Furthermore, the common model of leadership in this country, and possibly around the world, centers on leading by domination and oppression. When asked to lead, some students might draw from this common model and act in ways that sustain
uneven power relations within the classroom. Freire (1998) describes the causes of people reproducing oppression during their quest for freedom:

The oppressed, having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom. Freedom would require them to eject this image and replace it with autonomy and responsibility. (p. 48)

Students, therefore, should learn how to lead by unlearning oppressive ideologies and epistemologies that persuade them to believe they cannot lead or they can only accomplish leadership through domination. A democratic and collective learning involves a new form of leadership based on compassion and responsibility for self and others. Since few examples of this type of leadership exist, students are often hesitant to adopt this role, because they are “fearful” (Freire, 1967/1994) of claiming it.

Compassion

To teach students to overcome their fears of liberation, educators must model a democratic leadership that embraces compassion as a means of fostering liberation. Education literature rarely addresses “compassion” as an important pedagogical element. However, “caring,” an analogous principle, is represented in the literature (Noddings, 1984, 1992; Valenzuela, 1999). Our experiences within the SJEP have revealed many important lessons regarding caring, particularly that trust emerges only when teachers continuously demonstrate a deeply profound sense of caring for students. The development of these caring relationships introduces greater avenues of leadership for both students and teachers.

Valenzuela (1999) shows that students tend to mistrust their teachers when they believe they do not care. Within a trusting environment, students have greater opportunities to learn new lessons, while unlearning the lessons of dehumanization and oppression that sustain an unquestioned reality (Haney Lopez, 2003). Specific to this process, students recognize that they can create and transform knowledge (Delgado Bernal, 2002), and as leaders, it is critical that they engage in a praxis that promotes social justice for their families and communities.

In the classroom, showing compassion not only for the student’s academic progress but also his or her life circumstances engenders a caring environment. Thus, the educator must express compassion for the challenges that stifle academic performance inside of schools, as well as the broader social and economic forces that make learning difficult (poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.). Compassion involves acknowledging the student as a complete human being by recognizing the problems in his or her life that impede well-being. Compassionate educators reveal the capacity to mentor students through these challenges, and embrace the responsibility to facilitate a resolution to some of the most pressing issues facing students. It has been our experience that this type of compassion and commitment fosters an expanded sense of hope within students.

It is through the educator’s compassion that the student feels acknowledged, validated, and most importantly, supported in his or her journey through life’s difficulties. Listening to the student, taking note of his or her personal struggles, and allowing him or her to express frustrations, and then finding different ways to advocate for students becomes the foundation for developing a compassionate educator–student relationship. Once compassion is evident in the relationship between the educator and students, trust within the classroom will increase. The educator attains an enhanced capacity to lead, and can therefore facilitate the students’ ascendance into leadership roles. Trust allows
the educator to mitigate the students’ fears and motivate them to redefine their roles in the classroom.

It is important to note that compassion toward students of color is not simply defined as a concern for their individual suffering. What happens to an individual student should be a matter of concern. However, an educator’s compassion should not end there; students’ experiences and struggles as members of a larger social group must be recognized and addressed. The struggles of students of color extend beyond individual crisis to community-wide oppression. Racism, along with other forms of oppression, can hurt them as individuals and harm their families, peers, neighborhoods, and communities. A student’s entire world, including historical struggles that have positioned him or her as socially, economically, or politically subordinate, are primary focal areas for the critically compassionate educator.

**Consciousness**

To achieve a humanizing compassion, educational content should elevate students’ critical consciousness. A real demonstration of compassion for students of color involves centering coursework on analyzing and addressing the various forms of oppression that confront them. However, understanding the true complexity and parameters of oppression is a challenging educational matter, one which takes considerable time and knowledge to comprehend. Some students recognize the real forces of oppression constraining their life experiences; others, however, lack the critical consciousness to perceive what truly holds them down.

Freire (1970) asserts that at least three significant types of consciousness (magical, naive, and critical) are apparent throughout the general population, representing successive stages in human development. The first stage is termed *magical consciousness* in which people believe God predetermines their fate. They assume they have no control over circumstances and therefore accept that their lot in life is given and immutable. When reflecting on the reason for poverty, those with a magical consciousness will likely assert that it is God’s will. The danger with this type of consciousness is that oppressed populations will find little room to change their status. God determines and fixes reality to the point in which people feel they have no other choice but to accept their subordination.

The second stage of development, according to Freire, is *naive consciousness* in which people assume that their situation in life is the result of family upbringing and culture. Thus, an individual’s success or failure is perceived as directly related to how they have been raised and the kinds of cultural beliefs they have been exposed to while growing up. In American society, naive consciousness is quite prevalent and informs a dominant explanation for the low academic attainment of students of color. Those embracing this consciousness believe that many students of color fail because they originate from families or cultures that do not value education, resulting in a lack of motivation to succeed in school. In this regard, naive consciousness parallels “deficit thinking” (Valencia, 1997) in that failure is understood as a problem of deficiency on the part of the students and their families. In other words, it presumes certain communities lack the “right” family and cultural values for academic success.

The final stage of development is *critical consciousness*. Those adhering to this type of consciousness will understand that living conditions derive from social and economic systems, structures, and institutions. God, family, and culture have little to do with the circumstances of one’s environment. Rather, it is individual and collective agency, along with the structures that result from that agency, that have the most significant influence.
over peoples' living situations. God, family, and culture do not directly engender wealth or poverty; structures of privilege, oppression, and exploitation do. The primary benefit of critical consciousness is that it clarifies that reality is not fixed and immutable, but rather the product of human construction. Therefore, if humans create social conditions, they also have the power to alter those conditions. Individuals who attain critical consciousness, perhaps the highest stage of human development, feel capable and confident they can change the material conditions of their lives and the lives of those around them.

A key objective of educators, therefore, should be to facilitate the attainment of critical consciousness. This progress is achieved through the educator modeling critical consciousness in his or her instruction. Educational content must center on a critical perspective relevant to the student’s social, cultural, and historical realities. This contextualization comes about when historically marginalized students learn subjects, such as history or social studies, in ways that prioritize discussions of injustice and oppression. Ultimately, modeling critical consciousness facilitates students’ awareness of the social and economic forces bearing down on their lives, and the potential for disrupting those forces.

The Cycle of Critically Compassionate Intellectualism

Critically compassionate intellectualism flows more in a cyclical than in a linear fashion, with the effects of each element running both clockwise and counterclockwise through the cycle. For instance, the attainment of critical consciousness supports cooperative learning because students will be circumspect about the dynamics that might sway the pedagogy toward an authoritarian lecture style; thus, the classroom processes that are undemocratic will be quickly recognized and addressed. Cooperative learning promotes critical consciousness because students must put their conceptions of justice into practice to sustain a democratic classroom. Likewise, compassion facilitates cooperation in that working collectively and democratically requires a true concern for others. Compassion also elevates critical consciousness by encouraging a comprehensive perspective of human suffering.

A critically compassionate intellectualism in full cycle secures the intellectual development of students of color. The ultimate goal of this tripartite educational approach is to assist students in recognizing their intellectual abilities and how to use them. Students are provided with the opportunity to reflect what Gramsci (1992) calls “organic intellectualism” such that they study and learn to lead their communities in the struggle for social justice. Intellectualism, in this case, is connected to a greater purpose—to serve in the interest of liberating people from the shackles of oppression. With this purpose in mind, students will strive to educate themselves in order to educate others.

The Social Justice Education Project

The Social Justice Education Project (SJEP) started as a collaboration between the University of Arizona and Tucson Unified School District at Cerro High School. The district had previously established a social science curriculum based on Chicano studies (“U.S. History through a Chicano Perspective”) that provided students with a course that counted for their required U.S. history credits. We proposed to the principal a subcurriculum that would be folded into the school's U.S. history course. The proposed class would include Chicana/o studies, critical race theory, and a participatory action research project. To make sure the course material was covered thoroughly, we asked the principal if we could work with a cohort of students through their junior and senior years of high school.
The administration approved, and the class began in the spring semester of 2003. For four straight semesters—from 2003 through 2005—students were introduced to advanced-level social science material such as critical race theory, critical pedagogy, and social theory. Simultaneously, they learned participatory action research methodologies for assessing and addressing everyday injustices facing them and their communities.

**Cerro High School**

Cerro High School (CHS) is located in the southwestern portion of Tucson, in the second largest school district in Arizona. Cerro has a majority Chicana/o student population with a high concentration of low-achieving Chicana/o students. The socioeconomic statuses of the neighborhoods that surround CHS are among the lowest in the city’s greater metropolitan area. A May 2006 report revealed that of the city’s 32 zip code areas, the one in which CHS is ranked 26th. The median income per zip code in Tucson was $48,612 as compared to $30,082 in zip codes within CHS’s attendance area. The majority of CHS’s neighborhoods have traditionally been home to Chicano families, which helps to explain CHS’s 63.2% Chicana/o student population. Furthermore, 55.3% of the students at CHS receive free lunch, considerably higher than the district average of 35.2%.

In the fall of 2002, there were 315 Chicanas/os enrolled in the freshman class at CHS and at the end of their senior year in the spring of 2006 that number had dwindled to 151. Over the last seven graduating classes Chicana/o four-year matriculation rates at CHS ranged from 37% for the class of 2004 to 60% for the class of 2002. In the 2003 to 2004 school year, CHS had the lowest percentage of students meeting mastery in all three areas of the Arizona Instruments for Measuring Standards (AIMS) test. Over the last five years, Cerro has had the lowest Advanced Placement Student Access Indicator (APSAI) (Solórzano & Ornelas, 2002, 2004) in the district, which is a figure used to measure access to the highest level academic courses in high schools. During the 2005 to 2006 academic year, Cerro’s APSAI was 217, placing it at the bottom of all TUSD high schools. In comparison, the school with the best APSCI is TUSD’s academic flagship school, College Preparatory High School (63% Anglo and 20% Chicana/o), had an APSCI of 9.9. The short of it is that Cerro has one advanced placement course for every 217 students, while College Prep has one advanced placement course for every 10 students.

**Social Justice Education: Critically Compassionate Intellectualism in Practice**

As a response to these unequal schooling conditions, the SJEP was designed to practice critically compassionate intellectualism by placing the intellectual development of Chicana/o students as its top priority. It provides students with the opportunity to investigate social and economic problems that undermine their potential to excel academically as well as impede the welfare and prosperity of their families and communities. The teachers in the program do not tell students what these problems are; they simply “problem- pose” by stating questions that prompt them to think about the complexities and tensions within their social context.

For example, a research assignment that prompted students into thinking about their social world involved photo documentation of their school and neighborhood environments. Students were given a disposal camera and then asked to document the environments in which they live. They were asked to take photographs that would help answer the following question: What are some problems you see in your life? Students spent...
about two weeks with the camera, ready to capture the various challenges they encountered in their day-to-day activities.

Some students had difficulty deciding what to photograph because they had not yet attained the critical consciousness necessary to “see” problems. Others surpassed the magical and naive stages of consciousness and recognized the deep-rooted structures fomenting injustice in their communities. These students became critical agents for their peers because they were able to use their intellectual capacities to help those still walking down the path of human development toward critical consciousness. Their photos and attendant explanations fostered a class dialogue that opened all eyes to the day-to-day challenges facing many Chicana/o students in the Tucson area.

One student shared some photos he had taken around his neighborhood. The photos showed major cracks in the streets and sidewalks, garbage piles rotting in an empty dirt lot, public bathrooms deteriorating in the local park, and families living in substandard housing. He explained that these impoverished conditions have a negative effect on a student’s attitude. He argued that young people make judgments about their value to the society based largely on the conditions of their neighborhoods. When a young person sees that the neighborhood where he or she lives is in a perpetual state of squalor, it is understood as an indicator that society and the people with the power to rectify such conditions do not care about that individual.

Another student furthered these sentiments saying that unequal treatment in the larger society often undermines the Chicanas/os’ trust in schools:

…it’s like the same thing, they were all taught the same things, to do certain things, to be in the same positions in life…my mom was telling me that they were forced to learn, the women, they were taught typing classes so that they could move up in the world as secretaries. And, my dad was tracked into auto mechanics. Neither [was] on the college track, they were on a track that the racist system believed was right. Like today, my parents, like today’s [Chicanos] most…really don’t have a chance. Look at our school, look at the ones in the AP classes, there are twice as many Chicanos as Whites in our school, but do they have twice as many Chicanos in the AP classes? No!

As the students collectively reflected on their own neighborhoods in comparison to other areas of Tuscon, they concluded that the local government adequately maintains the parts of the city that are inhabited by Whites. Their Chicana/o neighborhoods, in comparison, have been underserved for years. An explanation of “why” this happens involved a lengthy discussion about local politics and activism and analysis of the fact that elected officials tend to respond more empathetically to the demands of White communities than to issues raised by Chicana/o communities. However, students did not want to ignore the fact that their communities can be more proactive. This turned the discussion to investigations of solutions that could come from within their communities. This led students to conclude that the perseverance of poverty in their neighborhoods is at least partially the result of community fatalism, something that can be overcome through access to education and their generation’s participation in change-making efforts. One student, Rolando Yanez, explained that these kinds of conversations helped students understand their potential to change the conditions in the community: “The class, the project…showed the students that we could say something; we didn’t have to be scared. We know that we need to stand up. We are conscious, and we need to use our conscience for justice, and to fight racism.”
Julio Cammarota and Augustine F. Romero

Along these lines of acting on their budding critical awareness, students continued to document the conditions of poverty by conducting field observations and taking photos. They also interviewed peers about the effects of poverty on motivation to see whether their theory held any water in reality. The students’ research constructed a strong case about the negative impacts of poverty on the academic achievement of Chicana/o students (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1988; Rumberger, 1995; Rumberger & Rodriguez, 2002).

To make sure that their voices were heard, students arranged a presentation of their research with the county board of supervisors. After the presentation, the board recommended that SJEP youth work closely with the county department of health and human services to assess neighborhood conditions and develop ideas to resolve these issues. This has since led to the planning and development of a new youth center in Tucson, and has sparked a number of dialogues aimed at addressing the needs of Chicano and other marginalized youth in the city.

**Chicana/o Academic Identity**

Another resolution offered by the students was the expansion of the SJEP. One of the main reasons students requested an expansion of the SJEP program was its value in developing their academic identity and increasing their academic proficiency. Examples of students’ newly developed academic identity and their elevated levels of academic proficiency are reflected in numerous programmatic assessments: SJEP student performance on the AIMS Test, student surveys, and student testimonials regarding the transformations that have taken place as a result of their participation in the SJEP.

Entering the 2004 to 2005 school year, eight of the 12 SJEP students needed to pass at least two sections of the AIMS test, with 6 of 12 needing to pass all three sections. At the end of the 2005 to 2006 school year, the SJEP students had 100% pass rates in both the reading and writing sections, and a 91% pass rate in the math section. An equivalent comparison between Anglos or Chicanas/os who needed to pass any or all sections of the AIMS is difficult; especially, given the significant decline in the Class of 2006’s Chicana/o enrollment between the end of its sophomore year and the end of its senior year (266 to 151 = 44% loss of Chicana/o enrollment).

In addition, over the course of the two years of the SJEP program (2004–2005 SY to 2005–2006 SY), 100% of the students who entered the project in the 2004 to 2005 school year with a deficiency in any test areas passed all phases of the AIMS test. More impressive are the results without augmentation1 for this same group of students. Without augmentation, 34 out of 36 students passed the reading section, 35 of 36 students passed the writing section, and 27 of 35 students passed the math section.

Further evidence of the impact of the pedagogical approach used in SJEP can be seen by comparing the success of the SJEP students to their Anglo peers that also needed to pass sections of AIMS after their sophomore year. During this same time period (2004–2006), the number of Anglo Cerro students that failed to pass the reading section was 6 of 28 or 21%; for writing 10 of 32 or 31%; and for math 9 of 50 or 18%. The sample sizes are close enough to justify comparison, and what this data reveals is that the SJEP students outperformed their similarly situated White peers on two sections of the AIMS and were close to equal on the third section.

Another example of the strong academic identity that was built in the program can be seen in the graduation rate of the students in SJEP. Over its four graduating classes, the
The combined SJEP graduation rate exceeds the Anglo graduation rates at schools where SJEP is offered (SJEP rate v. school site rate for Anglos): Class of 2004: 94% SJEP vs. 81% site; Class of 2005: 96% SJEP vs. 83% site; Class of 2006: 97% SJEP vs. 82% site; and the Class of 2007: 99% SJEP vs. 84% site.

Perhaps the most telling data about the effectiveness of the SJEP are the students’ responses on the program’s exit survey. On the program’s most recent exit survey, 100% of the students strongly believed that participation in the SJEP led to the improvement of their writing and reading skills. Moreover, 100% strongly believed that their readiness for college was better because of their participation in the SJEP. Lastly, 100% strongly believed that after participating in the SJEP they could make valuable contributions to their community and society in general.

Student interviews were equally as revealing about the program’s level of positive influence on students’ lives. Veronica Alvarez, a freshman at Arizona State University stated:

People need to know that these classes (SJEP classes) are the reason why me and probably all of us have done good in school and on the AIMS test. These classes gave me confidence; I knew I would feel smart at least once a day. And then Lopez (Lorenzo Lopez is the SJEP teacher of record) was right, I realized that these classes were really, really hard, and if I could do good in these classes, I could get As in my other classes too. This class also helped me believe that I could go to a university. Nobody in my family even went to Pima [local community college] and most of them didn’t even graduate from high school. I am going to graduate from college and a big part of that will be these classes and the project.

Another student, Yolanda Martinez, a freshman at Pima Community College said:

I have thought I wasn’t going to graduate from Cerro because I didn’t think I was going to pass the AIMS. This project, the classes and you guys helped me to pass the AIMS. If I didn’t take these classes or have you, Lopez and Kim (what is her title) for my teachers I would not be graduating. My life would be different, next year I am going to Pima and then to the U of A. I remember one day you were talking about the other class (cohort one) and how they said the project saved their lives. That made me think, I was wondering if that could be true. I didn’t think you were lying, but I was not sure how this would be for me. For me and Jairo this class did change our lives. It helped us to understand that... Nos vemos el mundo con ojos critico, you know like you say we see the world different. We see ourselves different, I see myself different, and I believe different things. Now I believe that things can change, I can help change things, and the things can be just. It hard, and sometimes it feels like too much, but I know Mexicanos or Chicanos can be strong, we do have power, and unless we speak up and take action nothing will change. I am going to help.

These testimonials, in combination with the surveys and the test scores, lead us to conclude that there is a strong correlation between students’ participation in the SJEP and the development of an academic identity, increases in academic proficiency, and improvement on the AIMS test.
The Future of Critically Compassionate Intellectualism: Toward Antiracist Pedagogy

Racism is the sum of programs, practices, institutions, and structures deeply rooted within social life that maintain a social and racial order wherein White domination is perpetuated and intensified (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Pine & Hilliard, 1990). In schools, racism is reflected in entrenched policies, practices, biased curricula, and standardized testing. The ideology of racism creates, maintains, and justifies the continual production of injustice, inequality, and oppression. These products lead to the creation of a system of ignorance wherein Chicanas/os and other people of color are exploited and oppressed (Solórzano & Yosso, 2000). Social scientists have effectively documented the fact that these conditions benefit White students and victimize students of color (Haymes, 2003; Pine & Hilliard, 1990; Yosso, 2002).

Omi and Winant (1994) state, “The hallmark of [American] history has been racism.... The U.S. has confronted each racially defined minority with a unique form of despotism and degradation” (p. 1). The American reality for people of color has been one of inequality, injustice, and exclusion. These experiences include, but are not limited to, slavery, invasion, occupation, colonization, genocide, and extermination. Given the racist reality of America’s past, present, and likely future, it is essential that critically compassionate intellectualism confronts racism as something that is not a mistake, not periodic, not irrational, but rather is a social construction that maintains White domination and advances injustices and inequalities experienced by people of color in the United States (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997).

Given that racist structures hinder the intellectual development of students of color, a critically compassionate intellectualism must deal with racism head on. The future of critically compassionate intellectualism must include its evolution into a comprehensive antiracist praxis that addresses all forms of racism in American society, including White privilege, White supremacy, language and cultural oppression, uneven resource distribution, differential treatment, and disparities in academic outcomes.

The success of critically compassionate intellectualism in the SJEP allows us to say with certainty that educational programs are most effective for Chicana/o students when they prepare them to confront and overcome racism. Anything short of this will perpetuate patterns of educational marginalization for Chicana/o youth.

Note

1. Augmentation is a process whereby students can use successful academic coursework to add points to their AIMS scores.

References


The Social Justice Education Project 475


