

EDUCATION EQUITY MATTERS



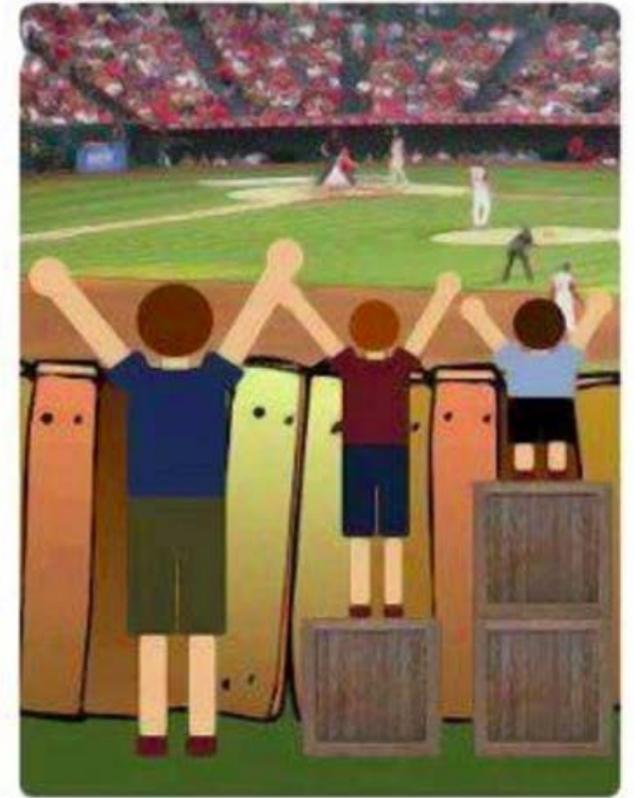
Defining and Operationalizing Educational Equity at CSM

Jeremiah J. Sims, Ph.D.
Director of Equity
simsj@smccd.edu



What does equity look like (draw it!)?

- Please reimagine this pictographic representation, which, ostensibly, demonstrates the nuanced difference between equity and equality.



Agenda

- **Paper tower activity (15 minutes)**
- **What is Cultural Competence?**
- **What does equity look like (Activity)?**
- **Defining educational equity**
- **Indicators of Good Teaching**
- **The Three R's (Socio-academic Synergy)**
 - *Relationships, Relevance and Rigor*
- **Brief Discussion of Critical Pedagogy**
- **Critical-Reality Pedagogy**
- **Discussion (30 mins)**

Educational Equity

Educational Equity is predicated on the intentional creation of a positive, socioemotionally nutritive educational atmosphere wherein all students are empowered and encouraged to succeed academically—precisely because they have been afforded rigorous and rich educational opportunities that equip them to work towards the realization of their full academic and human potential.

Sims (In Press)

Enemies of Educational Equity:

The Opportunity Gap

Misidentification of the problem: Achievement Gap versus the Opportunity Gap

- The persistent academic underperformance of African Americans and other marginalized groups has been lamented as evidence that there is an achievement gap that exists between traditionally marginalized students and their mainstream counterparts.
- This so-called “achievement gap” is a red herring that obfuscates the real problem: there is a real, protracted opportunity gap (or gulf, to be more accurate) between low-income, first in family, underrepresented students of color (i.e., hyper-marginalized students) and their more well-resourced Asian American and European American counterparts.
- More simply put: hyper-marginalized students are not afforded the same opportunities that their more affluent European and Asian American counterparts are (Sims, in press).

Enemies of Educational Equity:

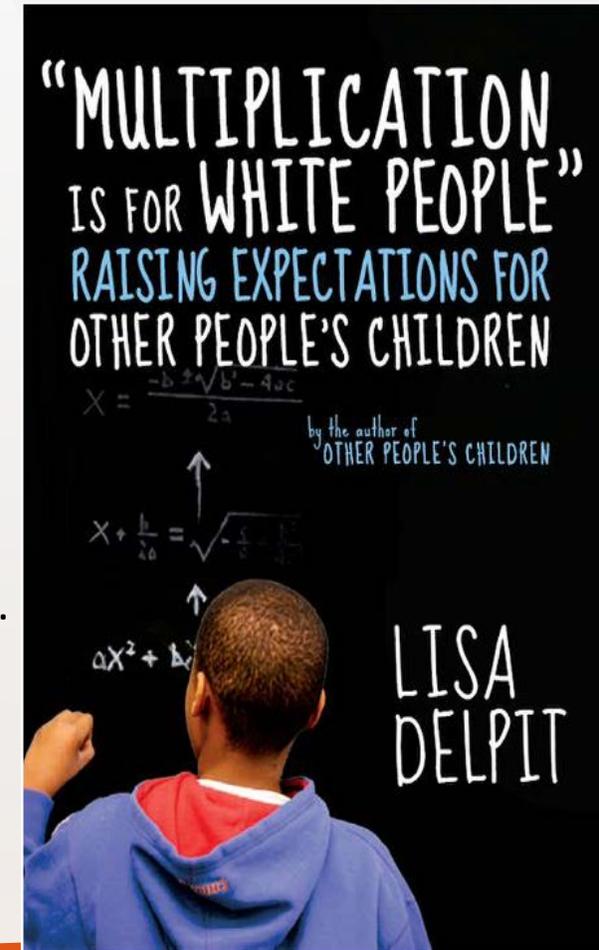
Deficit Model Thinking; Culture of poverty

- Deficit model thinking places the locus of educational struggles and failure squarely on the shoulders of students (Mahiri & Sims, 2016).
- Not only are students blamed for the struggles they endure, they are made to believe that they are incapable—due to some kind of faulty intrinsic/innate wiring—of being successful in school.
- Students' cultures, home languages, socioeconomic statuses—all things they have no control over—are also, routinely, blamed for the struggles that many hyper-marginalized students face in traditional K12 educational spaces.
- This recriminatory (i.e., blaming the victim) strategy purposefully elides conversations around the structures/institutions that are responsible for the creation and persistence of the inequitable barriers that hyper-marginalized students must traverse in order to be successful educationally.
- Culture of poverty arguments are based on one study (Lewis, 1959) that looked at one village in Mexico and used his tenuous findings to make a sweeping generalization regarding poor people worldwide.
- This “theory” has been debunked many times since its seemingly universal acceptance.
- The term “blaming the victim” was coined (Ryan, 1971) in response to this erroneous theorization.

***"Multiplication Is for White People": Raising Expectations for Other People's Children (2012),
Professor Lisa Delpit
Indications that Good Teaching is taking place...***

- Whenever students are involved with issues they regard as vital concerns...
- Whenever students are involved with explanations of human differences...
- Whenever students are helped to see major concepts, big ideas, and general principles and are not merely engaged in the pursuit of isolated facts...
- Whenever students are involved in planning what they will be doing, it is likely that...
- Whenever students are involved with applying ideas such as fairness, equity or justice to their world...
- Whenever students are directly involved in a real life experience...
- Whenever students are actively in heterogeneous groups...
- Whenever students are asked to think about an idea in a way that questions common sense or a widely accepted assumption that relates new ideas to ones learned previously that applies an idea to the problems of living...
- Whenever students are involved in reading, polishing or perfecting their work...
- Whenever students are involved in reflecting in their own lives and how they have come to believe and feel as they do...
- *Whenever students are encouraged to shift their recognition of the immediate socio-historical and socio-political realities of their own lives to that of other people who face both similar and dissimilar realities...*
- *Whenever students are encouraged to empathize and work in solidarity with others...*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T4k3X6dphnw>



Cultural Competence

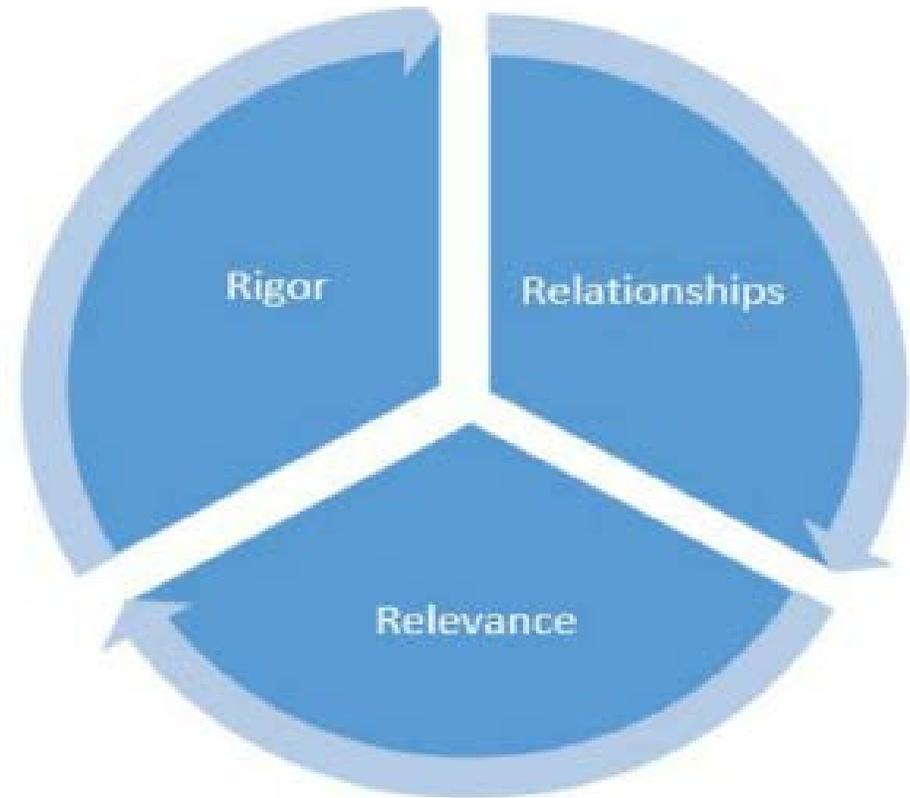
- **Awareness** of one's own, culturally-informed worldview
- **Attitude** towards cultural difference
- **Knowledge** of different cultural practices and worldviews
- **Cross-cultural skills**: ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with different cultures
- **Willingness to question** your own worldview and even challenge it.



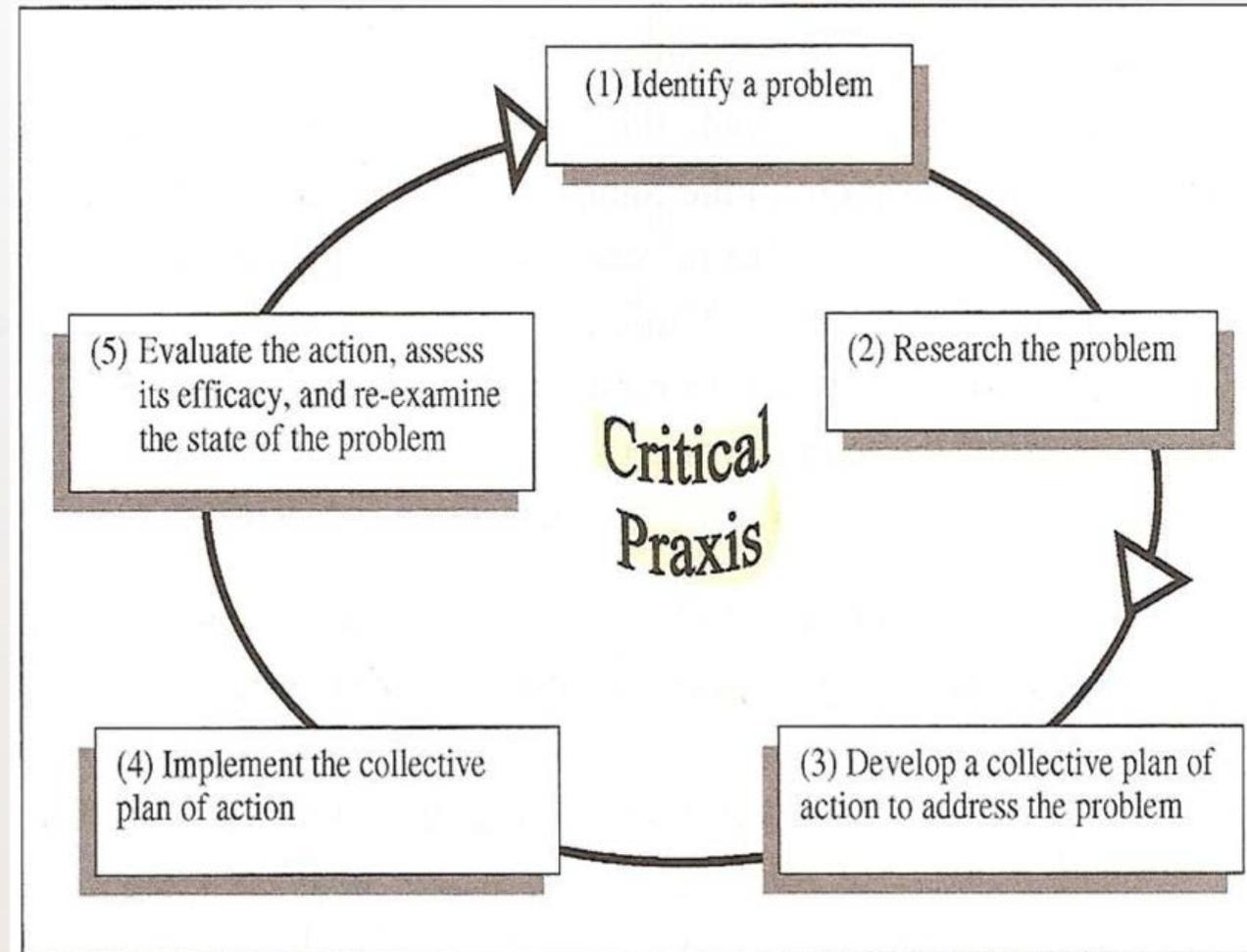
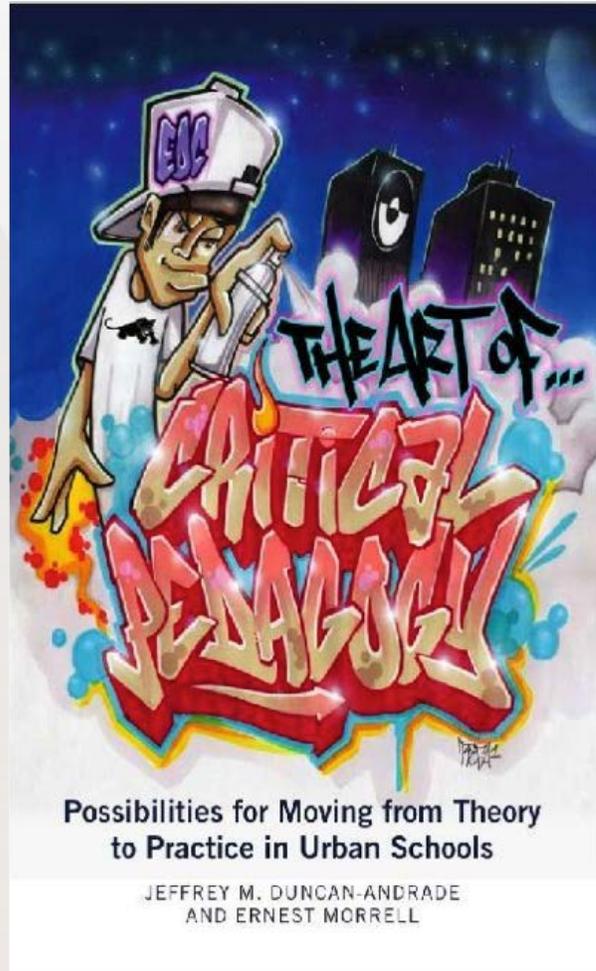
Socio-academic Synergy as the realization of the 3 R's

Socio-academic synergy is realized when a synergistic relationship between students' real-lives, outside of their immediate academic context, and the pedagogical and student services approaches employed by the educational entity that serves them coalesce. The resultant educational atmosphere should function to encourage, empower, and equip all students to achieve without requiring them to compromise their cultural and or linguistic identities (in order to be viewed as students full of promise and potential).

Sims, In Press



Transformative Learning: Culturally Relevant and Critical Pedagogies As Tools of Practice



Critical Pedagogy

- Based on the writings of Paulo Freire (1968; 2011) regarding emancipatory & liberatory pedagogy.
- Critical Pedagogy takes the first position that education is inherently and intrinsically political.
- Concerned with disambiguating and, ultimately, redressing social inequity.
- Interested in empowering agents for socially just, democratic societal transformation.

What should CP Do?

Critical Pedagogy in Practice should increase understanding, available identities, and competency by:

- Working to ***ensure that students' identity(ies) as urban youth are encouraged to persist.***
- Contributing to a counter-cultural community of practice that takes enemies of a critical education like false hope, oppression, low expectations, disenfranchisement, etc., to task.
- Seeking to ***replace low-expectations with critical hope***, high expectations, and empowerment, etc.
- Preparing marginalized students to navigate and overcome injurious realities of social and economic inequity.
- ***Preparing students to succeed educationally as evidenced by college readiness.***
- Curating an atmosphere where student ***buy-in is predicated on inclusion.***
- Allowing for ***honest discussions*** around systemic inequity and the need for social justice.
- Functioning as a space for students to ***gain a mastery of canonical information whilst simultaneously interrogating and even deconstructing it.***
- Engendering a dialogic communicative/discursive atmosphere with our scholars and eschew a unilateral (one-way) top down communicative process.

Role Playing

*Collaborate with your group for 5 minutes.
Then, act out a scenario of critical pedagogy in action.*

Is this an example of critical pedagogy in action?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=joshL_IWEy8

What about this?

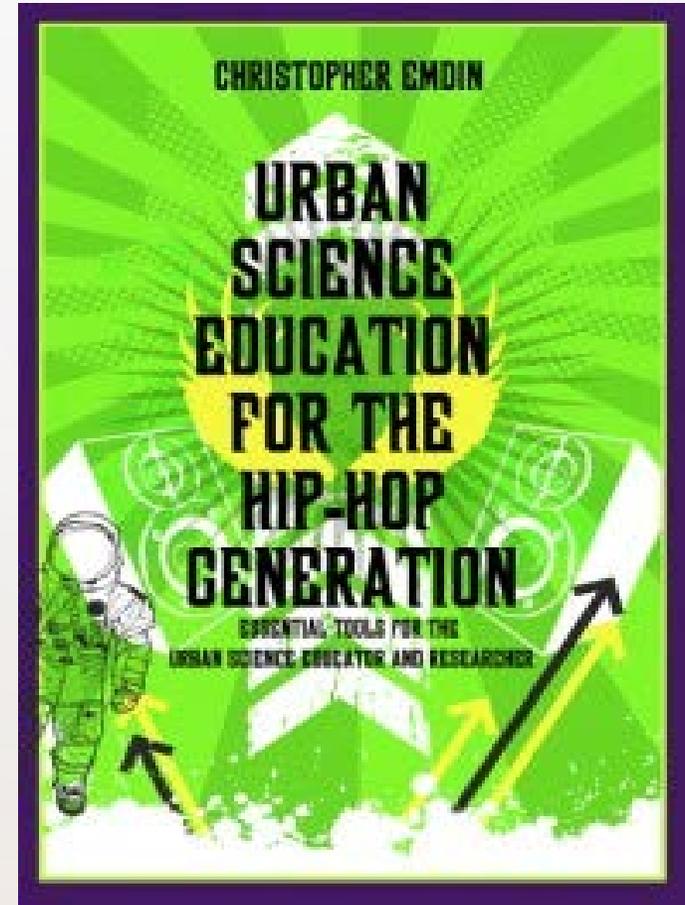
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6QHACA55aHQ>

Roots in Critical Pedagogy

- “a set of teaching practices that aim to create equitable social and academic outcomes for students in urban schools” - (Duncan-Andrade)
- “a classroom culture that normalizes attention to historical and persistent suffering and injustices in the lives of students” (Duncan-Andrade)
- ensure the cultivation and curation of a supportive space for reflection for both teachers and students

The Five “C’s” of Reality Pedagogy (Emdin, 2011)

1. **Co-generative dialogues**
2. **Co-teaching**
3. **Cosmopolitanism**
4. **Context**
5. **Content**



What is Reality Pedagogy?



Emdin (2011) defined RP as a teaching method that “focuses on the cultural understandings of students within a particular social space, like a science classroom” (p. 286). RP consists of what Emdin (2011) calls the “5 C’s”: co-generative dialogues, co-teaching, cosmopolitanism, context, and content.

- **Co-generative dialogues** - Structured dialogues that build on students’ Hip Hop identities and familiarity with the Hip Hop communal tradition of Cyphers are one of the most longstanding cultural rituals of Hip Hop (Love, 2013).
- **Co-teaching** - Encourages students to be the “expert at pedagogy...while the teacher is positioned as a novice who is learning how to teach” (Emdin, 2011, p. 288). Co-teaching allows teachers to study how students learn from one another in order to better understand students’ learning styles, and provides an opportunity for students to learn in ways that reflect their
- **Cosmopolitanism** - Based on the philosophical construct that human beings are responsible for each other and that individual differences should be
- **Context** - Connects students’ home-lives and culture to their classrooms through community and culture Context allows students to bring to the classroom artifacts that represent who they are and where they come from. Emdin writes, “[w]hen students can physically see and examine artifacts both in the classrooms and in their home communities, the divides between the school world and their real lives are broken down” (p. 291).
- **Content** - Evolves out of the willingness of the teacher to acknowledge his or her own limitations with academic content and to explore and learn with

MAN UP: Implementing Critical-Reality Pedagogy for Social Justice in a STEM- Focused 6th-8th grade Afterschool Program for African American males

Central Question:

What are the impacts of a critical-reality pedagogical approach to the learning of STEM subjects on 6th and 7th Grade African American male students' competency in, identity with, and understanding and development of socially just applications of STEM?

- Analyzing the Critical Contextualization of STEM
- Interested in competency in, understanding of, and identification with STEM for AFAM Males
- Assessing the impact of critical pedagogy & social justice education in STEM
- Paradigm-shift in the teaching and learning of STEM subjects
- Illuminates need for critical-reality based pedagogical paradigm for both STEM and humanities instruction

Lessons from MAN UP: a critical-reality pedagogy

- A critical-reality based pedagogical approach was instrumental in contributing to students' increases in competency, identity development, and demonstrated ability to apply STEM for social justice.
- However, in much the same way that even the most state of the art powerboat is powerless and incapable of realizing its potential outside a body of water, a critical reality based pedagogical approach must be placed within an educational atmosphere working to develop socio-academic synergy in order for its potential transformational power to be realized.
- Pedagogical approach focused on building relationships that were nutritive and supportive while involving students in the meaning making and curricular processes so that course material was relevant to them.
- And, we made sure to push them, while providing all necessary support, to critically contextualize course content in a thoughtful and rigorous way.

Components of CSM Equity Plan

- *Assess baseline understanding of perceptions of educational equity at CSM.*
- *Work to arrive at a CSM specific definition of educational equity.*
- *Create and facilitate E3 course: <https://smccd.instructure.com/courses/4869>*
- *Implement a professional development program for faculty and instructional and student services support staff based on pedagogies and best practices to foster equitable student success.*
- *Ensure that CSM's commitment to faculty diversity is broadly communicated to the community by overseeing the creation a Faculty Diversity Internship Pool (FDIP).*
- *Assessment: Work with learning communities to develop assessments that analyzes the shifts in students' academic identity, feelings of belongings, self-efficacy, and desire to transfer.*
- *Develop LComm led, equity-based CSM hackathon.*

Some Key Takeaways

- Understanding “culture” is vital for creating transformative relationships and empowering students of all ages.
- Our focus should be on creating equitable educational opportunities for our students.
- While we plan for equity on a macro scale, we have to think about equity on a micro level. (the outside world “spills into” classrooms)
- Content mastery is indispensable, but it’s currently playing too big of a role in education. This emphasis is predicated on “culture of poverty” approaches.

Discussion: What is your educational philosophy?

- ◆ In what ways have you put your educational philosophy into practice? Or, in other words, describe the pedagogical approach that best describes your teaching style in the classroom?
- ◆ Is there a disjuncture between your educational philosophy and the pedagogy you put into practice? Please discuss.

Reflection

What should an educational equity agenda look like at CSM?

- What should the goal of educational equity be?
- What is your role in realizing educational equity?
- Why is diversity important in education?
- How do you actively account for students' variegated cultures & worldviews in your instruction?
- What are some of the most pressing challenges you have experienced in the pursuit of educational equity in your classes?