

Teacher Group Formation as Emancipatory Critique: Necessary Conditions for Teacher Resistance

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One of the essential problems of critical social theory in education has been the inability by critical ethnographers to practicalize the heavy theoretical formulations of resistance theory. This naturalistic case study situates a group of four middle school teachers acting both individually and collectively in an attempt to undermine the contradiction between the individual and group concepts. It is argued that, through institutional and cultural political resistant acts, teachers can build an intersubjective, group understanding that potentially opposes dominant ideological propensities. My proposal is that teachers realize their group identity and use this to form a normative stance on cultural issues at the school site.

L'objet de cet article est d'établir les liens entre les théories de critique et de reconstruction sociale et la pratique éducative. Une recherche conduite auprès de quatre enseignants de niveau intermédiaire a montré qu'en fait, ils se permettent de mettre en question l'idéologie dominante du système où ils se trouvent, mais sur une base individuelle seulement. Pour que leurs efforts atteignent les résultats qu'ils désirent, il faudra que les enseignants développent une identité collective et le sens de solidarité.

In the last two decades, attempts to generate a radical theory of schooling have undergone major and fundamental revisions. Central to these amendments has been the rejection of functional views or models of the social system. That is, the seeming fit of the correspondence principle (Bowles & Gintis, 1976) — the mirroring of the school with the industrial/bureaucratic infrastructure — has been found lacking (Apple, 1982; Giroux, 1983). It has been argued that as part of the superstructure, schools not only reflect the economic base, but can run counter to it as well (Willis, 1977; Everhart, 1983; Fine, 1986; Friere, 1985; Weiler, 1987; Grumet, 1988; McLaren, 1986, 1989; Purpel, 1989; Wexler, 1987; Giroux & McLaren, 1989; Smyth, 1989).

Indeed, an influential radical literature has emerged depicting schools as sites of social struggle (Shapiro, 1990a; Giroux, 1983, 1986, 1988a; Carlson, 1987)

showing that schools are not just passive apparatuses of dominant ideologies. These authors, along with others (Bullough & Gitlin, 1985, Altenbaugh, 1987), view society as laden with contradictory barriers which impede a radical change agenda. Radical theorists, in their analyses of schools, often propose that we cannot assume, as the functionalists do, an entirely integrated and ordered set of meanings. According to these radicals, contest and struggle are seen as affecting the larger ideological terrain of which schools are a part. Through such conflicts, a different agenda can take shape.

To date, the radical education literature has shown extraordinary sensitivity to issues of disjuncture and conflict, and to possibilities and limitations of change, particularly in student lives. Yet, sparse attention has been granted to resistance by teachers to the stultifying effects of the educational system.

Resistance can be both institutionally political and/or culturally political. The former holds that teachers, both individually and as a group, can resist structural constraints. This may involve the infraction of certain rules, such as having parties in class when one is not supposed to, not standing outside one's classroom at an appointed time, or arriving late to organized meetings for reasons that have to do with one's perception that such events are a waste of time. This resistance may also include a move to a more pragmatic curriculum rather than to always following stringent official guidelines.

Cultural political resistance, on the other hand, more directly concerns emancipatory critique. Teachers, as the transmitters of knowledge to students and as active agents in the pedagogical process, can resist the cultural forms that emerge out of the dominant ideology (e.g., competition; success at all costs; sexism and racism; created stereotypes of students, administrators, and themselves) only if they question, reflect, and act individually and collectively to interrogate these forms. Emancipatory critique, then, implies new habits of educational thinking. This would include a language of possibility (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985) that is symbolic of a new level of consciousness.

My recently completed study (Kanpol, 1987) focused on what I believe to be a missing and key concept in understanding teacher resistance: *group solidarity*. The major obstacle that teachers faced in their institutional and cultural resistances, I found, was the inability to focus both their individual and group solidarity on emancipatory concerns. An important question is: How can a group transformative stance, as a necessary condition for teacher cultural political resistance, be identified? In this paper, my general concern is to add to the growing body of literature which is attempting to develop a new and emancipatory rationale for teachers. I will present data that illustrate the contradictory and dissonant nature of the teacher's identity as an autonomous, even isolated individual, as against his or her identity as a group member. In doing so, I will clarify key theoretical constructs such as the nature of resistance,

subjectivity, and intersubjectivity. In the final section of the paper, I will argue that teacher cultural political resistance includes undertaking normative stances and a united teacher front in order to change a system where, by and large, teachers are deskilled (Apple, 1983; Braverman, 1974).

Methodology

For this case study, in Winter/Spring 1986, I selected a group of four eighth grade teachers at "Hillview," an urban, unionized middle-school setting. I had observed them teach during the prior year when I supervised student teachers.

The design of this study called for three phases. The principal, as one key informant (Bogdan & Biklin, 1982), helped me in the first phase of the design. He had great experience at the school as an administrator and was willing to share his insights about it. In our initial meeting to discuss the possibility of conducting research at Hillview, he mentioned that there were problems with eighth grade teachers in general, that they "resisted" his authority. I initially chose to observe six eighth grade teachers (with their prior consent) whom I perceived (during my one year experience at the school) to have different styles of teaching and different attitudes to students. This helped me decide which four teachers I would ask to be involved in further research. I observed each of the six teachers for three days, getting to know their habits in and out of class as well as their ideas, thoughts, and perceptions on various issues at the school. I tried to follow these teachers wherever they went. Discretion was used in all cases.

The next phase of the study consisted of observing four teachers for in-depth observations. They were chosen according to my perception of how they were viewed in relation to the research questions I was generating at the time of inquiry, and the key informant's relationship with the four teachers. Each teacher was subjected to three weeks of intensive observations, four hours a day, five days a week. An interview followed that period of observation.

The final phase of the study involved member checks, peer debriefing, and triangulation methods to determine if observations made were accurate and to further establish a relationship of trust between myself and the teachers under observation. As one form of triangulation, teachers were constantly asked throughout the observation period and during the various writing phases of this and other manuscripts whether my observations were on target. Thus, finding a balance between my perception of what events meant and a teacher's understanding of an event became an important concern as the study proceeded. By doing this, I was able to confirm my subjectivity (Peshkin, 1988). I was seeing events my way based on my experience. Concurrently, I tried to maintain as much distance as possible from the data to gain a different perspective as well.

I often spent time with individual teachers during and after school hours. Many times I met with teachers on a social basis — at an eighth grade teacher's wedding, at an eighth grade teacher's social get-together and at my own residence. Over time, I became the classic participant-observer.

This qualitative approach was chosen because sustained systematic observation and interaction had to occur in order to determine how teachers acted both individually and as a group. The librarian commented to a visiting state department representative about my presence in the school: "He's one of us now. He lives here." This general attitude allowed me to immerse myself in the school lives of the teachers under observation. To be accepted as a teacher in the eighth grade teaching staff was central to gathering information on individual and group resistance. When the study started in earnest, I felt that I had already gained teacher trust.

The School

Hillview is one of the larger middle schools in the city district. There are 33 teachers and 750 students. There are various cultures in the school. Most notable are students who defy teacher authority in countless ways. Students' ethnicity includes 60% white, 35% Black and 5% Cambodian. Free or subsidized meals are distributed to over 70% of the students. In general, the students are from either poor or broken homes that do not engender academic atmospheres.

Teachers at Hillview have, on average, 13 years of teaching experience. Most teachers have a Masters degree, while a few have Bachelors degrees. The eighth grade staff is mainly white. The four teachers in this study are white.

Hillview was set up as a middle school many years ago. Its large auditorium is gloomy and not well lit. The hallways are spacious but are usually empty. Gray lockers line the school's one story in every direction. There are bells, fire drills, and assemblies at designated times. The collective sounds of the "hoods" whistling and the teachers hollering across the hall as they stop them from either running or creating havoc is constant.

There are old restroom facilities for both teachers and students. In contrast to the brightly lit, heated, and immaculate offices of the principal and vice-principal, the teachers' room is shabby. This distinction highlights how teachers in this study feel about the difference between *them* or *they* (administration) and *us* and *we* (teachers). Clearly, there exists a status difference in the minds of the teachers.

The Teachers

Mr. X is tall, erect, and always well dressed. He wears a tie, and his hair is combed back neatly. His well kept beard gives him a distinctive look. He is an

imposing figure as he stands outside his door (which is situated opposite the school office) where he observes anyone passing by. He is opinionated about life at Hillview: the people in the building, including students, teachers and administrators. Mr. X has things under control. He is hard working, always occupied, and quick to hand out assignments or punishments and rewards for good work. A student commented:

Mr. X makes me work, work, work, copy notes all the time. He hard man, but he still good.

Mr. X executes Health/Science assignments methodically, going over the student requirements, answering questions, and relaying answers in an almost non-stop, workmanlike pace, instilling what he calls responsibility into his students. He often carries his grade book and curriculum materials, and arranges materials for his next class. He could best be described as ordered. Mr. X, however, is discouraged. He wants out of middle school and into high school.

As with Mr. X, Mrs. A, the Language Arts teacher, is neatly dressed. She stands erect and uses an authoritative tone of voice. She is described by the principal as a "workaholic." Mrs. A always completes her busy work: preparing student exercises and executing administrative functions, such as reminding teachers about extra-curricular activities. She is forceful yet friendly in her teaching approach. Normally, Mrs. A is reserved, but when issues of school policy become topics of contention, she becomes involved. Mrs. A can be described as "into" or deeply involved in Hillview life. She cares about all administrative decisions, not only those that affect her personally. Additionally, she is opinionated about school issues in front of the principal. Mrs. A tries to learn about students' home backgrounds. She is both affectionate and sympathetic to students' destitute socio-economic existences. She remarked about a fourteen year old girl who reeked of liquor and has a baby:

I want to reach out to her. I feel we both have things in common . . . but it's like she doesn't want to.

Ms. Y is the Social Studies teacher, an innovator, and the idea person of the school. Both Ms. Y and her students are involved in classroom issues involving racism and prejudice. A glance at Ms. Y's classroom reveals a student sitting on the teacher's chair and other students mulling around Ms. Y's table. Ms. Y is easy-going and not perturbed by a student voice out of line. She can be a proficient worker and extremely demanding of students who are always busy. Commented Ms. Y to her class:

It would be wise to do your homework, or don't bother coming to school, and if your task is not completed in ten minutes, you'll be in the time-out room for two hours. If you do complete your work, you'll all be rewarded.

Mrs. Y's students have completed creative exercises, such as poetry writing on social concerns about prejudice. She often remains after school hours to

counsel students. She is quiet and youthful, but can forcefully express an opinion. Both Ms. Y and Mrs. A are involved in intramural activities. Both join in playing basketball on Thursday mornings (part of club activities). Ms. Y is, as the principal describes her, "a great part of the school." He says that "it would be a shame to lose her."

Ms. W is the foreign language teacher of eighth grade students. She can be both jolly and sarcastic. Students like Ms. W. She is friendly. She offsets a bad moment, or a remark she has made about a student or administrator, with her humor. Ms. W talks with students about their concerns, such as new car models and candy sales for the school dance. She participates in such school activities as the school dance. Like Mr. X, however, Ms. W feels stuck in a middle school, commenting that students don't care about academics. She feels "intellectually unchallenged."

These teachers work hard. They assume administrative duties and constantly worry about their students' academic performances. Their work is often physical: organizing storage space for candy, moving bleachers in the basketball stadium, or dealing with administrative tasks during class time. There is rarely time-off from the duties of the classroom.

For all their dedication, the teachers whom I followed were disillusioned, always complaining: "Oh, we haven't got an efficient administration here." They were discouraged with students' attitudes toward their studies, with the general behavior towards teachers by administrators at the school site, and with what Ms. Y coined the tension at the school. An important question is: How were these frustrations accommodated or disguised so that teachers felt more adequate, worthwhile, and meaningful? In order to answer this question, I turn to data in two sections of the study that highlight instances of both individual and group behavior at Hillview.

The Individual at Hillview

The distinction between the individual and the group is based on a simple notion. Teachers' lives are individually lived. In their class confines, teachers are separated. They stand alone in class. Teachers teach different subjects and have different personal interests. Time spent together as a group is limited.

At Hillview, teachers were bogged down executing individual assignments and performing such auxiliary tasks as playground, lunch, and hall duty. Teachers were, in the main, isolated from each other and the administration. Mrs. A typifies this when she commented:

I do what I want in class. Nobody sits on us and tells us what to do. I haven't had my lesson plans checked in twelve years. No one knows what I teach.

Teachers are all expected to comply with the official duties of the S.O.A.R. period (an acronym for the Special Opportunities to Achieve Results program), an official time block for providing students with individual assistance, sustained silent reading, extra-curricular activities, student council meetings, assemblies, and music practice sessions. Teacher isolation is compounded when no group "voice" stands in agreement on how to handle S.O.A.R.'s teacher perceived inadequacies. Mr X. further amplifies teacher isolation in his comment:

There is no academic achievement in S.O.A.R. Most of it is a waste of time; there is no study. Teachers bitch about it, but there's not much we can do about it unless we have an entire uprising of the staff, and we're not going to do that. Both the principal and teachers live in their own separate world.

All four teachers in the study adjusted the official purposes of S.O.A.R. to actions that were more pragmatic for their individual classes. Mr. X was frequently out of class, following up on discipline problems, "just to get the principal angry." Mrs. A socialized with her students, letting them talk quietly instead of reading, or left class for ten to fifteen minutes to complete "administrative" duties. For Ms. W, S.O.A.R. was "a waste of time, everybody's time, my time, their time . . . I run dittos some days, grade papers on others or just socialize with kids." Ms. Y just "prepared for the whole day." In short, teachers were involved *individually* in their opposition to this official obligation.

These eighth grade teachers did not get along well, which magnified their isolation. One of the four teachers noted:

We just disagree over most things. Our views on teaching differ greatly.

Similar accounts extracted from other teacher dialogue in this study included comments indicating that certain teachers do nothing in class and that teachers just do not get along.

It became obvious throughout this study that all eighth grade teachers were interested in knowing what it was that others were doing in class. Ms. W said about my presence at Hillview:

For the first time we have a chance to read what others are doing. Otherwise, *none of us* even know what the *other* does in class.

However, not one of the eighth grade teachers in this study attempted to learn what the other was teaching.

The Group at Hillview

Despite individual differences, different subjects taught by teachers, areas of disagreement and so forth, eighth grade teachers at Hillview were defined by the administration (principal and vice-principal, etc) as *the eighth grade team*. Additionally the teachers in this study referred to all teachers in the eighth grade

as *we* and *us* upon occasion. This can best be illustrated by Mrs. A's confrontation with the area supervisor and the principal in a specially held eighth grade teacher meeting about lack of communication lines:

Everything you told us here we know about that stuff, you know. We're just talking around the whole central issue. We don't have a whole lot of leadership.

The fact that most teachers in this study shared the same ideas about the "poor, inept" administration reinforces their group solidarity. Comments included:

He's ready to retire now. He's just putting in his years . . . the administration stinks . . . they're not doing their job . . . we do the administration's work here.

As well, these teachers taught the same students and shared the same lounge, lunch quarters, and social activities. They often banded together about school policy. Mr. X commented on the eighth grade staff's feelings about the designated morning time during which they were required to stand outside their classroom door to await students:

As a group we all agreed that standing outside the door at 7:35 was useless, so we just do not do it all the time.

Some teachers arrived late to designated meetings. One teacher left school early and had no other member of the study cover for her. The principal was not notified.

The four eighth grade teachers were unified in their judgment about a sexual assault issue that had occurred two months earlier. The incident involved two eighth grade boys who had assaulted an eighth grade girl. All of the eighth grade teachers were also angry that they were not notified of the incident until two months after its occurrence. Even though the principal explained that it was not in his jurisdiction to take action because the assault occurred off school grounds, Ms. Y still emphatically wrote to the principal and the superintendent of the district:

It is hard for us to understand two items: 1) why we were not informed of the incident and 2) why there was no school disciplinary action against those involved . . . From this unfortunate incident we would like to see several policy changes over this sexual assault issue.

All of the eighth grade teachers signed the letter demanding that the policy of sexual assault be made explicit. The collective attitude of teachers was to argue against the authority/power structures by questioning policy and by consolidating a united group front. Amplifying their group solidarity, teachers said:

We control the school . . . we all break rules . . . we all agreed not to stand outside the door at a designated time . . . we all overuse the quota of Xerox copies.

In their classes, teachers individually used methods and taught content that helped form group consciousness, either on social issues, as in Ms. Y's class, or on the formation of community relations as in Ms. W's and Mrs. A's classes. Ms. Y's class discussions and poetry exercises on such pertinent social issues as prejudice was one such example, and reveals the beginning of group consciousness formation. For example:

Ms. Y: Is anyone prejudiced?

Student (1): I guess, well we all have a few prejudices. I mean, um, do we like everything, um, and everyone in this school?

Ms. Y: What are some of your prejudices?

Student (1): I'm a hood. I don't like the preps. All they do is work; they nerds.

Ms. Y: What makes you better?

Student (2): He's not better. He's the same. We are all the same. We do things differently.

Ms. Y: What do you think about that?

Student (1): Ye, I guess.

Ms. W was concerned that students collectively decide what to choose as an extra curricular activity. A united student voice was depicted in a class conversation:

Ms. W: What will we do if we sell so much candy that there will be money left over?

Student (1): We can go to Wyndott Lake and go on the roller coasters. Can we do things together?

Student (2): Can we all go in a bus?

Ms. W: I think I can arrange it. As long as we stay together and do things together, as a group, we can go.

Additionally, students in Mrs. A's class commented that she let the class read what they wanted or even speak quietly during some periods. In general, students felt autonomous, free to choose activities. Rarely did Mrs. A have discipline problems. To use eighth grade reading materials which children who had third grade reading skills was an "impossible" task and had to be dealt with pragmatically. Commented Mrs. A:

Mrs. A: What I'm gong to do is let you relax and read different types of literature. What would you like to read?

Student: Ye, that stuff is too hard. Let's read something easier.

Mrs. A: Okay, take out *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*.

Students immersed themselves with the newer, more spontaneous curriculum. Ms. A, in a conversation with me, noted:

Now I can do more creative-type, pragmatic activities with my students rather than boring exercises . . . we openly talk about things like drugs . . . I decided that students gained nothing by doing the exercises made up by the other teacher.

A student responded to Mrs. A's curriculum:

She lets us do things that other teachers don't. We don't take dumb tests . . . she good, let us read what we want.

Both in and out of class, eighth grade teachers were isolated. Still, there were semblances of we-ness both in teacher's involvement with each other and in their individual curricula that involved students. This has larger theoretical significance.

The Disparity Between the Individual and the Group

The findings in this study reveal a distinction between the individual acting/feeling teacher and the teacher group concept. While it is understood that not all teachers can operate in unison because of the nature of individual assignments and differences, two central questions are worth investigating: How and when do teachers form group solidarity? When may institutional political resistance lead to cultural political resistance, where teachers both individually and collectively struggle to become more meaningful at the school site? Answers to these questions were sought through a partial analysis of the data already presented, where seeds of individual and group institutional and cultural political resistance already existed.

It is important to note that, if teachers want to create a radical pedagogy, time spent together as a group is crucial. Time spent together allows individuals within the group to bond over school concerns. For example, the four eighth grade teachers used created free time for various activities. Along with the rest of the eighth grade staff, they collectively made the schedule. This prompted one eighth grade teacher to comment that "we run the school." As well, they collectively agreed to "bend rules," and to "test his (the principal's) authority." This represented some level of institutional political resistance: probing hierarchical relationships and structural facets of school, such as petty rules. However, when acting in unison during their time together, does the above power struggle entail a battle for an alternative consciousness, one that has at its roots real cultural political resistance? At first glance, the answer to this question is that it does not.

Teachers in this study strongly resisted the institutional authority structures and official components of schooling, as evidenced by various breakages of rules, teacher language and thought codes, and questions of policy revolving around the sexual assault charge. As to these instances, the four eighth grade teachers who had formed a group understanding meanwhile transported this

sense of solidarity to other eighth grade staff members. This signified the existence of meaning-making that transcended the individual and led to both the group and the rest of the eighth grade staff collectively questioning moves made by higher authorities.

In order to further my analysis, we need to consider the subjectivity and intersubjectivity distinction. These constructs will help clarify our understanding of the ways in which teachers do or do not and may or may not join together to resist, both institutionally and/or culturally, dominant ideological propensities.

Theoretical Concerns: Subjectivity and Intersubjectivity

Dialogue in the education literature on the nature of reflection has begun to consider the subjectivity and intersubjectivity distinction for the establishment of a community as a guiding force to improve educational practice. Of philosophical interest in this literature is the role and meaning of the individual and thinking subject. How the subject's opinions, ideas, desires, competitiveness, success and failure, etc., gain meaning for the subject within "society" is central to understanding the subject endowed with a consciousness that forms, recognizes, and conforms to ideas and values. Theoretical connections to educational practices have been made by social theorists (Habermas, 1984; Mead, 1934; Dewey, 1902) and educational critical theorists (Simon, 1987; Shapiro, 1989, 1990b). Many of these connections are concerned with the establishment of community. It is here that the concept of intersubjectivity becomes paramount.

The concept of intersubjectivity emerged as a philosophical tool to explain the existence of co-beings who share a world and relate to surroundings in a similar manner. Intersubjectivity presupposes that interaction is both possible and conceivable as a system; the actor must be viewed as part of a system of interaction. Additionally, intersubjectivity includes experiences incorporating the "natural world" and "reflection," where "other ego-subjects related to their surroundings in a similar manner and the mental life of others — manifest in their bodily expressions — is accessible only indirectly, through empathy" (Dallmayer, 1981, p. 43). Thus, "reciprocal acts of empathy could lead to a possible community consciousness, that is, to an essentially possible plurality of personal centers of consciousness and streams of consciousness enjoying mutual intercourse" (Dallmayer, 1981, p. 44). This notion has to do with what Dallmayer terms a "we-synthesis" — the intersubjective and natural world that is socially constructed in the actors' life world (1981, p. 46). With the subjectivity and intersubjectivity distinctions in mind, a clearer understanding of the intentional acts of the four eighth grade teachers in this study signifies collective behavior, eliciting instances of both teacher institutional and cultural political resistance.

Practical Effects of Intersubjectivity

An example of intersubjective resistance in this study was the intentional institutional political resistant acts of the four eighth grade teachers. For instance, the four teachers found it natural to break rules when all teachers agreed on their uselessness, and act in unison at teacher meetings by questioning teacher rights concerning the withholding of information from them by the principal. More importantly, there was an intersubjective notion (*we* understand) that *they* were unjustly treated when information of the sexual assault incident was withheld by higher authorities. This prompted the eighth grade teaching staff to question who controlled information at the school.

Thus the subject (or individual) was momentarily less important than intersubjective understandings concerning teacher rights and a questioning of structural constraints such as authority structures (as in who controls state information, knowledge and rules). Intersubjectivity, then, has much to do with the social development that signifies human self-awareness and autonomy. It signifies a slow awakening from the drowsiness of a pre-reflective existence to a point where teachers can and do question the institutional and cultural nature of the school they work in, both individually and collectively.

An example of this collective cultural questioning appeared when the sexism issue was raised. Ms. Y was in part calling for reflection and reevaluation of both the eighth grade staff's and the administration's views on this topic, and, more importantly, for teacher and administrative action within the curriculum to deal with it. This resulted in a letter of complaint about the issue. One way, then, to help diffuse the dominant and impeding ideological notions of a self-centered subject was for Ms. Y to help create more *we-ness* for the eighth grade staff concerning the cultural political climate of sexism. To do this teachers had to create an intersubjective stance that would ultimately result in building non-sexist curricula. This cultural political climate was carried over individually into teachers' classes, particularly after consciousness was raised concerning the assault incident.

Cultural political resistance in class was evident with Ms. Y's concern about racism (reflected by writing and sharing poems concerning the "ills of prejudice" as she called it) as well as with a show of democracy in her class (letting her students choose topics of concern rather than imposing on them the completion a time-on-task rote activity). Ms. W let students decide where to spend their field trip time. She encouraged students to talk openly in class about their team's participation in the intramural games. The emphasis in class talk was on cooperation and sportsmanship. Mrs. A permitted her students to choose their reading material. It was interesting to note that class talk about equality and sharing of work together instead of using mandated curricula from textbooks was more important to Mrs. A and Ms. W. However, both these teachers made a

conscious effort to culturally empower their students. This was an alternative view to the traditional teacher-student relationship, and, in part, was brought about after Ms. Y and Mrs. A had helped raise the consciousness of the whole eighth grade teaching staff.

Conclusion

In the foregoing cases, what is seen are individual teachers acting to subvert the dominant ideology of rampant competition, success, prejudice, and non-democracy. Teachers in this study, in part, acted in unison and sustained with them the intersubjective consciousness that had to do directly with traces of transformation in their personal, political resistances. Institutional resistances were always apparent in this study. Cultural political resistances, however, were sparked by Ms. Y and Mrs. A. as they brought to the attention of all eighth grade staff members the ramifications of sexual assault.

To reach the point at which teachers will act together to undermine the dominant societal and school ethos, which I have referred to as intersubjective cultural political resistance, an awakening strategy for teachers would be the collective examination of the official and pragmatic bases of the curriculum: the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that they are expected to focus on in class. This type of collective activity could illuminate for teachers the struggles over which forms of political authority exist, whom the curriculum represents, and what versions of past and future curriculum should be legitimated, passed on, debated, and critiqued.

The traces of collective solidarity, which serve as a necessary condition for teacher resistance, can be found not only in intersubjective understanding about what it is that teachers should be teaching in class or debating in staff meetings, but also in teachers' capability of reaching normative convictions. This involves teachers articulating certain commonly held moral standards to both their supervisors and their students. For example, this might include a teacher group and/or the teaching staff adopting a shared platform on issues of race and gender. The letter on the sexual assault charge, drafted by Ms. Y, in part instigated a movement by the eighth grade teaching staff in this direction.

This shared platform translates into discussion on authority structures including who makes policy, who packages the curriculum, who sets discipline plans and who develops schedules. This platform will, at first, be rooted in both the individual and group understanding of what constitutes fair play for teachers — the chance to candidly speak to one's commitments. This can lead to teacher meetings not being used for trite bureaucratic concerns, but rather for fruitful banter on what constitutes just policy over such issues such as rules, equality, racism, and sexism. Concurrently, the role of the curriculum as a device for social transformation will include the above issues, and become an avenue for a

language of critique, possibility, and aspiration. Using the curriculum to teach about race and sex in a non-discriminatory way is vital for changing stereotypical assumptions and necessary for cultural political resistance.

Teacher discussion sessions can also provide the means to diffuse both individual and group alienation. Teachers may allude to many of the explicit connotations of exploitation and alienation by questioning both why and how the bureaucracy and the curriculum work to deskill and deintellectualize their actions. The eighth grade teachers' demand to obtain more information about students, especially when this involved such issues as the sexual assault charge, is one case study where teachers demanded both the time and opportunity to creatively intellectualize about what should be done in terms of policy concerning such cultural/moral concerns. In short, these teachers had become what Giroux has coined "transformative intellectuals" (Giroux, 1988b). A moral, consensual, and democratic platform on what is to be done with these concerns is critical if teachers are to help create cultural waves within the structural boundaries of schools. More importantly, teacher commitment to these morals infused into individual classes would help consolidate teachers' solidarity and provide impetus for change.

Teachers who both individually and intersubjectively embrace these morals in class and abide by them will generate a counter hegemonic agenda. By individually and intersubjectively asking such questions as, "Why is it that I/we are subjected to these evaluation categories?" or "Who is it that makes these evaluation categories so stringent and dehumanizing?" teachers can examine the older, conformist culture, and in turn can construct a culture which contains the possibility of transcending the individual as the central being. Thus, teachers can move together into the terrain of intersubjective critique. Again, the critique of sexism as well as the efforts of Ms. Y, Mrs. A, and Ms. W. to create student community through shared experiences are the seeds of intersubjective, cultural, and political critique.

Such intersubjective and critical consensus can only be achieved by questioning the cultural values of the school. To question such institutional politics of the school as rules or the legitimacy of authority figures is surely an important part of a teacher's day. However, only when both institutional and cultural spheres are questioned and acted on intersubjectively will there be movement toward eradicating the contradiction between individual teacher concepts and teacher team concepts. At this point, emancipatory, practical, and ideologically based constituencies must be questioned and confronted.

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