CHAPTER 6

Critical Social Foundations of Education: Advancing Human Rights and Transformative Justice Education in Teacher Preparation

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Introduction

In a recent poll conducted by the Pew Research Center, 58% of Americans say that the current climate is making race relations worse in the country Horowitz et al., 2019. They also remarked that systemic racism was a problem in the U. S. True to the above polling results, Derek Chauvin, a white Minneapolis police officer tortured George Floyd (a black man) by pressing his knee on George Floyd's neck for almost eight minutes until George lost consciousness and later died in police custody. A similar incident took place in March 2020 in Louisville, Kentucky when police officers entered Breonna Taylor's apartment at night, shot and killed her. In another incident, Ahmaud Arbery was shot and killed by two white men in a pickup truck while he was jogging in a Georgia neighborhood. Again, in Atlanta, Georgia, Rayshard Brooks was fatally shot by a police officer at a Wendy's drive-through lane. We cannot forget Freddie Gray who died in police custody in Baltimore, Maryland in 2015. Similar fate had befallen Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Jr., Stephon Clark, Terence Crutcher, Alton Sterling, Philando Castile, Eric Garner, Laquan McDonald, Carlos Ingram-Lopez; and the story goes on (see Feller & Walsh, 2020; Hill et al., 2020; Worland, 2020).

In the United States, people of color and minorities are marginalized and subordinated. The subordination of Black people and minorities, it must be

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pointed out, is not unconnected to the devaluation of Blacks and minorities sustained over centuries through slavery, the Jim Crow laws, and the denial of basic political and economic rights to Blacks. These practices have led to dehumanization of Blacks and minorities in what Freire (1998) calls "a *distortion* of the vocation of becoming more fully human" (p. 26), that has taken, "the character of an inescapable concern" (p. 25), in modern times. Given these circumstances, more and more parents and the general public are looking up to schools for answers to America's race problems. Because schools are charged with the overwhelming responsibility of preparing the next generation of students in the United States, teacher education programs must arm teachers with transformative pedagogy that incorporates human rights and transformative justice education into its curriculum. This chapter will examine the exploratory construct that we should prepare teachers for human rights and transformative justice agenda in American schools because as Bell (1997, p. 12) notes, "The normalization of oppression in everyday life is achieved when we internalize attitudes and roles that support and reinforce systems of domination without question or challenge." According to Tarca (2005), racism in America has changed from institutional bold-faced-fact of daily life to a more subtle form called "aversive," "laissez-faire," or "colorblind" racism. As she puts it, colorblind racism transfers "group-based explanations of disparities between Blacks and Whites to individual-based rationales" (p. 99). Colorblind racism is not only subtle but makes Whites appear to embrace equality for all "while maintaining a belief in the inferiority of Black individuals" (p. 99). Given the pervasiveness and virulence of aversive or laissez-faire racism in American society today, more and more parents and the general public are looking up to schools for answers for America's race problems.

The most significant point to note is that racism is based on shallow and non-justifiable assumptions about race with no biological or genetic basis (Smedley & Smedley, 2005). Racism was socio-historically constructed to justify slavery and colonialism which have extended into current schemes and contexts of marginalization today. Although Cook (2003) in his study of human history over the past 50,000 years came to the conclusion that there is factually only one human race, racism has sustained arbitrary categorization that assures the continuity of privileging racialization schemes in the world because race is a social construct that is used to create inequality. Indeed, over the centuries, racism has been used for domination, exclusion, and control. Smedley and Smedley (2005, p. 24) argue that, "Race is a means of creating and enforcing social order, a lens through which differential opportunity and inequality are structured." Freire (1998) made the point very succinctly that oppressors crave to possess and dominate things, people, and indeed the whole world. As a result, oppressors end up reducing life including humans to "objects" that exist for their profits and plunder. And to cover up their tracks, oppressors create myths in which they present the oppressive world as a given entity that the oppressed must accept passively and adapt to. (Freire, 1998; see also Avinash, 2014).

In this chapter, I want to argue that as a solution to this problem, we should prepare teachers who would be concerned enough to endow their Black and minority students with individual self-worth and their White students with the ethic of concern for others because as Freire and Giroux (1989) have told us, "Educational programs need to provide students with an understanding of how knowledge and power come together in various educational spheres to both enable and silence the voices of different students" (p. ix). In his groundbreaking work, *Education for Critical Consciousness*, Freire (2007, p. 39) argued that there are three levels of consciousness: magical consciousness, naïve consciousness, and critical consciousness. At the level of magical consciousness, the individual accepts life passively and superficially and becomes a victim of magical explanations. At the level of naïve consciousness, an individual identifies his or her place in the world and recognizes that he or she or others are marginalized but is incapable of the type of thoughtfulness necessary for action. At the stage of critical consciousness, a person is able to identify systematic issues of oppression by actively engaging in reflection and action. This state of consciousness is often followed by transformation about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, and attitudes to produce better outcomes. At this level, transformation is the practice of liberation through education where the individual learns of the *self* to be of worth irrespective of circumstances such as illiteracy, poverty, or ignorance (see Goulet, 2007, p. ix). Henceforth, students are not passive recipients of information but active participants in the learning process, and dialogue replaces the giving of information. In this instance, education becomes the act of problematization which gives the individual the ability to confront social, cultural, and political reality. However, Freire (2007) warns that literacy does not involve memorizing sentences, words, and syllables, but rather, the creation and recreation of human reality that adds to the natural world. Similarly, Dewey (1916/1966) defined education as "the principle of continuity through renewal" (p. 2). This means, the creation and recreation of beliefs, ideals, hopes, happiness, misery, and practices (p. 2). However, Dewey affirmed that education is not a matter of quantity or bulk, but of quality (p. 233). He offered a general perspective that provides some frame of reference about proper education and educative experience and argued that education is a necessity of life and educative experience is a means of social continuity of experience through renewal (p. 2). Dewey (1938/1998) highlighted the most important factors in the learning process which include the learner, the values and aims of society, and knowledge base of the subject matter. But he saw some experiences as mis-educative. An experience is mis-educative if it "has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience" (1938/1998, p. 13). To Dewey, therefore, educative experience is growth which allows for further growth. He pointed out that experiences which are harmful to others or narrow the field of further experience are mis-educative. Martusewicz (2004) argues that "transformations [which] reproduce conditions, e.g., ideologies, attitudes, relationships

or practices, or social and economic structures that may be harmful to others" are to be considered mis-educative (p. 4). Similarly, Dewey (1938/1998) pointed out that "growth, or growing as developing, not only physically but intellectually and morally, is one exemplification of the principles of continuity" (p. 28). This means, a man who grows in efficiency as a burglar or as a gangster or as a corrupt politician cannot qualify from the "standpoint of growth as education and education as growth" (p. 29). Dewey likened educative experience to a moving force whose true value can be judged based only on what it moves toward and what it moves into (p. 31). Indeed, Dewey (1938/1998) maintained that growth in and of itself was not enough: we must stress the importance of the direction in which growth takes as well as its final destination (p. 28).

In preparing teachers for human rights and transformative justice agenda, I argue that critical social foundations of education is the only course in the teacher education curriculum that is connected with advancing human rights and transformative justice agenda because it encourages students to think critically about social issues and engages them in meaningful activism to produce social change. Critical social foundations of education not only devotes attention to asynchronous power dynamics and imbalance in the distribution of institutional and systematic power along racial lines, but also it discusses how to dismantle structural racism. It is also about the only course in the teacher education curriculum that encourages students to be involved in concrete struggle for resistance and change. And importantly, critical social foundations of education is the only course in the teacher education course offerings that is capable of introducing the concept of democracy, citizenship, equity, fairness and is capable of conceptualizing the connection between social justice and education. In other words, critical social foundations of education is the construct in teacher education preparation that enables students to navigate power because as Foucault (1980) noted, "The real political task in a society such as ours is to criticize the working of institutions which appear to be both neutral and independent; violence which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that we can fight fear" (cited in Rasheed, 2008, p. 4). Indeed, Freire (1998) reminded us some years ago that oppressive regimes are not the natural order of events in the world, but rather, are historically and socially constructed trends that should be changed.

Courses in Teacher Education Programs

Unfortunately, many of the courses in teacher education programs as they are presently constituted are not suited for interrogating public decisions because they are content with citizens' conformist and passive dispositions. Given these shortcomings, I argue that many courses in teacher education cannot endow citizens with the necessary intellectual capacity that would allow them to examine public policies critically as well as allow them to participate in civic transformation effectively. This is to say, most courses

in teacher education programs are incapable of awakening students' moral outrage and consciousness to the persistence of subtle racism, exploitation, and psychological oppression. Although some of these courses are necessary for transmitting cultural knowledge, such knowledge alone are insufficient for preparing students for civic citizenship and social justice transformation because they fail to address citizens' civic obligations such as activism. Therefore, as an experiment in civic citizenship, the present teacher education courses are anachronistic constructs which have lost their erstwhile intellectual brilliance and meaning within the larger political agenda in contemporary civic engagement discourse. This chapter argues that a truly transformative agenda of civic citizenship and social justice can be achieved by studying critical social foundations of education that activates civic citizenship of all students, keeps students awake, and encourages them to be active participants in the fight for social change and social justice through social activism such as volunteering, doing charity work, civic missions, political participation, engagement in community affairs, advocacy, debating national policies, and civic values.

Critical social foundations of education also teaches students how to channel their frustrations appropriately in order to initiate change. It also encourages students' involvement in social development projects through collective action as a means of effecting change in their own communities. By enhancing students' capacity for democratic participation, students become active and engaged citizens. And through activism, organization, and mobilization, students are able to transform their communities. It needs to be said also that critical social foundations of education is the only course in the teacher education sequence that is not only suited for introducing the concept of democracy and citizenship but creates the space needed for discussing social justice, democratic citizenship, and social activism. Critical social foundations of education interrogates and addresses issues of gender, race, and class inequalities and challenges dominant assumptions about power, leadership, and democracy thereby establishing community voice in the process of radical transformation (Cuban & Anderson, 2007). Critical social foundations of education allows students to think critically about social issues and provides the space needed for them to work creatively to produce sustained change (see Butin, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2005, 2009; Mitchell, 2007; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). This can be done through students' engagement with fieldwork experiences and classroom work focused on social justice, civic citizenship, activism, and the desire to right unjust situations. This way, at the completion of their programs, students graduate with a sense of social justice engagement, responsibility, and an activist vision of community engagement (Butin, 2006).

Why Critical Social Foundations of Education?

Critical social foundations of education is a course in teacher education which critiques domination and discrimination and confronts, contradicts, and corrects inequality in society. Critical social foundations of education is

informed by the principles and practices of freedom, equality, and social justice. It encompasses what Butin (2007) described as "the linkage of academic work with community-based engagement within a framework of respect, reciprocity, relevance, and reflection" (p. 1). Its objective is to inculcate in students a sense of self and political consciousness. Critical social foundations of education is the type of education that enables students to question the distribution of power in society: the aim being to transform structural inequalities in order to arrive at a more just society. This means, critical social foundations of education is critical of domination, discrimination, subjugation, and dehumanization of individuals and groups. It demands that public policy be informed by the spirit of equity, social justice, and fairness to all. In critical social foundations classes, students are encouraged to ask questions to uncover the cause of injustice and to envision themselves as agents of change. Critical social foundations of education privileges social justice outcomes over and above mere citizenship objectives because social justice outcomes include not only patriotism to nation but also "allegiance to universal human values, democratic ideals, and human rights and dignity of all people in the world" (Ahmad & Szpara, 2005, p. 10). Critical social foundations of education teaches students to "develop a pedagogical language that emphasizes the importance of being able to identify with others, to empathize with their thoughts and feelings and to develop the capacity for ethical respect" (Giroux, 1993, p. 20). This is because, educators should develop an emancipatory theory of leadership that should begin with the task of "creating a public language that is not only theoretically rigorous, publicly accessible and ethically grounded, but also speaks to a sense of utopian purpose" (Giroux, 1993, p. 24). In this case, Giroux (1993) states that public education should provide students with the principles and practices of democracy that is not devoid of vision or possibilities or struggle. This is the type of pedagogy that would encourage students to be involved in their communities so as to make a difference. In other words, teachers should engage students in pedagogy that would produce engaged citizens. Giroux (2006) makes this point interestingly as follows:

> Educators need to develop a new discourse whose aim is to foster a democratic politics and pedagogy that embody the legacy and principles of social justice, equality, freedom, and rights associated with the democratic concerns of history, space, plurality, power, discourse, identities, morality, and the future. Under such circumstances, pedagogy must be embraced as a moral and political practice, one that both initiates and is the outgrowth of struggles.... (pp. 34–35)

In a very well-researched book chapter, Emenyonu (1988) illustrated the importance of education as an instrument of social reconstruction. However, he maintained that education can mar the social advancement of a nation if it is not properly construed. As an investment in human capital, Emenyonu (1988) argued, the final product of education can determine the nature and quality of life in a given society, but if it is poorly construed, it is bound to produce

"weaklings" and people without solid roots. He tells us that, if education at the top is purposeless the learner at the end of the educational process will become a nuisance to the society and a liability even to himself. An educational system must be purposeful so that its products can be functional members of society. According to him, "When an educational process is misconceived, the consequences are socio –economic chaos, political instability, cultural indecorum and moral indiscipline and laxity" (p. 34). Also, if the goals of education are not made particularly clear or are misguided and ambiguous, the students or learners will be unmotivated and schooling will become boring, and to a large extent drudgery (Emenyonu, 1988, p. 34). Similarly, it has been maintained that a free and just society is not self-sustaining. Its citizens must be acquainted with the principles of democracy, social justice, individual rights, and responsibilities (Giroux, 1993).

In critical social foundations of education classes, students are motivated to think critically about social issues and are persuaded to act in creative ways to produce social change. Critical social foundations theorists argue that schools should promote the ideals of democracy and teachers should emphasize democratic ideals and change in their classrooms. Critical social foundations of education focuses on social change and social justice; it encourages students' engagement with civic, social justice issues, and the expansion of community-service programs. It is necessary that students develop commitment to service as well as to systemic changes in society. Students start from the premise that society is not perfects; therefore, it is incumbent on them to uncover the root causes of such imperfections. By understanding society's imperfections, a student's consciousness is raised about issues of society's injustice. In addition to developing social consciousness, students are taught to balance classroom component with social responsibility for the purpose of community change (Mitchell, 2007). During the semester, students are required to spend time in their chosen social justice endeavors or in some form of community political action such as registering voters, participating in community board meetings, serving at soup kitchens, helping at homeless shelters, taking care of the poor, writing letters to editors of newspapers, protest rallies, public meetings, and activism. This way, students acquire civic participation skills which should include, "organizing and conducting public meetings, preparing agendas, writing letters to newspapers and politicians, public speaking, conducting opinion polls, campaigning, utilizing leadership skills, and volunteering" (Ahmad & Szpara, 2005, p. 18). The reasoning here is to produce active, involved, and critical thinking citizens. That is, citizens who can adjust to different questions and different domains of thought. Citizens who are fair-minded about their viewpoints as well as the viewpoints of others. Citizens who would be able to explore and appreciate the adequacy of other people's position. These individuals should be desirous to explore alien and even threatening viewpoints including those that contradict their deeply held assumptions and beliefs. They should be willing to explore, take

risks, invent, invest, and create opportunities for others who are less fortunate (Paul, 1990, pp. 18–43). The type of education here would enable an individual to think for him/herself, in what Freire (2007) calls education for critical consciousness. This type of education allows an individual to learn how to analyze questions and problems and how to enter sympathetically into the thinking of others. Those endowed with these types of skills are able to make effective economic, political, and social contributions to their own society, because they can gather, analyze, synthesize, and assimilate information. And most importantly, these skills help people to deal rationally with conflicting points of view and to develop critical thinking abilities (Paul, 1990, pp. 18–43).

Development of Critical Thinking Skills?

In a real sense, critical social foundations theorists maintain that foundations students should develop critical thinking skills through class dialogue,[1] because Freire (1998) argued in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* that dialogue is a precondition for our humanization. In his notion of "regimes of truth," Foucault (1980) tells us how some discourses operate and work together to reinforce a particular view of the world. Fernandez-Balboa and Marshall (1994), define dialogue as, "an active process of serious continuing discussion which allows people's voices to develop and be heard" (p. 173). They maintain that the advantage of using dialogue is that it is free. Dialogue is also social, inclusive, participatory, normative, propositional, ongoing, transformative, and best of all anticipatory (Fernandez-Balboa & Marshall, 1994). Dialogue in the classroom is advantageous because participants try to influence and direct the future of the events. It is transformative because students construct knowledge by themselves. It improves social relations in the classroom and raises awareness. Through dialogue, individuals can transform and shape their own destinies and remake their own world. The greatest beauty of dialogue is that it promotes self-awareness, self-reflection, and self-criticism (Fernandez-Balboa & Marshall, 1994). In all, dialogue generates reflection because when individuals engage in dialogue, they reflect, concentrate, consider alternatives, listen closely, give careful attention to definitions and meanings, recognize options, and perform serious mental activities more than they would have engaged in otherwise (Lipman et al., 1980). However, "true dialogue cannot exist unless the dialoguers engage in critical thinking" (Freire, 1998, p. 73). As LeCompte and DeMarrais (1992, p. 17) see it, the teaching of "inquiry skills can bring about individual self-awareness... or empowerment, and empowered individuals can... in turn confront oppressive social structures as catalysts for wider change" (see also DeMarrais & LeCompte, 1995). According to Hursh (1992), critical social studies can become a vehicle through which students give voice to their own realities and listen to others because it has been established that when students engage in dialogue in a classroom, they participate actively in the learning process, and a democratic process develops

because dialogue is the foundation of a true democracy. Students learn from each other when they are presented with a challenging learning environment through dialogue. As a result, they learn to trust, respect, and care for each other. Fernandez-Balboa and Marshall (1994) maintain that, "Dialogue helps students and teachers relate on a more personal, trusting level and makes the classroom a more humane place in which to learn" (p. 175). Abascal-Hildebrand (1999) informs us that foundations teachers act as public intellectuals because they want their students to use their knowledge and skills to transform social relations in the classroom and to better their society (see also Giroux, 1988). Social foundations teachers encourage dialogue because they want their students to share, communicate, and transform their world. Explaining why foundations scholars teach the praxis of dialogue to their students, Abascal-Hildebrand (1999) states:

> Our interpretative capacities…serve as the means for acting as public intellectuals. Our interpretive capacities enable our understanding of the action dimensions needed for changing public institutions, so it is more possible for all in the community to participate democratically. (p. 5)

Besides, foundations scholars engage their students in active continuing discussions because language is their *house of being*. They engage their students in constant discussions even in their seeming silence because language is the only avenue for understanding their work. Foundations scholars use language because it provides them with the tools to be involved in the democratic process and public discourse (see Abascal-Hildebrand, 1999). Freire (2007, p. 40) argued that "dialogue creates a critical attitude. It is nourished by love, humility, hope, faith, and trust. When the two 'poles' of the dialogue are thus linked by love, hope, and mutual trust, they can join in a critical search for something. Only dialogue truly communicates." Language brings the past into the present, thoughts into action, and from the past and the present one can project the future. However, in their excellent introduction in *Pedagogy, Popular Culture, and Public Life*, Freire and Giroux (1989, pp. vii–xii) warn against any type of education curriculum that takes on "the easy and sometimes sloppy demands of liberal pluralism," because such a curriculum has a tendency to silence, marginalize, and exacerbate forms of cultural containment, conformity, discrimination, and socioeconomic inequality. They argue that education should engage "the power-sensitive relations that articulate between and among different groups." They go on to state that, "We should see schools as places that produce not only subjects but subjectivities," because learning is as much about the acquisition of knowledge as it is about the production of social practices that provide individuals with a sense of identity, self-worth, value, and place. What they mean here is that educators should help students to overcome their voicelessness. Giroux (1988, 1993), for example, advocates for the type of education that is capable of preparing students to be active, critical transformative intellectuals, good community members, and

risk-taking citizens. He welcomes learning communities that are capable of producing, "critical citizens capable of exercising civic courage and the moral leadership necessary to promote and advance the language of democracy" (Giroux, 1993, p. 22). According to him, the type of pedagogy that is capable of producing such citizens,

> goes beyond analyzing the structuring principles that inform the form and content of the representation of politics; instead, it focuses on how students and others learn to identify, challenge, and re-write such representations. More specifically, it offers students the opportunity to engage pedagogically the means by which representational practices can be portrayed, taken up, and reworked subjectively so as to produce, reinforce, or resist certain forms of cultural representation and self-definition. (Giroux, 1993, p. 118)

Freire (1998, 2007) tells us that the only way to change the world is for reflection and action to go hand in hand. This is because for objective reality to be transformed, perception must be followed by action. Because of this, Freire and Giroux (1989) maintain that "Educational programs need to provide students with an understanding of how knowledge and power come together in various educational spheres to both enable and silence the voices of different students" (p. ix). In this regard, critical social foundations theorists call for activist vision of social justice engagement in what Giroux (1993) refers to as acts of "resistance and transformation" or representational pedagogy. Giroux (1993) informs us that the dominant culture victimizes some students, whereas representational pedagogy encourages teachers and students to negotiate relationship about teaching and learning so as to enables silenced voices to become active participants in the learning process and in everyday life (Giroux, 1993). Representational pedagogy lends itself to the demands and purposes of democracy because teachers and students engage themselves in the production of knowledge that is transformative, relevant, and emancipatory. Indeed, representational pedagogy is "informed by the principles of freedom, equality and social justice. It is expressed not in moral platitudes but in concrete struggles and practices that find expression in classroom social relations, everyday life, and memories of resistance and struggle" (Giroux, 1993, p. 13). As Kanpol (1994) noted, teachers and students should be involved in cultural politics, that is, challenging dominant oppressive values in our society.

Critical social foundations theorists argue that teachers should incorporate aspects of popular culture and activate voices of those who have been marginalized, silenced, and excluded. Teachers should emphasize cultural relevance and include perspectives from students' point of view. This means, teachers should construct knowledge in relationship to students' strengths, experiences, strategies, goals, struggles, descriptions of reality, and ability of action (see Bassey, 2016, 2020; Freire, 1993, 1998, 2007; Giroux, 1988, 1993; Kanpol, 1994; McLaren, 1994), because learning would be meaningless to students if it does not take into account their lived experiences, their stories, strengths, goals,

and visions (Kierkegaard, 1944). The important point here is that educators should take seriously the strengths, experiences, and goals of their students because as Kierkegaard again pointed out: "One must know oneself before knowing anything else. It is only after a man [woman] has understood himself [herself] that life acquires peace and significance" (Kierkegaard, 1959, p. 46). Yes, Pestalozzi told us about two centuries ago that if public education does not take into account an individual's circumstances and family life together with everything else that relates to his/her general well-being, such an education will stunt the individual's intellectual growth (see Nel & Seckinger, 1993, p. 396). Pestalozzi also told us that learning should connect with prior experiences and the personal belief systems of the students. This is how Freire (1993) made a similar point, "school systems should know and value both the class and the knowledge base that students bring to it" (p. 4). The reasoning here is that if learning is not made relevant to students' real-life experiences, such learning can only lead to distortion of the students' objective reality, because as Greene (1978) informed us, "the life of reason develops against a background of perceived realities" (p. 2). Another reason why teachers should make learning relevant to the lives of their students is because learning is likely to occur when students realize that the subject is related to their own backgrounds and experiences. Dewey (1938/1998) made this point as clearly as he could when he noted in his book, *Experience and Education:* "I have taken for granted the soundness of the principle that education in order to accomplish its ends both for the individual learner and for society must be based upon experience – which is always the actual life –experience of some individual" (p. 113).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that critical social foundations of education conceptualizes the connection between social justice and education and also creates the space needed for discussing social justice, democratic citizenship, and social activism in the classrooms. It does so by "questioning and addressing gender, race, and class inequalities, challenging dominant assumptions about power, leadership, and democracy, and establishing community voice in the process of radical social transformation" (Cuban & Anderson, 2007, p. 146). Critical social foundations of education makes students aware of both institutional and structural barriers to democratic practice and explores the means through which students can negotiate, challenge, and resist dominant control by teaching them how to use school walkouts, marches, and other forms of civil disobedience to make their voices heard in society (Cammarota & Ginwright, 2007).

Another point to note is that there is an organic connection between experience and education. A student's experience derives from the interaction between the student and his or her environment. This means, students are affected in their learning by internal factors and by their environment

guided by the principles of interaction and continuity. This is to say that dispositions that students developed from past experiences affect their future experiences (Carver & Enfield, 2006). Additionally, emotional well-being is important in student learning because as individuals we are affected by our environment because we are linked closely to the demands of our daily lives. Also, as members of families, peer groups, and classrooms located within the larger context of schools, neighborhoods, communities, and learners, we are influenced by culture, shared beliefs, values, and norms of our society. (Bassey, 2016, 2020; Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education, 2015; Gay, 2010; Gehlbach, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Therefore, it is by understanding the influence of these interacting contexts on learners that teachers can enhance learning effectiveness. This means, teachers must have clear conception of how "cultural backgrounds of students and how differences in values, beliefs, language, and behavioral expectations can influence student behavior, including interpersonal dynamics" (Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education, 2015, p. 21; see also Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2005, 2009; Nieto, 2007; Sleeter, 1991). The more teachers understand these facts, the better they will be able to facilitate effective teaching and learning interactions in their classrooms.

By integrating issues of transformative justice, how to dismantle structural racism, fight for freedom and activism into its curriculum, critical social foundations of education creates better understanding among different groups and serves as an important instrument in fighting both institutional and individual racism, thus heralding possibilities of more connected and caring communities.

Note

1. Dialogue here includes the virtue of speaking truth to power.

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