Concocting Crises to Create Consent:
The Importance of "The Shock Doctrine" to Understanding Current Educational Policy

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Concocting Crisis: Setting the Scene

For example:

- Building a new nation or reinventing the old under new management: Constructing fear of faction

- Protecting the socio-economic, political and cultural order/belief in the republican model and the "natural" class / "race" based social order: Fear that literate Africans might disrupt this social order; fear that whites and others might work in solidarity with Africans

In Response to the Crisis, Creating Consent….

1. **Jefferson**—proposed a new educational system that would rake a few geniuses from the rubbish…' (Spring, 2008; *Notes on the State of Virginia 1781/82*)
2. **Lincoln**—made it clear that he was not and had never been in favor of racial equality (Lincoln, 1858)
3. **Plessey v Ferguson**—legalized "Separate but Equal" racial arrangements (1896)
4. **Ellwood Cubberly**—proposed assimilating and amalgamating European immigrants into "our American race" (Nunberg, 2007)
5. **Jim Crow Laws**—for one hundred years after slavery officially ended, these laws continued to disenfranchise African Americans (Blackmon, 2008)
6. **Eugenics**—based on the premise that the human race needs to be improved, and some human beings are biologically inferior to others, this system measured this supposed difference in order to support create a hierarchical white supremacist society (Galton 1883; Thorndike, 1927)

Drawing on historical seeds of fear to manipulate public responses to current concocted crises

Shock Discourses—We are in danger. Our way of life is threatened by terrorists jealous of our way of life, and we are losing in the competition for global political and economic supremacy. Therefore we need more Math and Science students and teachers. From the Black President to the visible people of color in the media, an emphasis on affirmative action and diversity is no longer needed.

Application of Shock Discourses:

1) The recruitment and retention of students and faculty in higher educational institutions and teacher education:

From Teacher Diversity Project to Teacher Recruitment Program;

2) The obfuscations and/or suppression of a focus on social justice, and the role of race, gender, class, language, and cultural hegemony in reproducing educational inequities:

Tales of Two Higher Educational Institutions and Two High Schools.

Concocted Crises & Obama

Educational Policy under Obama:

The 2001, Elementary and Secondary Education Act, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) revisited

- Playing on conditioned discourses—what constitutes research and knowledge

- The culturally hegemonic one size that should fit all

- The Charter schools debate & the relationship between avaricious corporate practices, lack of corporate accountability, structural adjustment policies in education and worldwide, and a neo-liberal agenda, that promote social hierarchy, privatization, and standardization that benefit the few

The Structure of School: Legitimized by Science?

TECHNIQUES OF POWER	EXAMPLE
Surveillance – Monitoring, regulating function	Students have no privacy, even in the bathrooms; School building structures facilitate surveillance.
Normalization – Through standards	Establishes power relations; Acceptable school pedagogy and practice through comparison
Exclusion/Dividing practices – often occurs with normalization	Tracking; Reading groups; "Sheltered" classroom of ELLs and Special Ed students; Some identities, practices and ways of constructing knowledge
Classification – Sorting function	Language Arts, Science etc. AP, Honors, Special Needs students. "Race," class, gender……
Distribution – Controlling the agenda	Reading groups; Grade level groups
Individualization – A form of exclusion	Competition,' me' versus 'we'
Totalization – Governs and regulates groups	Students commit to various groups like year groups, teachers, fraternities, teams, debating groups, ethnic groups….
Regulation -	Refers to group rules, regulations and sometimes reference to knowledge; related to sanctions, rewards and punishment

From Hegemony to Counter-Hegemony

◆Cultural hegemony consists a set of interrelated narratives or "techniques of power" that present white, upper-middle class, patriarchal, and other dominant definitions of reality as normal, natural and common sense ways of thinking, feeling, believing and acting.

◆In a neo-liberal, inequitable, multicultural society, hegemony advantages students who inhabit privileged race, class and gender identities, mystifies this process, and masks the origins of the ideological discourses it represents.

One-Size-never-Fit-All

- Hegemonic historical narratives "bamboozle" us into thinking they are grounded in "truth," but they actually conceal the ways in which past and present socioeconomic, cultural, political and educational processes reproduce the power and privilege of those who inhabit dominant discourses and identities.

- In the classroom, hegemony may be represented in selective, dominant narratives about what are appropriate categories of knowledge and academic content, acceptable ways of grouping students for learning, suitable types of relationships, proper ways of interacting and communicating, and conventional ways of dressing.

Theoretical Premise:
Critical Multiculturalism

- Consciousness is embedded in social practice
- Schools are contradictory and contested places
- We know the world through language (verbal and non-verbal)
- The personal and the political are linked/how others see you is related to how you see yourself
- Hegemonic discourses shape/have shaped discourse (how we think, feel, believe, and act)
- The details of every day school practices are linked to wider social structure and social relations
- Meaning is socially constructed. Culture and pedagogy produce/reproduce knowledge rather than "transmit" it

Critical Multiculturalism

- Academic skills and concepts are tools that will help you "read' and solve the problems of the real world (Freire)
- Education is also about empowering students/helping them develop voice, identity, and agency
- Students develop critical reflexivity and critical consciousness through voice and dialogue
- Naming is a precursor to transformation. We need to name the many interlocking systems of oppression, including whiteness, racism, classism, and sexism
- Asymmetrical relationships of power should be identified and addressed (e.g. such as tracking)

Critical Multiculturalism

- Cultural hegemony includes presenting Eurocentric epistemologies as the only "normal" (e.g. individualism, meritocracy/either-or thinking/notions of neutrality); Other epistemologies should be validated/we should allow for the possibility of alternative and hybrid ways of thinking, feeling, believing and acting

- Historical and contextual descriptions offer more meaningful solutions to problems than ahistorical and abstract ones

- Hegemonic master-narratives should be identified; the methodology and pedagogy of counter-storytelling, metaphor and composite characters can generate counter narratives (critical race theory)

Meanwhile, There is a Real Crisis:
E.G. High School Completion

Overall graduation rate for 2008 was 68% (not much change in recent years)

- More than 75% of White and Asian students graduated.

- The graduation rates of Black, American Indian, and Hispanic were 50% 51% and 53% respectively.

- More females graduated than males.

- Graduation rates were lower for students in highly segregated, low-income, urban centers; there are regional disparities (from highest to lowest: Midwest, Northwest, West, South).

- NCES

Addressing the Real Challenges: Making Hegemony Visible

1. Problem-Posing education
2. Freire/"Funds of Knowledge"/Strength-based research (resiliency and resourcefulness)
3. Developing critical multicultural social justice learning plans - with art and social justice at the center
4. Implementing a "Critical Multicultural Pedagogy of Empowerment" - Problem-Posing education
5. Cultural Portfolio
6. Whiteness artifacts exercise
7. Community Scholars model
8. Culture Shock
9. Helping kids from low-income backgrounds and their families understand "the culture of power" [See the work of Lisa Delpit]

Learning the "WORD" to Read the "WORLD": Teaching applications & the theory behind them

WORD

- **Build** on background knowledge - academic and cultural (culturally responsive/relevant teaching)
- **Explain** - give explicit instruction, how new knowledge connects to prior knowledge & be applied
- **Involve** – Interactional teaching strategies that actively involve the students, meaningfully, in their own learning
- Use all steps with English language learners – step by step, explicit, visual & hands-on
- Comprehensive literacy instruction: read aloud, shared reading, & guided reading
- Students' cognitive development: Moves from concrete to abstract?

WORLD

(Critical Multiculturalism)

- Building on students' generative themes
- Engages dialogue, student voice, developing critical consciousness
- Problem-posing education
- Reading "texts" critically (written/film/performance, etc.) recognition of hidden scripts; analyzing motive and interests; synthesizing two or more "texts"; evaluating in terms of ethical standards; developing hybrid ideas)
- Use real historical & contextual descriptions v abstract ones
- Look at relations of power/hegemony/ interlocking systems of oppression
- Developing identity and agency

Putting Critical Multicultural Preparation into Practice

- Consistently checking stereotypes and deficit assumptions
- Cognizance of power relations
- Awareness of one's "positionality"; how white, upper/middle class/males have been advantaged by historical and current practices
- Commitment to ongoing dialogue
- Empowering participating families

Ideally, what is left at the door?

- Cultural hegemony, including whiteness!
- One-size-fits all pedagogy and standardization
- Simplistic, quantitative, assessment strategies that fail to give shape to critical, creative and meaningful practice, and inform students of how well they are meeting their goals
- Racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, ableism........with a view to helping students move beyond internalized racism, etc.