The Context of a Culturally Unresponsive Curriculum: Constructing Ethnicity and Gender Within a Contested Terrian

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Abstract:
The purpose of this research was to examine retrospectively the impact of federal mandates for forced school desegregation and coeducational programs on the curricular and teaching decisions of veteran teachers. A series of three narrative interviews were conducted with 12 middle school physical education teachers who had been teaching in the school district prior to 1970. The data were analyzed using constant comparison. The themes of curricular ownership, lack of awareness of and sensitivity to students' gender and ethnic identities, and the resulting need for student control were evident in teachers' decision making. White girls, African–American students, and other students of color were reluctant or refused to participate in tasks taught within a white, male sport curriculum. When viewed together, ownership, insensitivity, and control formed an interlocking system of domination that constrained students' constructions of an authentic identity.

Article:
Politically mandated educational change occurs with relative frequency in most school districts in the United States (Darling-Hammond, 1990). Although some policies appear to affect only the school administrative staff, such as changes in the formula used to calculate the frequency of student dropouts (Fine, 1990), other mandates are more public and invasive. In the United States, federal mandates, such as the 1964 Civil Rights Act that forced school desegregation or Title IX of the 1972 Educational Amendments that promised equal opportunity based on gender, stimulated wide-spread changes in student demographics and experiences. Unfortunately, the external, hegemonic nature of these laws left a residual effect that may continue to influence teachers' willingness to respond to policies associated with current reform initiatives. Although there has been relatively little interest in recent years in historical accounts of these school struggles, Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery and Taubman (1995) argued that this ahistorical focus on educational policy is detrimental to the understanding of current issues. During recent years analyses of current educational issues and events within a historical context has contributed to more meaningful and successful curricular reforms (Reid, 1986).

In the United States federal mandates, such as those pertaining to ethnic and gender desegregation, have had major consequences for specific subject areas in which race and gender were contested (Sleeter & Grant, 1987). Physical education presents a prime vantage point from which to examine the conflicting and oppressive images of ethnic and gender identity (Fernández-Balboa, 1993). Because of current issues surrounding constructions of femininity and masculinity and the cultural politics of race within sporting contexts, physical education is often a contested terrain for identity construction. The public nature of physical performance and achievement in physical education make it a prime site for peer pressure and social stereotypes that, if unaltered, reproduce oppressive constructions of gender and race.

Physical education teachers are involved directly in creating learning environments that facilitate or constrain students' ethnic and gendered constructions. Because school districts often are unwilling to purchase synoptic textbooks and other formal curricular and teaching materials for use in physical education, teachers have almost complete responsibility for and control of the development and implementation of the curriculum. Teachers

who have not acknowledged the role that gender and ethnicity play in the development of their own and their students' identities may be unaware of potential conflicts, contributing to students' feelings of anxiety, alienation, and disengagement (Cothran & Ennis, 1997).

The purpose of this research was to describe retrospectively the impact of federal mandates on the curricular and teaching decisions of veteran physical education teachers. This naturalistic research examined the teachers' accounts of events surrounding the federal mandates for integrated, equitable programs, the rationales for their responses, and their continuing struggle for control of their classes. Specifically, the research focused on questions of curricular ownership and gender and cultural sensitivity central to perceptions of curricular relevance and authentic identity formation.

At the time the current research was conducted, I had completed several ethnographic studies in this school district that had included extensive observations of middle and high school instruction and student interviews (Ennis, 1995, 1996; Ennis, Cothran, Davidson, Loftus, Owens, Swanson & Hopsicker, 1997). The findings from that research suggested that students' experiences were constrained by teachers' practices within sport-based curricula employed by both male and female physical educators. Low-skilled students, students of color, and girls appeared reluctant to participate in this curriculum (Ennis, 1996).

As a result of that research, I was also sensitive to the alienation and disenfranchisement felt by the teachers who had not been consulted about or trained to implement the federal mandates. They had not received assistance to think critically about their practices and to formulate legal, philosophically palatable alternatives. Further, they had not received technical training necessary to implement changes in their program. This is not said to excuse the teachers of their responsibilities for professional growth and agency, but to point out the complexity of the educational situation in which the current study is situated. Findings of my earlier research suggested that all participants appeared to be victims at some level of social and political processes that constrained their behavior and fostered the construction of their beliefs. Issues of curricular reform in this school district could not move forward with any hope of success without a more in-depth understanding of the historical nature of teachers' beliefs and identities within this context.

Identity

Erikson (1968) explained that an essential aspect of human growth and maturity is the creation of a self-identity. He defines identity as a coherent conceptualization of values, beliefs, and future goals to which the individual is firmly committed. The search for identity occurs at many different levels of personal and social awareness. Identity within a culture, for example, leads to a sense of connectedness that assists individuals to minimize feelings of "alienation, despair, uncertainty and a loss of a sense of grounding..." (Hooks, 1990, p. 27). Identity is created through a sense of affiliation with people of one's own ethnicity and gender. Individuals focus on shared aspects of a broadly defined culture that contribute to their sense of being. Developing and nurturing one's own identity has been viewed as a means of constructing a sense of self and a willingness to acknowledge and support the developing identities of others (MacLure, 1993).

As identities develop during early adolescence, the search for self may influence students' willingness to engage in or withdraw from certain activities (Blasi & Glodis, 1995). Adolescents' conceptualizations of their own personal and cultural identities may encourage affiliations, contributing to the attainment of career goals. Their need to maintain personal distinctiveness while winning peer approval acts as a complex and compelling force in identity development (Harter, 1990). Teachers, likewise, are responding and reacting within their own sense of identity. Their adult identities are molded within gendered and cultural expectations shaped through language discourses. Identities of teachers who have been reared within white male perspectives are often inconsistent with those of their white, female students and both male and female students of color.

In physical education and sport, both men and women from diverse ethnic backgrounds have been influenced by a white, patriarchal sporting philosophy. This perspective values skillfulness, strategic playing ability, rituals and customs that benefit competent performers, and aggressive and intimidating physical behavior and

language. Aggressive behaviors accepted by some in society and displayed frequently in professional sport form a template for many of the negative factors influencing sport. Although the most violent aspects of this sporting identity are suppressed in school athletics and physical education, nevertheless, there is often a hidden agenda that serves to intimidate and exclude other less competent performers from these arenas.

Historically physical education curriculum for girls and women has emphasized content more consistent with social constructions of femininity, such as dance, fitness, and cooperative games. Since the advent of Title IX, however, advocacy for increasing girls' level of competence, as defined almost exclusively by male performance, has dominated the curriculum (Wright, 1997). Traditionally, both male and female physical educators have been successful within this definition of physical competence. Their identities reflect a sense of self that is confirmed by their past or present sporting performance. Further, through physical education, they seek to nurture physical competence as desirable and enjoyable, just as teachers of mathematics, science, and literature attempt to instill appreciation for subject matter in their students. For students who do not perceive themselves as physically competent or for girls who perceive physical competence as antithetical to their constructions of femininity, physical educators" attempts to preserve and reproduce this environment are met with dissatisfaction and disengagement (Cothran & Ennis, 1997). In this research, teachers' perspectives on the contested issues of race and gender were examined from a narrative, retrospective viewpoint. Efforts were made to understand teachers' resistance to change within a historical, political, and economic context viewed as a contested terrain.

Method
Participants
Twelve middle-school physical education teachers who had been teaching continuously in the same Eastern urban school district since 1970 participated in this study. Each teacher had been employed in the school district prior to the implementation of forced desegregation (busing) in 1973 and Title IX in 1976. Six teachers were male, nine were Anglo-American, two were African—American, and one was Puerto Rican. Teaching experience ranged from 26 to 35 years. All teachers taught in middle schools that served seventh and eighth grade, 12—14 year old students. Most of the teachers had worked previously at other junior high/middle and high schools, and two had also taught at the elementary level. Each teacher had received a bachelor's degree from a different college or university and two teachers held master's degrees. The school district enrolled more than 115,000 students, 74% of whom were African—American. Conversely, the majority (80%) of the physical education teachers in the district were Anglo-American.

Data Collection
Teachers' constructions and understandings of their physical education goals and teaching practices during their careers were collected in a series of narrative interviews (Rosenthal, 1993). Narrative data were collected using a semi-structured formal interview format. Interviews were conducted in the teachers' office in three separate sessions that ranged from one to two and a half hours each. During the first interview, teachers described the teaching environment when they first were hired in the district and traced how their careers had evolved to the present. Teachers were not interrupted during this narrative phase of the interview. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed immediately following each session.

In preparation for the second interview, I sent teachers the transcript of their first interview and asked them to read and comment on its accuracy and inclusiveness. In the second interview, I asked two types of follow-up questions: (a) clarification questions to encourage them to explain comments made during the narrative and (b) elaborative questions to provide more detailed explanations of particular events and their consequences for planning and teaching.

Prior to the third interview, I sent them the transcript from the second interview. In this interview, I asked probing questions to encourage reflection about (a) the significance of these events in the effective operation of their curriculum, (b) opportunities for student learning, and (c) their level of job satisfaction. Some teachers had volunteered some of this information in their original narrative, while others were asked during the final interview to reflect on the events they identified as pivotal.

Data Analysis

Data from the three interviews were analyzed using constant comparison (LeCompte & Priessle, 1993). Initially, data from each teachers' interviews were examined together and an individual career narrative was constructed using a case study format. Narrative data collected during the first interview were volunteered by the teacher without probes or follow-up questions. These data were perceived to be most salient to the teacher and, thus, more likely to reflect a perspective that initiated conscious decisions. Occasionally, data elicited in the second and third interviews were acknowledged by the teachers as influential in their decision making and were given the same philosophical weight as data from the first interview. Examination of each career narrative produced a series of themes that the teacher deemed relevant to his or her life and to the evolution and construction of the current curriculum. At the conclusion of this analysis, themes were examined across teachers to identify those that appeared relevant to a number of teachers and school contexts. The themes of curricular ownership, lack of awareness of and sensitivity to students' gender and ethnic identities, and the resulting need for student control are articulated in the next sections. When viewed together, ownership, insensitivity, and control formed an interlocking system of domination (Collins, 1991) that constrained students' construction of an authentic identity.

Contested Issues of Ownership

Teachers interviewed as part of this research reported that court-ordered busing and Title IX had substantially influenced student demographics and motivation to participate in their programs. Schools within the district had been integrated following the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the 1954 legal decision, *Brown vs. the Board of Education*. However, some African—American parents and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People were dissatisfied with the district's progress toward integration and filed a law suit that ultimately led to court-ordered busing in the district in January, 1973. This was followed four years later in 1977 by implementation of Title IX of the Educational Amendments that promoted equal access for girls to sport and physical education. Although teachers initially perceived few differences between African American and white students, they acknowledged that 'mixing' girls and boys together in physical education reflected a major change from past practices.

Prior to Title IX, male and female teachers had experienced only gender-segregated physical education. Though they, themselves, had been public school students, professional preparation majors, and novice teachers in single-gender programs, they were now required to teach students of the opposite gender whom they had never taught previously nor had ever been trained to teach. They explained that prior to Title IX the content of girls' and boys' programs was quite different, reflecting socially acceptable activities for boys and girls. For example, boys' physical education focused primarily on intense levels of competitive play in team sports with minimal emphasis on skill development. Conversely, girls' physical education focused on a variety of activities including sport. Sports in girls' physical education were played at a slower pace and intensity and focused on skill development and cooperation. Both male and female physical educators emphasized that the externally mandated policies leading to integration and coeducation programs had stimulated more marked changes than projects developed by the school district, principal, or the instructional supervisor.

After the advent of desegregation, both male and female teachers expressed an immediate commitment to include African—American students in physical education. Initially, many African— American boys blended easily into physical education because of their athleticism. Male physical educators were less willing, however, to learn and teach activities formally associated with girls' physical education and continued to teach team sports for mixed classes of boys and girls. Many female physical educators reported they felt pressured when teaching coeducational team sport classes to appease verbally demanding boys and to comply with the perceived need to successfully 'mix' boys and girls in classes. One female physical educator explained:

> We had a varied program in girls' physical education prior to Title IX. We had gymnastics, dance, and individual sports as well as team sports. But girls rarely played as competitively as the boys. Most games were relaxed, half-speed games that focused on enjoyment, not competition. Girls who wanted to be athletic easily dominated the games. When we went to coed classes, even these girls had trouble.

Most of the time we taught team sports because that's what the men were used to teaching and it was very difficult to get the boys to do anything else. Male teachers were not interested and unwilling to teach traditional girls' activities. We found that the men's games were so much faster and more intense. The girls who had hung back before were absolutely lost and intimidated by the power and speed of the boys. It was like they really gave up then. They hung back, avoided the ball, and just tried to get out of the way.

Gradually, many of the activities that had been part of the girls' programs were eliminated from the sport-oriented curriculum.

When asked how busing and coeducational physical education had affected physical education programs, male teachers responded that there were few curricular changes. The team sports content originally part of boys' physical education dominated the curriculum. Teachers encouraged African—American boys and (all) girls to learn to play with higher levels of competency and intensity. Several teachers commented that they had to work harder to motivate Some African—American boys and most girls to participate in the physical activities they had traditionally taught to white boys. They reported that some white girls and students of color appeared less willing to engage in new activities or participate in the team sports that were an accepted part of the program:

> As far as physical education was concerned, I saw a different attitude of interest. Kids in my opinion seemed to limit themselves. This continues today. I have always thought of PE as being an area where we say, "Let's see if we can expose the kids to different things, particularly at the middle school level, so when they get to high school, they have an idea of what they would like to pursue." But I find that most of them, particularly the (African—American) boys, insist on playing basketball. That is their own thing. So many other things they consider not as interesting or important. Some boys would rather take an F than dress and participate in other activities. That is unfortunate in my opinion. I guess it is society. Parents and early exposure have a great deal to do with it.

Title IX increased the heterogeneity of student skill and motivation in physical education. Compliance with the mandate produced a situation in which highly skilled and motivated white boys were taught in the same classes with students who were not as skilled or interested in acquiring skills in sports they perceived to be 'white' (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Although girls had been participating in sport in their physical education classes, teachers explained that most 'girls had not participated at the same level of intensity and competitiveness as had the boys'. Not only did Title IX provide access to equipment and facilities, it also provided access to a level of competitiveness that even the more highly skilled girls had not experienced previously in physical education.

Female physical educators reported that they enjoyed teaching highly motivated and skilled boys. The boys' enthusiasm for activity more closely matched their own interest, enjoyment, and sporting identity. One female teacher commented:

> I was personally glad when they passed the law that was Title IX. I personally enjoy teaching boys more than girls. Boys are more willing to work and accept what is offered to them than the girls. The girls complain a lot about their hair and how they look and what they have on.

Conversely, male physical education teachers indicated that they, at times, 'became angry with the low motivation and interest of the girls'. They reported they had to work much harder to motivate these disengaged students. Boys, in turn, were impatient with the slower pace of drills and lead-up games in coeducational classes and were eager to participate in traditional competitive sports. One male teacher explained:

> I am not somebody who deals with change well at all. I couldn't accept the fact that we were going to have girls in our classes. I like it now, it has worked out fine. Initially it was hard to get in with. But I still think to a certain degree it hurts some of the boys' real competitive games when we go to break up into teams. One of the biggest problems teaching girls is motivation— that's still true today. The boys

you don't have to motivate. You have to calm them down. They don't want to practice any skills. They already think they know it all.

Teachers continued to work to remediate the performance and motivation of African—American students and white girls in what had become a white, male physical education curriculum.

Insensitivity to Gender and Ethnic Differences Inherent in Identity Formation

The role of gender and ethnicity in the development of student identity was not acknowledged by male teachers as important to student learning. Female teachers wistfully recognized girls' needs for a positive physical education experience as an important concept lost in the submersion of girls' programs under the umbrella of sport. African—American students also experienced the alienating effects of disenfranchisement in this curriculum. As the population demographics of the district changed over the years to reflect a majority African—American population, their numbers and interests began to influence teachers' curricular choices. While aggressive, vocal boys resisted the traditional multi-sport program, African—American girls continued to experience alienation consistent with that of the few remaining girls of other ethnicities.

Providing Girls with Access to Men's Sports

Gendered identity is contested in physical education through content that reflects patriarchal perspectives on physical activity and the tensions that arise between masculine and feminine definitions of behavior in sport settings. Messner (1990) argues that sport originated to provide a socially acceptable outlet for male aggressiveness and to satisfy the male need for physical superiority over both women and weaker, less physically able men. Currently, sport continues to provide a release for men in a way that excludes women by its language, focus on physical domination, and displays of aggressiveness toward others. When sport is the primary focus of the physical education curriculum, some teachers report they are constantly vigilant to promote the development of skillful movement and appropriate exercise. They work to counter the tendency of male students to focus on competitiveness and domination. This is particularly challenging when media and parental messages to young boys emphasize the authority of the physical: a monologue of dominance and aggression that often leads to violence. One male teacher argued:

> Teaching boys is really the way it should be if you want to develop athletes. If you want to do something socially, then you have coed. When I have a sport, say soccer for instance, some of the girls can play and keep up with the boys. The ones that can't keep up can at least go back and play defensive positions. There are some things that you have to do to accommodate girls, even when you say that they can play coed. But when we play touch football, the girls don't belong out there with boys. Girls can't keep up. I have also found that when girls are playing with boys, some boys actually hold back. They don't play as hard because they are afraid of hurting the girls. In that way it has kind of hurt the boys. It probably has hurt some of the girls too, because they come and they don't want to participate and try in front of boys... that image of jock... so that has hurt them too. It is not hard to get boys and girls to participate in coed classes, but it is hard to get them to put out a hundred percent.

Although both boys and girls participated in the same sports in coeducational classes, most of the rules, dimensions of the playing areas, and weight of the objects and implements were designed for boys and men. When boys and girls curricula were combined, there were some "concessions made for girls' lack of strength when compared to boys', but for the most part, girls and women participate in men's games (Vertinsky, 1992, p. 376). Many girls refused to 'play out' a masculine identity in sport. Instead they 'hung back', dressing when required for a grade, but often hesitating to 'mix it up' with the boys.

Some students may have agreed to engage in a sport curriculum based on their assessment of the relevance and subjective value of sport in their lives. For example, many boys embraced sport enthusiastically as central to their support system and essential to learning dominant, masculine social roles. Many girls, however, have been less eager to engage, torn perhaps by the social dichotomy of being simultaneously feminine and proficient in a

patriarchal sport form (Andrews & Loy, 1993; Dewar, 1993). Both male and female teachers' comments reflected frustration with the results of this paradox:

> Girls are worried about putting their gym shirt over their head, messing up their hair. They don't want to get dressed. There are very few of them that want to participate on the boys' level. I don't particularly care for girls in Phys. Ed. I don't think many people do... except liberals. Girls come up with different problems than boys do. Girls get into soccer probably more than any other team sport. But they like to jump rope for about 15 minutes and then they are tired, and they want to sit down. Now I'm not knockin' the females, but that is just the way it is. They should be in dance or aerobics. Boys should be too, but I couldn't teach it, I wouldn't want to try (male).

> When I first started teaching we did a lot of things with the girls that we don't do now. Instead of combining us with the boys [after Title IX], they should have just given us the money we were entitled to and the facilities or whatever, just like the boys had. There are some sports now that we complain about. In basketball we separate the boys and girls and in touch football because in those sports, the boys never throw the ball to the girls. When I am watching the coed games, the boys are more interested in playing the sport, the girls are more interested in touching the boys or in having the boys touch them (female).

Vertinsky (1992) argued that coeducational physical education is often an invitation for girls to participate in the boys' curriculum. Equal access did not ensure equal engagement. Evans (1989) suggested that the practice of ignoring the gendered identities of female students in sport activities may exacerbate rather than ameliorate the tensions between male and female sport participation. He argued that this practice has created hostility and contributed to teachers' and students' stereotypic perspectives on physical performance. Deeply rooted constructs of gender that form the basis of girls' definitions of femininity often are positioned in opposition to the male constructions of sport as a confirmation of masculine identity.

Teachers in these programs attempted to make minor structural adjustments in their physical education curriculum to accommodate girls' limited strength and speed when compared to the larger, stronger, faster boys. This approach is based on a deficiency or remedial model of accommodation (Miller, Leinhardt & Zigmond,1988). It does not address the inherent differences in the ways that males and females construct identity. This perspective, consistent with a distributive approach to power has been preoccupied with providing girls with access to current power structures rather than criticizing those structures or creating alternatives that are more consistent with girls' constructions of their gendered identity (Vertinsky, 1992).

Integrating African—American Students into the White Curriculum
When analyzing the themes of this research as racial text (Pinar et al., 1995), it is not surprising to find that many African—American students possessed neither the skills nor the interest in sports other than basketball and football. Historically, inability to gain access to expensive facilities such as golf courses or tennis courts limited lower income individuals' access to instruction and opportunities to participate (Eitzen & Sage, 1993). Further, people of color and white women have been denied access to private facilities simply on the basis of race or gender. When they were permitted to participate, they found opportunities to play key positions limited to whites or males because of a perceived need for a higher level of intelligence (e.g. football quarterbacks, baseball pitchers). Although many of these racist and sexist legacies are less prominent today, they still act in subtle ways to constrain access to opportunities for white women and people of color.

In sport-based programs the sports selected for inclusion usually reflect those that white, male teachers valued, felt competent to teach, and often played themselves. When white, Anglo-American teachers selected sports for inclusion in the curriculum, it was not surprising that they choose those about which they were most familiar and those that were a positive, stimulating part of their own histories. African—American students in urban areas often have not had the same opportunities to become skillful and enjoy participation in these sports that many describe as 'white' (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986).

Most teachers in this study, reported that the traditional sport content did not need to change to respond to the needs of students from different cultures. They considered sport cross-cultural. All students needed to learn how to play a variety of sports. Ferna´ndez-Balboa (1993) pointed out that often physical educators do not perceive the inherent Anglo-American perspective in multi-activity sport curricula. White teachers often assume that sports typically played by white men are relevant and meaningful for all students. They do not acknowledge that sport, like other social phenomena, is culturally bound. In other words, certain sports may have special meaning to one ethnic group more than others. Students find little meaning in sports not valued within the culture and do not engage in the curriculum.

In this study, the physical education curriculum required all African—American students to participate in a variety of sports, many of which they had never seen played (e.g., lacrosse, team handball) and in which they had little skill. Rather than the dominating force they depicted on the basketball court, their performance in these new sports was mediocre compared with the white students in class. As the demographics of the population changed, the growing majority of African—American students became increasingly unwilling to jeopardize their peer status by participating in sports that were not meaningful and which they could not play well. Failure jeopardized neighborhood status and power won on the basketball court and perceived to be essential to the development of positive self-concept and cultural identity.

Teachers' beliefs about the importance of sport as an essential component of the body of knowledge in physical education appeared to be unshaken by the advent of busing. In retrospect the teachers realized that, with the large populations of African—American students now participating in their program, the role of one sport in particular, basketball, acquired a meaning that far exceeded that of other sports. Rather than attempting to acknowledge this influence, the teachers initially denied the centrality of basketball, and instead, tried to teach a multi-sport curriculum. Teachers explained that their students resisted their efforts and worked to shape the curriculum to focus on only one sport, basketball (Ennis, 1995). Basketball appears to be part of African—American males' embedded identity (Harrison, 1995). Embedded identities reflect multi-layered self-conceptions that include aspects of an individual's socio-historical being. More than simply layers of ethnic, racial, or gendered memberships, embedded identities structure the individual's beliefs, interests, and sense of self, influencing daily decisions and life choices (Heath & McLaughlin, 1993).

Students' sense of identity within the African— American community was different from the identities constructed by the Anglo-American teachers and the few Anglo-American students in these programs. Teachers attributed problems with discipline and class control to students' disruptiveness and inability to concentrate, not with an inconsistency of the content with their background and ethnic identity. Faced with more disruptive and disengaged students, teachers attempted to exert greater control to maintain their authority in the classroom (Ennis, 1996).

Controlling Disenfranchised Students

Teachers noted that while their curricula had not changed over the years, the behaviors and characteristics of many students had changed dramatically. They reported that some students were less willing to participate in the formal educational mission of the school and the mission of physical education. These teachers felt that some boys were actively resisting their attempts to give them the same opportunities that they had given other generations of students. One teacher commented:

> Today, I think that we are in a big transition period. I think our students are changing. They have changed more in the past two years than they changed back in 1968 when we had Martin Luther King and everything and busing. I heard somebody mention this the other day, it is like civil disobedience. They are challenging everything all over again, and I don't know why.... Now, they are so quick to fight. Of course, the violence is in sports. You watch [professional basketball], you watch a baseball game... Our society is changing and I think our students are reflecting that.

Other teachers also acknowledged the difficulty in maintaining control when providing students with activity choices:

> We have started allowing students more [curriculum] choices. We offer them four choices of different sports each grading period. Personally, I don't like it. I would rather keep my own class all year where I can maintain control, because that is more important than anything.

Many of these teachers admitted that currently their curricular focus was centered around controlling boys in their classes. These students were permitted to participate in sport as long as teachers felt they could maintain control. One teacher said, "If they can't do what I say, we just sit. The longer they cause problems, the longer we sit". Control also involved requiring girls to participate. Girls were unwilling to engage in games that involved physical contact and in which they were the target of boys' criticism for their inability or unwillingness to play aggressively. Teachers reported that control meant getting both boys and girls dressed and into the sport activity with minimal distractions. Class management strategies they had performed efficiently during the early years of their teaching careers had become increasingly difficult and stressful.

Control also meant maintaining a safe environment. Traditionally, teachers were concerned primarily with student injuries during physical activity. Now, in addition to this issue, there was the threat of physical violence with every minor disagreement. Students were less willing to accommodate others, to back down from arguments, or to discuss constructive alternatives. Girls who felt intimidated asked to sit out to avoid physical injury. Teachers reported they were constantly vigilant to detect boys' body language, raised voices, or 'playful' physical contact that could signal the beginning of a fight. Teachers did not connect their concerns about student control, lack of interest, low achievement, or social irresponsibility with the curriculum. They perceived these to be factors that students brought with them from their neighborhood to class. Teachers argued that their programs would be effective if students would just engage and follow their rules.

Interlocking Systems of Oppression

This research focused on the voices of veteran teachers, emphasizing teachers' perceptions of tensions between their own and their students' construction of a curriculum reality. In these schools, the teachers' focus on white male conceptualizations of sport as the central focus of the curriculum created an interlocking system of domination (Collins, 1991). Boys and girls were disenfranchised by a curriculum that was unresponsive to their cultural and gendered identities (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Adolescent identity developed in a resistant environment constrained by patriarchal constructions of gender and race.

Rather than attempting to understand this phenomenon using a linear formula in which African—American ethnicity is added to gender (or the reverse), it is more informative to analyze these relationships within an interconnected framework that addresses the consequences of an unresponsive curriculum. The socio-historical perspective developed through the teachers' narratives portrays a lack of sensitivity characteristic of many educators during this era (see also Kantor & Brenzel, 1992; Metz, 1978). Evidence from this research suggested that it continues today, disconfirming contemporary reform rhetoric espoused by some school leaders and scholars.

Describing this pattern within a theory of interlocking systems of domination (Collins, 1991) provides an avenue to address both race and gender as bi-directional facilitators of oppression. When the influence of these factors are observed within the adolescent school community, the impact on identity is readily evident. Rather than succumb to the oppression created by the white, patriarchal sport curricula, these African—American adolescents resisted through noncompliance, failure to dress and engage, and disruptive behaviors, choosing to fail the course rather than submit to these policies.

Foucault (1980) defined these student perspectives as subjugated knowledge or 'those blocs of historical knowledge which were present but disguised'. They represent, "a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to the task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the

hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity" (p. 82). It is highly unlikely, however, that these adolescents' apparent resistance to the white, patriarchal curriculum was either inadequate or naive. Patricia Hill Collins (1991) points out that as long as authority figures are permitted to control the conversation, African— American male and female adolescents' discourses will be seen as parochial perspectives that remain invalidated and unaccepted by educators. She proposed instead that African— American's deep reliance on a personal, yet at times verbally silent, understanding of oppression and resistance gives ethnic validity to this culturally relevant alternative reading of subjugated knowledge (Collins, 1991, p.18).

Counter definitions of subjugated knowledge, such as the one offered by Collins (1991), emphasize the insight and validity of individual perspectives, denying the naivete or powerlessness of such knowledge. In this study, adolescents through their refusal to engage in some forms of sport provided a strong statement about the nature and quality of the curriculum that speaks clearly across decades since these federal laws were enacted. Castenell and Pinar (1993) urge educators to read these curricula as racial or racist texts. Texts embedded with Anglo patriarchal perspectives that ignore and at times degrade the identities of African Americans, white women, and other people of color.

Teachers in this research acknowledged the resistance demonstrated by their students, although they were unable or unwilling to define it consistently within a cultural and gendered identity. Like the teachers interviewed in Solomon's (1992) study, these teachers also blamed the media for the glorification of profes-sional sport, contributing to the African—American males' tendency to hyperfocus on basketball and their resistance to other forms of organized sport. Frequently, they discussed girls' unwillingness to participate in competitive activities with boys or their preference for sedentary activities. Female physical educators wistfully reflected on the nature of girls' physical education prior to Title IX, validating the gendered if not the racial significance of these curricula.

Evidence of increasing attempts to control the behaviors of adolescents through punitive measures was characteristic of each teachers' narrative. This socio-historical Anglo perspective on control emphasizes the need to suppress confrontational African—American boys and motivate African—American girls unwilling to expend effort to engage in white patriarchal sport. These examples of both disruption and disengagement are strong indicators that these adolescents did not consent to this oppressive curriculum, instead preferring to accept a failing grade.

Although the teachers' power to define and implement curriculum and evaluate students appeared almost total within these school structures, they reported that it was becoming increasingly more difficult to convince students to comply. Perhaps this was due to the students' increased resistance to a racially- and gender-biased curriculum (Castenell & Pinar, 1993). An alternative explanation offered by one teacher pointed to students' conscious acts of civil disobedience. A third interpretation could be teacher burnout or the suggestion that these veteran teachers were becoming tired of the fight to maintain the visions constructed early in their careers. Teachers expressed concern that they soon might be unwilling or unable to withstand student pressure, leading in their minds, to an unacceptable curriculum.

Kaestle (1973) explained that the standardization of curriculum and the resulting control issues in urban schools:

> developed in response to the political pressures exerted by the rapid expansion and diversification of the population in American cities. Teachers... become part of the [control] apparatus and less able to be flexible. Also to the extent that the system intentionally masks the identity of the student to ensure impartiality, the student loses part of his individuality. Formalized impartiality leads to anonymity (p. 178).

Cohen and Neufeld (1981) pointed out that over time this early definition of impartiality was challenged by equality of opportunity. According to Weiner (1993) this "new concept demands that schools adapt to students'

circumstances, although the organizational structures of urban school systems and the relationships between education's constituencies that the structure engenders have not been altered" (p. 101). Thus, the teachers in this study were in some ways trapped within a paradoxical system that was forced to respond to federally mandated change without essential levels of internal structure flexibility. Ironically, the intended revolution stimulated by these federal mandates occurred as anticipated, although teacher beliefs and expectations and concomitant institutional structures developed and perpetuated over decades predictably were much slower to respond. This delay resulted in a time lag in which the social order was mandating greater equity of race and gender, while the teachers' socio-historical perspectives limited their ability or willingness to change.

Determining the extent to which a federal mandate positively enhances the learning environment is based on the nature of the criteria used and the time period that has elapsed since the change was initiated (Cuban, 1992). In this school district, 25 years had passed since the mandated policies were enacted. Policies mandated to force change had greatly altered student demographics, but had little influence on the teacher-controlled curriculum (Darling-Hammond, 1990). Although teachers in this study accepted and sometimes acknowledged the benefits of the federal mandates, few changed their curriculum to respond 'in spirit' to the intentions of the mandates. By including African—American students in their classes and allowing the girls to participate in boys' team sports, teachers believed they had fulfilled their legal obligations (Sleeter & Grant, 1987). They did little, however, to create curricula that were culturally relevant to African—American students or to develop programs in which boys and girls had equal physical and emotional opportunities to learn successfully. Instead, they interpreted student resistance as laziness, disinterest, or civil disobedience, and created punitive measures to control and motivate students to engage.

When teachers were asked about the effects of busing and Title IX on their curricula, male teachers indicated that the sport-oriented content of their programs really had not changed. They were still teaching team sports using basically the same methods and class organizational structures they had used as young teachers in the 1960s. Teachers interviewed in this study reported few efforts to adapt and redefine curricula to match the ethnic and gendered identities and definition of self that African—American boys and girls construct. They did not acknowledge that the problems of resistance and control with these adolescents could be due in part to the teachers' insistence on perpetuating curricula in conflict with the ethnic and gendered identities of their students (Cochran-Smith, 1995).

Currently, many programs continue to maintain patriarchal Anglo-centric curricula without careful consideration of the potential conflict with students' ethnic and gendered identities. As schools became increasingly more diverse in every sense, teachers are encouraged to focus on the evolving school context as a powerful influence in the success of the teaching—learning process. Opportunities to reflect and critique school-based curricula provide teachers with invaluable opportunities to envision their own future and to create programs in which their students can learn within a responsive pedagogy.

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