

LATCRIT RETREAT
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THE LOCALIZATION OF LATCRIT THEORY AND PRACTICES

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1. Why should we be concerned with the localization of LatCrit?

- Through the tax system, our local communities are paying for the public educational institutions that in the past have NOT been responsive to the needs of poor people of color. Scholars of color must reverse that relationship and provide professional services to our communities. Thus, LatCrit must be of service to local communities.
- That knowledge is power is a foundational proposition of critical theory. Our local communities are an important source of oppositional knowledge and at least some of our work should be grounded in local histories and local needs even as we endeavor to locate other work in more global sites, knowledge, and needs. Recognizing local knowledge y *la concientización de raza* can disrupt the convention paradigms by valuing the epistemological importance of *our familias, our barrios* and our *comunidades*. Thus, LatCrit should see itself in a symbiotic relationship with local communities of color in its role as a creator of cultural capital.
- Local communities of color are in desperate economic need. Racebased scholarship must be real and respond to the material concerns of the communities in which we reside. Thus, LatCrit must use its significant intellectual and academic resources to analyze how racism limits the lives of local peoples and what we can do to address that persistent phenomenon.

2. How can we move LatCrit from law schools into local communities?

- **Redesigning the purpose of student work.**

Much of the work done by law students is used exclusively for the purpose of evaluating their performance and assigning a grade. It is often read or observed only by the professor and discarded or shelved after being graded. Student work, however, can be put to use in many ways. They can engage in community education for example. Students can also be offered the opportunity to take complex legal analyses, including LatCrit writings, and translate them for K-12 teachers and students.

In Spring 2001, I taught a seminar called Lawyering for Social Change. Because I had only four students, I was able to experiment with the content and the pedagogy of the class. The students were told to develop race-based materials about a legal subject of their choice. They were to incorporate technological applications such as CD-ROM, PowerPoint, and/or audio/video recordings into their materials. One of the students, Charmaine McDarment, volunteered to train the class in computer applications. This experiment in using the law school classroom for the development of K-12 materials can be adapted for the development of LatCrit materials for use with public schools, community colleges and literate and preliterate populations.

- **Collaborating with other race-conscious scholars and activists.**

Chicano/Studies:

I have applied for and have interviewed to be the interim director of UNM's Southwest Hispanic Research Institute, a group of Chicano/a scholars who work in about fifteen different academic units or departments. I will have an opportunity to develop collaborations with UNM scholars and other Chicano/a scholars at other institutions.

The MAESTROS Project:

I was introduced to Marcos Pizarro by Daniel Solorzano, a Chicano Scholar at the UCLA Graduate School of Education. Professor Solorzano has been writing about the importance of LatCrit to education and his students have attended LatCrit conferences for the last several years. After teaching in the Washington state and California schools for many years, Marcos Pizarro earned his Ph.D at UCLA and is currently a tenured professor of Chicano Studies at San Jose State University. He has been working to develop strategies to create new pedagogy for teachers of Latina/o students.

We have been working under the aegis of an entity we call MAESTR@S. Some of our joint work is described in the article appearing in the educational journal called Equity and Excellence in Education that is attached. We conducted a three-day race-based pedagogical workshop for about 50 teachers and educational activists from California and Arizona in July, 2001. Our plans are to conduct another race-based workshop for Albuquerque teachers and Americorps workers in July and August, 2003.

- **ARTI:**

I have also been working closely with the Anti-Racism Training Institute ("ARTI"), a local anti-racism program affiliated with Project Change, a non-profit based in San Francisco (originally funded by the Levi Strous Foundation). ARTI has programs focused on economic development, health, legal services and education. Professor Christine Zuni Cruz and I are working to develop anti-racism training materials based on two concepts we are calling "narrative braids" to describe analyses with an explicit subject-positionality and "racial literacy" to describe the race-conscious methodology. Racial literacy is a concept first named by Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres; we have invited them to work with us on this project and hope to facilitate that collaboration in the near future.

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