Teaching to Labour and Social Reproduction: Pedagogical Relics of The Factory Model in 21st Century Structures of Schooling

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Abstract

This qualitative case study examines whether the social ideologies of secondary school teachers about the future employment prospects of their Mexican American working-class students influence the pedagogies they deploy in their own classrooms. Drawing from social reproduction theory and earlier studies that have addressed social stratification through schooling, we explore how teachers understand their academic duties to students, how through their pedagogical labor teachers serve as social exemplars, and whether they engage their students in learning through their labour. Findings suggest that teachers' beliefs about students are contradictory and problematic, as are the associated pedagogies they use with them. Though largely unconscious, teachers enact a de facto social reproduction in the way they frame students' economic opportunities as bleak but inevitable. The authors suggest that teacher preparation programs engage teacher candidates about the history of factory model schooling and the normalized inequities that such a model continues to reproduce.

Keywords: *Mexican American students, social reproduction, teacher labour, pláticas*

The encroachment of neo-liberalism upon spheres of education has created a learning environment that has normalized a doctrine of competition, consumerism, and has redefined education as a commodity of marketization (Dafernos, 2023). Macris (2011) cautions on the pervasive strength of neo-liberalism as an ideology, not only in its ability to reproduce itself, but more problematically for its capacity to adapt to the undetermined evolution of its own policies and practices. Pavlidis (2023) is among many who argue that under the neo-liberal mode of capitalist accumulation teachers are undergoing proletarianisation where teachers are de-professionalized and their labour power devalued from skilled to average. Pavlidis counters that a teacher's work is an intellectual cultural activity that shapes and impacts both students and teachers. Pavlidis asserts that teachers' work as intellectuals is neither directly productive nor unproductive in the traditional sense of the word 'production'. He implies that the art of teaching is an intellectual labour (scientific or artistic activity), distinctively different from labour which directly transforms into value. He further reasons that teaching does not produce anything, but substantially contributes to the formation and development of personality and the labour power required by capitalism.

Keller et al. (2014) consider that teaching is an emotional practice that is an integral part of teachers' lives. The art of teaching problematically is often overlooked or minimized as a form of emotional labour such that teaching is expected to be objective. Yin et al. (2019) caution about the implications of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment. This particularly should be considered with schools being transformed into apparatuses of intensification, amid a heightened insecurity for both students and teachers alike through standardized testing and scripted curriculum (Ball, 2012). Schutz & Lee (2014) assert that the classroom for both student and teacher is an

arena where emotional episodes occur through overwhelming joy when teachers see their students understand difficult content, but also when teachers deal with intense frustration over students' home life challenges. Within the teaching profession teachers are expected to show pleasant emotion and suppress unpleasant feelings.

Tsang (2011) suggests that emotional labour for teachers is forced emotion management in working for a wage. In the teaching profession, emotional labour is governed by emotional rules for teaching which often alienate teachers from the practice. Basim, Begenirbas, & Can Yalcin (2013) suggest that teacher emotional labour is affected by personality but also contributes to burnout. Thus, teachers control and manage emotions based upon the social norms and expectations of employment. Emotional labour is considered crucial for directing emotions and cognitive responses from students in respect to their education. Ye & Chen (2015) state that emotional labour is subject to a form of regulation which can be a form of capital that can be used as exchange. Thus, adhering to emotional rules and norms that are governed within educational institutions. Cardozo (2016) cautions on capitalism's historic divisions attributed to the private, public, home, market reproduction and production, and how these divisions now operate within education and facilitate new ways for appropriating caring labour. The commodification of education reconstructs teaching as poorly paid housework in the marketplace.

This article explores how teachers understand their social and pedagogical roles in their work with students. Data are drawn from a qualitative case study using *pláticas,* or semi-structured interactions. We argue that teachers' complicated

ideologies about social stratification and work roles based on social class are instantiated at times through a discourse of social reproduction.

This article examines the following questions:

1. What do teachers perceive to be their social and pedagogical duty at Nopal High School (a pseudonym)?
2. How do teachers engage working-class Mexican American students in learning through their labor?

We begin with a brief discussion about the development of historical models of schooling, including "charity" and "platoon" schools" for impoverished children in the United States and factory model schools for children of the working class. We then provide the theoretical framework and explain how previous studies on social stratification through schooling have informed our work. We follow with a discussion about how the ideologies and pedagogies of the three focal teachers in the study contribute in large and small ways to the preparation of their students for future work roles.

Charity Schools

As U.S. society evolved, concerns about the poor and the marginalized required a response. During the colonial era "charity schools" were created to serve children from poor families. This model was deeply rooted in Puritan beliefs, and included a goal to reduce poverty and crime. As a result, some education scholars have argued that charity schools effectively educated students from homogenous communities (Jeynes, 2007). For the most part, charity schools operated with deficit views of the poor and with the presumption that weak family structures

contributed significantly to criminal tendencies among American youth. During this epoch in history, schools used the Lancasterian system in which pupils were seated in rows and received instruction from monitors who, in turn, received instruction from the master positioned at the back of the class.

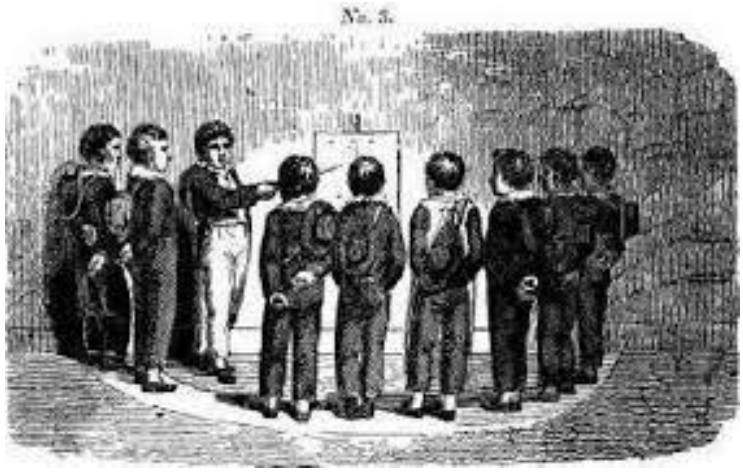

Image Source: Whatever happened to monitorial schools? (Cuban, 2021).

Monitors were selected from the more academically successful students in the class, who wore badges to indicate rank (Spring, 2018). What was unique about charity schools was the imposition of punitive discipline and curricular routinization as a means of developing students' moral character to dissuade them from criminal tendencies (Vinovskis, 1992). Problematically charity schools exacerbated social class divisions as the poor attended such schools while the better off attended private and public schools (Sundue, 2007).

Common Schools

In his early work critical education historian David Tyack (1966) used the state of Oregon as a case study to analyze the crucial role of the Protestant clergy in the establishment of common schools in the United States. He explored the social and

intellectual perspectives of early Western missionaries, particularly, their need to believe that settler colonists had to create a kingdom of God in the wilderness. These perspectives were infused by dogmatic military and sectarian religious notions, such as “taking ground from the enemy,” “the devil” or “rival sects” (Tyack, 1966, p. 452). Additionally, they justified the westward expansion of settler colonists, with Bibles in hand. Protestant clergy viewed resistance to religious progress as foreign or inspired by liberal thinkers.

The practice of nation-building through Evangelical Protestantism and its sectarian ideology paralleled the expansion of early U.S. schooling (Meyer et al., 1979). Strong beliefs in racial inferiority and the institution of slavery as the foundation of nationhood denied an education to enslaved Africans to ensure their subordination: if their bodies could be exploited, their minds must be socially controlled and broken down. Furthermore, White slaveholders believed that if African slaves were educated with the intellectual tools provided to Whites they would rebel against the established order (Spring, 2022). Such mistreatment and exploitation revealed the fear and anxiety of those in positions of power.

Oppressive conditions extended to other groups after the civil war during the era of reconstruction, from 1865-1877 (Tyack & Lowe, 1986). Indigenous students were subjected to racist and repressive conditions in boarding schools, where education was framed by a “kill the Indian save the man” notion (Churchill, 2004). Mexicans came into contact with the White dominant group through U.S. colonization. Spanish-speaking school children were segregated and endured corporal punishment in so-called “Mexican schools” throughout the Southwest through the justification that the Spanish language was a barrier that hindered their learning (Menchaca, 1995).

The increasing diversity of U.S. society and the influx of new immigrants into the nation heightened social anxieties. As this diversity expanded, fears about social disorder and class conflict also increased among White communities, who assumed that inculcating the poor and working class with common thought would eliminate hostile feelings towards the rich, thus preventing the division and violence that occurred during the Civil War. The creation of "common schools" fomented an ideal -- a common class consciousness and common set of moral and political values among all members of U.S. society (Spring, 2018). In theory, common schools during the nineteenth century were designed to level the playing field between the social classes, despite the widespread belief that affluent White individuals had a natural superiority over the indigent because they had the means to send their children to the best schools.

A crucial goal of the common schools was to provide a moral education as an antidote for a changing society. Educational leaders believed that common schools would bridge divisions arising from rural and urban regionalism. They assumed that city schools were of much higher quality than rural schools, and that an institutionalized common curriculum would inspire educational leaders to establish teacher training institutes to prepare teachers to be effective no matter what common school they served (Jeynes, 2007; Spring, 2017).

Platoon Schools

The transformation of schools appealed to the prejudices of the ruling classes, and schooling bureaucracies reinforced privilege. Schooling became a model of bureaucratic punctuality and precision designed to control children's behavior. Curricular and pedagogical regimentation became part of the production line of the school factory. Fears about economic scarcity permeated schooling and academic

failure was blamed on students (Tyack, 1974). The social transformation of schools continued into the 20th century with modern business methods incorporated into the structure of schooling. Schools resembled industrial plants because both implemented management structures designed to ensure that their physical spaces were used to full efficiency. An example of this design was the "Gary Plan" or "platoon schools," developed by Gary, Indiana school superintendent William A. Wirt at the turn of the 20th century. Platoon schools were meant to impose regimentation and discipline to properly socialize future workers into the modes of production (Thorburn, 2017). Poverty, mental ability, and poor health were seen as barriers to productivity in schools, and thus had to be eliminated. Students were rotated from room to room, so the school spaces were in constant use. One of the most direct parallels between factories and schools is the regimented use of the whistle for the former and bell for the later to signal shift and class changes. As Callahan (1962) put it, when the factory whistle blows, is the work really completed at the end of the shift? We extend this metaphor to contemporary schools, asking if a teacher's or student's work is really done after the dismissal bell sounds.

Factory Model Schooling

The structure of schooling changed in Western industrial nations from the mid-19th century into the beginning of the 20th century. A major dynamic contributing to the transformation of schools was the industrial revolution and the shift in economic production. Schools were modified and pedagogical tasks geared to complement technology and labour, a change that strained human relations through the exploitative nature of labour (Griffin, 2013). This change interrupted the traditional nuclear family as parents were needed to fulfill labour needs. With the

disruption of the traditional nuclear family structure, schools began to take on the socialization of children (Arum et al, 2021).

Immigration from Southern Europe and Asia increased the numbers of non-English speaking immigrants (Takaki, 2008). As a result, U.S. educators pressed for rapid assimilation through schooling. These demographic changes among factory workers especially triggered resentment toward immigrants and their mother tongues. Because members of the affluent and industrial classes feared that foreign languages would reduce workers' productivity on the assembly lines, English became the mandatory language of communication (Orosco, 2016). Simultaneously, the demand for subservient workers pressured schools to socialize children into factory work, primarily by forcing obedience through discipline. Throughout the 19th century assimilation became one of the central preoccupations for U.S. school officials, particularly enforcing an intense focus on the acquisition of the English language (Kaestle, 1983).

Image Source: Opting out of factory model schools (Chase, 2015).

Scientific management theories were applied in the micro-managing of students through doctrines of efficacy (Fallace & Fantozzi, 2013). As such, knowledge was

handed down by word of mouth from teacher to student. This pedagogical practice reduced knowledge to rules and laws for doing daily work and additionally replaced the agentive judgement and participation of the students and, later, of the workers. Labour studies on the physical effect of heavy work focused on the ways that factories perfected a system of maximum efficiency. The principal objectives of these studies were to secure maximum profit for the employer and to prevent deliberate undermining of that profit, a practice referred to as "soldiering" or "hanging it out," as it was called in England (Taylor, 1998). Thus, the machinery of education ensued with efforts to systemize urban education and decentralize decision making to ensure subordination through factory model school preparation. The Lancasterian model systematized a factory design for schools and within this system, the superintendent of schools functioned much like the manager of a cotton mill.

Theoretical Framework: Social Reproduction Theory

Drawing upon social reproduction theory, education serves to reproduce economic inequality and social stratification. In education social reproduction has been normalized through multiple social levels that contribute to much larger structural inequality (Maisuria, 2022). McGarr (2023) suggests that social reproduction theory is an invaluable dialogical lens for critiquing how education plays a role in shaping people's beliefs and values which facilitate an adherence to the status quo. Moreover, it also reveals how neoliberal policies in education support and reinforce the interests of the ruling class. In the critique of schools and classrooms, a social reproduction theoretical lens requires being alert to historical and persistent patterns of inequitable educational practices (Collins, 2009). This particularly holds true in how schooling has functioned as a mechanism for race and class domination and provides a theoretical space for intercommunal dialogue

about race, class, capitalism, Whiteness and tensions with critical race theory and Marxism (Cole, 2012). In capitalist societies such mechanisms of control greatly depend on hierarchical and unequal divisions of labour which, in turn, depend on differentiated and selective educational systems. These systems are imperative in the reproduction of social stratification and maintenance of an economic status quo (Hickox, 1982). Sotiris (2013) affirms that a States institutions play a key role in social reproduction and play an underlying role in the stratification of class divisions in society. Within the context of higher education, social reproduction occurs through a refinement of divisions between manual and intellectual labour.

The various roles of teachers have been contested in schooling, particularly in relation to philosophies of education. For example, drawing upon the philosophy of essentialism, or normalized core curriculum, teachers serve as the authority in the classroom, transmitting basic intellectual skills and school culture from one generation to the next and ensuring that it has been acquired (often measured through standardized assessment). Thus, the purpose of education is to transmit normalized cultural practices by training one generation of students after the other in acquiring basic academic skills at the same time they are socialized to take a predetermined work role in society (Anyon, 2011; Oakes et al, 2018). Jonsson & Beach (2010) further that when relating to the concept of intelligence, schooling determines who is fit for intellectual labour as this is ascribed by social class. Moreover, teachers and schools serve as makers and mediators in judging intellectual achievement. Among the social classes, hegemonic ideologies about schooling and future work have been deeply ingrained in the cultural fabric of U.S. society. Pre-determined work roles are not actively questioned in general, and typically the concerns of those who do object are dismissed.

A critique of the norms of social reproduction is critical as the increase in service sector employment of working-class people of color will demand a labour pool supplied through schooling (Healey & Stepnick, 2022). The confinement of historically marginalized communities within a permanent underclass requires maintaining their presence in poverty wage zones. Ironically, the factory model also necessitates a management class that draws from training manuals in the preparation of new workers (Ritzer, 2021). While the factories of the industrial revolution are archaic historical memories the factory model of schooling retains a historical residue, one very much present within structures of schooling through standardization policies which exert control over both teachers and students (Becker, 2010).

By utilizing State theory Hill (2001) asserts that ideological State apparatuses have internal coercive practices such as punishment, non-promotion, displacement and being perceived as out of favor within established social orders. As such, State apparatuses attempt to secure mass internal unity through nationalism and blind patriotism. Hill (2018) additionally argues that the Marxist struggle against the reproduction of social class inequality by way of education throughout the world is not solely to describe it, but to change it. This demands a constant critique of the economy, politics, education and social class which furthers a class consciousness. Backer & Cairns (2021) affirm through a social reproduction feminist lens that education is necessary for a larger understanding of the reproduction of capitalism and, furthermore, how such an approach aims not only to provide an understanding for the reproduction of capitalist relations, but a more broad and holistic understanding of life, thus, enabling an expansive critique of students active participation in schooling and its relation and complicity to reproductive labour. Carpenter and Mojad (2022) suggest that a Marxist feminist extension explains the

concretisation of capitalism and the immense proliferation of social difference through which capitalist social relations have been dependent upon. Social reproduction theory provides fundamental insight by suggesting that human labour is at the heart of creating or reproducing society. Furthermore, social reproduction problematizes oppression with an intersectional theoretical lens in relation to race, class and gender due to oppressive realities being structurally relational and deriving from capitalism (Bhattacharya, 2017; Roediger, 2017). Previous research on social stratification through schooling has illuminated how such practices are normalized. Bowles & Gintis (1976) argued that there is a relationship between the labour needs of capitalism and the demand placed on schools to produce a docile workforce. This is accomplished through subordination where failure is deeply internalized by the student as an individual outcome and a hegemonic schooling experience. Willis (1977) described how working-class students were confined to a permanent underclass through schooling experiences that they resented and resisted. Anyon (2011) found that a "hidden curriculum" prepared and integrated children into work roles based on their social class. For example, students from poor and working-class backgrounds were trained to take up blue collar positions in society, whereas students from middle class or affluent families received a curriculum designed to prepare them for college. Oakes (2005) similarly investigated how schools have solidified social stratification through academic tracking of students by race or social class. She details how tracking was instigated as a result of social and economic problems that emerged at a particular time in U.S. history.

In Pierre Bourdieu's (1992) The Logic of Practice, he insisted on a critique of five forms of Capital for understanding social stratification and unequal social relations in society: 1). Economic Capital, goods properties or resources; 2). Cultural

Capital, knowledge, and skills that provide status; 3). Human Capital, skills, experience, and education, 4). Social Capital, networks, or core groups that benefit from existing social arrangements, 5). Symbolic Capital is the prestige or acknowledgment ascribed and upheld by the recipient within a culture. Additionally, Bourdieu (2019) suggests that the conversion of education into different types of capital is the underlying strategy aimed at ensuring the reproduction of capital and positions occupied within social spaces. As such, the different types of capital can be distinguished according to their reproducibility, or more precisely how easily they are transmitted with more or less concealment. Bourdieu & Passeron (1977) further indicate that educational systems are able to conceal social stratification more easily as a function by legitimizing class difference through its technical function of producing qualifications. As such, modern societies are successful in getting the school to produce and replenish skilled individuals qualified for societal demands.

The social construction of race had previously been dismissed in discussions about economically stratified schooling (Anyon, 2011). Nonetheless, race as a marker of difference from White norms has played a key role in the social demarcation and stratification of minoritized children in U.S. schools. For example, schooling opened paths to good citizenship for the White children of European immigrants, while simultaneously channeling minoritized children into the manual labour pool. Teachers and administrators policed racial demarcations and provided opportunities for good citizenship through ascription to White norms and obtaining professional or managerial positions in society (Stratton, 2016). An array of ideologies in relation to race and class have given meaning to the structure of schooling and the messages they impart during the early socialization of students (Macleod, 2000).

Research Site and Participants

This study was conducted from February to May of 2017 at Nopal High School (a pseudonym), located in a predominately Mexican American working-class community in the Southwestern United States. Nearly 100 percent of students attending Nopal come from Mexican descent heritage. All students at Nopal are eligible for free or reduced lunches, a government indicator of family poverty levels. A steel fence surrounds the school and there is a security checkpoint at the only entrance and exit during school hours, not unlike prison checkpoints or corporate retail distribution centers like Wal-Mart or Amazon. In the first week of the study, the school's principal related an incident where teachers and staff chased a student out to the football field, who turned around and threw a knife at them. He also told us that a teacher's car had been vandalized but he reasoned that these incidents occurred "within the realities of relative deprivation" of the surrounding neighborhoods, which included inadequate mental and emotional health resources to respond to the needs of the community.

In this study, we focus on the perspectives and experiences of three teachers at Nopal. Each teacher is White, middle class and teaches predominantly Mexican American working-class students. One teacher had more than 25 years of teaching experience, another had been teaching for 10 years, and one teacher was new to the profession; she had taught at Nopal for less than a year. The principal initially introduced many teachers to us, but ultimately, three agreed to participate. After we received approval from our institution's Institutional Review Board, we obtained consent from the participants.

Teachers	Race	Socioeconomic Status	Region of Origin	Subject Taught	Teaching Experience
Ms. Steel	White	Middle Class	Pennsylvania	English	Seasoned (25+ years)
Ms. Anderson	White	Middle Class	Texas	English	New (< 1 year)
Mr. Fidelis	White	Middle Class	Arizona	Math	Seasoned (10+ years)

Data and Methods

The study relied upon ethnographic research methods, including participant observation in classrooms, designed to build trust and establish collaborative relationships with students and teachers (Creswell, 2007, Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011), semi-structured interactions with teachers called *pláticas* (conversations), field notes and informal jottings (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Saldaña, 2012). These triangulated data sources provided us with critical insight about the teachers' experiences at Nopal High School and served as an effective tool for analysis (Cole, 2005; Richards, 2009).

Pláticas provided another critical methodological tool, primarily because this style of communication is a shared cultural practice in the Mexican American community and one recognized by both teachers and students. *Pláticas* helped us understand and participate in the construction of narrative, a discursive practice in Mexican American communities (Guajardo and Guajardo, 2013). *Pláticas* are useful for creating trust with the individuals a researcher engages with, and

ultimately will describe in print (Fierros & Delgado-Bernal, 2016). The *pláticas* were taped recorded and later transcribed (Seidman, 2006).

Data Analysis

In attempting to conduct non-exploitive research at the school we needed to think ethically and see ourselves through the gaze of the students and teachers (Saldaña, 2014). Thus, we incorporated a critical empathy into the study by anchoring an appreciative inquiry approach within a community of practice (Wenger, 1999). Appreciative inquiry is a feminist research methodology used to focus on what works well in a cooperative and open way with research participants (Clouder & King, 2016). This collaborative and ethical approach is intended to help dismantle hierarchies between researchers and participants, who jointly identify and deconstruct ideas (Reed, 2006). We wanted to analyze with our study participants what was occurring at any moment. We analyzed the data through holistic coding to determine themes that arose from a careful reading of interview transcripts, our field notes and informal jottings.

Findings and Discussion

An analysis of the *pláticas* and classroom observations revealed three overarching themes.

1. *Teaching to perceived differences*, that is, differences that teachers considered as barriers to learning, and how these differences contributed to difficulties teachers reported in teaching a diverse student population.
2. *Preparing students for the real world*, which included the teachers' reflections about their institutional and pedagogical duties to educate their students for contemporary U.S. society.

3. *Ensuring student success* attested to what teachers believed they needed to do to facilitate students' academic success at Nopal.

Teaching to Perceived Difference

For the most part, all three teachers were open to participating in the study and eager to share the joys and frustrations about teaching at Nopal High School. They pointed to various successes they had achieved while teaching their subject areas, but notably, they also complained about their inability to firmly control the students in their classrooms, a circumstance that tested their patience and reduced communication with them. Ms. Steel acknowledged her difficulties managing student behavior at times, but she was adamant about her practice of treating all students in the same way.

> I teach them all the same. If I can tell they don't understand something, I talk to them more about it. A lot of kids here get extra help, and I give them extra help to see what they are doing and fix it for them. When they are having a problem, I tell them, "Here is what we are going to do, let's write extra work and tell me what you don't understand." The other day I had a student who fell asleep in class. He did it twice so I asked him to wake up. I treat all of them the same. I could teach somewhere else, but I drive half an hour to get here every day, half hour here, half hour home.

Ms. Steel expressed a firm belief in the need for students to walk a linear line throughout life. She believed life did not offer many chances and that her duty as a teacher was to make sure students had the same education to succeed.

Ms. Anderson, also White and middle class from outside of the state, spoke about her efforts to build a community with her students as a means of helping students connect their experiences to the content.

> I think I try to make my classroom a place of trust, by loving my students individually. I share a lot. My kids know who I am and where I am from. I tell stories about what is going on in my life so that they can see me as a vulnerable human. I have told them of mistakes that I have made in life, so they know that I am not judging them. If I am in a discussion, I try to cover a spectrum of points of view. I try to give a lot of time and space so they can tell their own stories, about their own families and they can have their own opinions and take a stand on current issues. I try to make sure everybody's voice is heard, so that we get to the point, like different backgrounds and different opinions.

In classroom observations it was clear that Ms. Anderson made an effort to engage and interact with her students. Nonetheless, we noted that for the most part, she stayed seated at her desk and did not circulate around the room. Students were expected to go to her for help. In all observations we made, she did not change the seating arrangement in class and ignored resistant behaviors of some of the students. If students sat passively in their chairs, she seldom moved towards them. In the few instances when she approached them, she appeared to engage in small talk. Ironically, during our visit to the classroom, she pointed out students who were doing well academically but had little to say about the students who were quiet.

Mr. Fidelis is a white-middle class math teacher. Born and raised on the eastside of the city, he was vocal about his efforts to teach diverse student populations.

> What I see as modern segregation is that we struggle with how we divide kids by perceived ability and confidence, which undermines everything. Because now we put all the low kids together, and what are they all going to learn from each other? They are probably going to have self-esteem issues, so we are probably going to give them menial

> low stuff to do. [That is] "well, here, you are the low kids so we will give you this." Then we turn around and give the high kids the challenge.

His classroom was large and overcrowded, making it difficult for him to engage the students. Still, he attempted to arrange them in small groups to learn math from each other. We observed that some students were reluctant to work with others who were perceived as slow math learners. Clearly, students were aware of the math abilities of their peers and distanced themselves from them.

Preparing Students for the Real World

A second theme that emerged from the data was teachers' perspectives about their responsibility to prepare students for the "real world." We found this view paradoxical because it would be difficult to find students not living in the real world on a daily basis.

Ms. Steel stated,

> I tell them that I have to make a difference as their teacher because in the real world you have to come to work on time and you have to work. If you don't work, then you lose your job. I try to tell them my personal experience to build trust, but I try to tell them a lot of things about my life as a student getting an education. As long as you get an education … I spend nine hours a day, I'm usually here Tuesdays and Thursdays. I am here in the morning at 7:15 am. I try to tell them, "When you go to college you don't mess around, you have to turn in your work on time." I tell them my first class in college had 400 people, "Nobody will care for you after this, you will have to take care of yourself, your mom cannot go to college with you. You have to take care of yourself, don't you?"

Ms. Steel expressed a strong belief about the need for discipline and routine in the schooling experience of students. In contrast, Ms. Anderson relayed the critical

need to teach her students about oppression and racism in her English class. She wanted students to connect the content subjects to their writing development. She stated that often English was taught through a Eurocentric lens and thus disengaged students. As noted above, she was quick to point out the students who were doing well in class, while discounting the students who seldom participated.

> I just do what I can. It's more important for me that they be prepared for the real things. For what is written on the fucking curriculum sheet. I will explain to them that there are too many Latino kids going to prison and [the school-to-prison pipeline] is starting them on that path. I just try and keep it real, I mean we talk about racism a lot, we talk about how there is nothing out there, where they are going to confront racism in their work, in their community. We talk about poverty, we share examples. I try to make that a constant theme, and especially if they start laughing, excuse the reality show but are we happy with the way the world is right now, it's fucking ugly, and I will reference some of the things that have been on my mind. I will say, "There are limited jobs and you guys have to go out there and do them. That's the reason you should sit up in your seat and you should at least tell me where you are at and participate in your reality."

Ms. Anderson expressed a desire to make a difference in her student's lives, but she seemed unaware of the problematic ideologies in her comments, for example, that students inevitably would face a bleak future of limited employment and intense competition for factory jobs. While no doubt believing she was conveying a realistic description of their economic futures, she nonetheless adhered to factory model schooling through her teaching practices, which contradicted her own beliefs about her role as a teacher.

Mr. Fidelis emphasized the importance of teaching students mathematics that they could apply to their everyday lives.

> I try to have diverse and various types of activities. I was telling some students this morning, sometimes we do real math in the real world. That would be something like, "I keep track of every time I fill up my gas tank. I print the receipt out and I write down my mileage, and so I have to know much gas I put in my car, along with how far I drove on that amount of gas." I collect that over time, and I use it in my lessons to talk about the idea of, like, "Have you ever had a car that had a gas gauge that didn't work, right? "How do you know how much gas you can use without filling up every day?" Because the sad thing is, we are still teaching math like we have for hundreds and hundreds of years. So, we are not necessarily teaching students real math that they need to be successful in the real world that we have as it is now.

Mr. Fidelis attempted different pedagogical strategies with his students. But he would occasionally become frustrated with his inability to connect with some of them. This resulted in the vocal disciplining of certain students, creating tension in the classroom. Still, he noted that he wanted to take a more democratic approach to teaching math and wanted his students to relate to how they used math in their everyday lives. More than anything, he did not want his students to feel oppressed by mathematics.

Ensuring Student Success

In investigating how ideologies of factory model schooling are socially reproduced, we sought to learn how teachers understood and facilitated student success. This theme highlights how the teachers made sense of their interactions and relationships with students and how they viewed the role of these relationships in creating a sense of place and positive experience in their classrooms. Ms. Steel admitted that in some ways her students encountered more difficult challenges in their lives than she had experienced as a high school student years ago. She felt she

had to adjust to her students and try to understand them. On the other hand, she doubted her students' desire to learn, declaring that there was "no focus on education" at Nopal.

> Well, in this school, I am different because I am White in this whole school. There is not a focus on education even though we are a school. Okay, although here is what I think of this school today, kids have a lot harder lives today. When I think of Nopal High School, I came in the 2005-2006 school year, it's been about 11 years. I did not understand a lot of things that were happening to these kids at home that never happened in my home. I had to adjust to understand the students. I had to ask them to tell me what is going on. "If you tell me, I will be able to work with you, but if you don't tell me, I am going to be mad at you." I would ask students, "Why [are] you not doing this? Is it because you don't want to?" This is my assumption. A lot of people want school to be fun. So sometimes schooling can be fun, but students have to do their work.

Ms. Steel wanted to understand her students' experiences, but she expressed a meritocratic, "pull yourself up by the boot strap" mentality. She conveyed that if *she* had achieved academic success herself, her students could do this as well. She expected them to respond to her through the lens of individualism embedded in her own narrative about overcoming academic challenges.

Ms. Anderson wanted students to understand the hardships they would face in society, particularly how labour functioned as a commodity and how it was instantiated through a subservient educational experience. As an English teacher, it was important that her students connect their lived experiences to their writing development. Yet, her description of conversations with students is contradictory. On the one hand, she communicates the exploitative nature of the workforce and wants her students to be ready for it. On the other, she desires to create a "micro-

community" within her classroom, with an environment conducive to learning and interpersonal relationships.

> I think the purpose by those who pay for the schools is to create a workforce that is obsessed with consumerism and that is ready to obey. I tell them that there are people who are making money off of us, people who sell textbooks about what we should say and do here in the classroom. And they want to take all humanity and creativity out of you and me. So, I think that is the purpose, but then I think for the kids, schooling serves a purpose of socialization. Like teaching them how to relate to people. I think they gain important academic skills, but even so they start to learn who they are. It's like character building, like all kinds of obstacles and they come out of it more mature. How they made mistakes, how they learned, it's almost like a micro community.

Ms. Anderson saw herself as an agent of change, but she maintained a degree of social distance in her interaction with students. Those who responded more positively to her were rewarded with her attention, while students who were quiet or appeared to ignore her, in turn were ignored by her.

Mr. Fidelis acknowledged the limitations that teachers have within systems that constrain them. Yet he worked to provide a more liberating mathematics experience for his students.

> I think the most difficult barrier for students and teachers is the politics, everything that happens at the district level and the policies that they enact. I think I'm moving in progressive ways and trying to leave a lot of this traditional stuff that isn't working for our students, and I just don't see enough of that in other teachers. I think for Nopal High School in the math department that's a barrier. There aren't enough people willing to admit that what we are doing is not all that great and [that we should] try to find something better. I am optimistic about teaching. The research and people coming out of teaching programs, they've got a new lens. I feel like the younger generations of teachers

> are moving in the right direction, [but] it's going to take time. I feel like I can inspire students to be something, to be the best that they can be. Maybe I can inspire kids to be teachers or maybe not, but I feel like that is my optimism, that these kids have great things that they can do, and I want to be a part in making that.

Mr. Fidelis vented his frustrations at policies discouraging the change needed to make the teaching of mathematics innovative. Such centralized forms of control have their origins in factory model schooling.

Discussion

The objective of this study was to explore how factory model ideologies are socially reproduced and transmitted through the labour of teaching practices. We wanted to consider how such beliefs and practices contribute to social stratification. According to Braedley & Luxton (2021), social reproduction should be recognized within the specific context of work because without such conceptualization it loses its analytical capacity. Moreover, in the analysis of racial, gender, and class inequalities in capitalist societies, a critical lens indicates that the relationship between neoliberal capitalist development and social control derives from an institutional colonialism that has sustained inequity through social institutions like schools.

The findings in this study suggest that teachers' beliefs about students from diverse backgrounds are contradictory and problematic, as are the associated pedagogies they use with them. First, the teachers in this study enact a kind of *de facto* social reproduction in their classrooms in the way they frame students' economic opportunities as relatively bleak but inevitable. That this assumption may have been unconsciously communicated does not alter the message that their students

face a predetermined future among the working class. Second, while we believe all three teachers were dedicated to their profession and desired to help their students, they had limited practical or theoretical insights about working within a predominately working class Mexican American community. Indeed, one of them implied that she was doing Nopal students a favor by driving a half hour to get to the school. Finally, while the teachers were thoughtful in their discussions about engaging with students, they were uncritical when analyzing their experiences as middle-class White educators at a school serving working class students of color.

The three focal teachers in this study employed a variety of stances in working with the students, at times using a color-blind approach to provide "equal treatment." In other instances, teachers attempted to apply culturally responsive pedagogies, but maintained social distance from their students who seemed unengaged in classroom conversations. All three teachers justified the disciplinary practices they occasionally used as a means of preparing their students "for the real world." One teacher also initiated discussions about the school to prison pipeline to remind students of the challenges they faced in the future. The teachers' attempts to "keep it real" with students were likely motivated by the desire to help them graduate from Nopal High School, but we wonder whether these "reality checks" served to derail or discount students' agency or ambitions. In their interviews, teachers did not offer counter narratives of student success or empowerment. Nihilistic messages about economic insecurity and limited employment reify the school as a factory model and discursively support the social stratification of working class Mexican American students. These messages both frame and prepare students for a subservient workforce, one that accepts workplace routinization and boredom as inevitable in the real world.

We did note some optimism from two of the teachers. Mr. Fidelis appreciated the more creative "lens" of younger teachers. He also considered that his duty was to inspire students to be "the best that they can be." Ms. Anderson acknowledged that the schooling experience could be alienating for students. Somewhat contradictorily, she also felt that schools served to communicate useful socialization practices, like relating to peers, gaining academic skills, and learning more about themselves. Schools built character, she stated, and though schools presented obstacles for students, the experience could make them more mature.

In this study, participant observation was invaluable in helping us connect teacher ideologies about the employment prospects of their Mexican American students to the pedagogies they deployed in their classrooms. This methodological approach also helped us understand how these teachers approached their socially constructed "duty" to their students. More importantly, it provided insight into how through their labour teachers served as social exemplars for their students. For example, Ms. Steel expected individualistic effort from her students. Ms. Anderson laboured to instill critical thinking in her students, but also arbitrarily defined them based on perceived ability and motivation. Mr. Fidelis recognized that mathematics teaching was too often divorced from "real world" applications and that schools separated students based on perceived ability and confidence. Nevertheless, he uncritically labeled his own students as "low" or "high." It is not a stretch to speculate that the ideologies of all three teachers were informed by their own early educational experiences and the overt or covert messages they received about factory model schooling.

Critical education scholar Christine Sleeter (2015) has argued the importance of understanding deeply entrenched ideologies about social class and learning that

began during the industrial revolution. The factory model of education sees children as products and schools as institutions which produce standardized products . Sleeter contends that this model reproduces social stratification based upon class and race. For working class students of color, the factory model metaphorically essentializes their roles as future blue-collar workers. A standardized curriculum that emphasizes efficiency and discipline -- common within the factory model -- is alienating for all students but has especially negative implications for working class students of color. The goal of such a curriculum is to produce a docile worker who is expected to adapt to 8–12-hour shifts. Additionally, factory model schools are “oriented around compliance with and maintenance of the status quo, rather than social transformation” (Sleeter, 2015, p. 114). We agree with Sleeter’s recommendations that schools of education must disrupt ideologies that perpetuate factory model schooling. Instead, we need to seek revolutionary ideas in the overhaul and transformation of the structure of schooling.

Continued efforts should be conducive to understanding racism within the modes of production (Willhelm, 1980), and how schooling continues to operate in the 21st century for the exploitation of labour (Bakan & Dua, 2014; Cole, 2012; Themelis, 2022). But more importantly, we need to sustain a line of thought for critiquing how racism has and continues to be a necessary component of U.S. American racialized capitalism and operates as a divisive mechanism among the working class while relegating minorities to a permanent underclass and relied upon for suppressing a unified political front (Young, 2011). Belkhir (2001) reasons there is an ever pressing need to struggle against historical social inequalities deriving from race, class and gender. Racism, sexism and classism must be integrated into a Marxist analysis of capitalism in which such intersectional oppressions serve as

point of entry to understand various forms of inequality within social structures. By recognizing how the centrality of intersectional disempowerment maintains inequality, exploitation, cultural subordination and domination, we can attempt to neutralize the mistakes of the past which considered intersectional disempowerment as divisive in the class struggle.

Conclusion

The teachers in this study expressed contradictory ideologies about teaching and learning. Although they attempted to implement more inclusive pedagogies to engage students, they also imparted both subtle and overt deficit messages about students' lack of motivation and disinterest in learning. Indeed, these messages seemed belittling to us. Thus, social reproduction and the critique of factory model schooling within the context of educational history should be firmly embedded in teacher preparation programs to illustrate how structures of schooling control both students and teachers. Critical self-reflection is an invaluable dialogical tool for teachers to surface and challenge their internalized prejudices and beliefs no matter where they teach, but especially if they have the honor of working with students from diverse communities. Educational policy centers in schools of education should also prepare teachers to advocate for themselves within the teaching profession through teacher unions and professional development to address the complexity of working within archaic factory school models that socially stratify students and reproduce social inequality (DeMitchell, 2020; Santamaria, 2014).

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