Loosely Coupled Inequality in Education:
Supporting At-Promise Students Through an Equity and Justice Framework

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How does school safety and harsh discipline impact equity, school climate and teacher-student relationships? What can we do differently?
Two-Year School Ethnography and Surveys (1893 student high school, 54% students of color and 46% white students) 106 classroom, 56 lunch period, 26 detention room observations. School security officers shadowed, two hours twice a week.
Safe Schools as Conflict Schools  (Morrill and Musheno 2018)
My English teacher, has my referrals already written for me—a big stack—he waits just for me to say something and he’ll be like all right go outside walk to the office . . . and I know because they always say the same, like no matter what I do, it says “disruptive in class.”

-Joey
They feel that like white kids are like better . . . like Mexican kids are crime-related and I think they think they’re like bad influences, and they think we’re like not smart. They think that like white kids are. . . smart and they’re like good kids, they’re like good influences . . .

-Mary
The teacher chose . . . me, and the white guy [a fellow student], he said, ‘Oh, he won’t know the answer. He’s Mexican.’ The teacher didn’t say anything....

...I just skip school. Go to a friend’s house, help my parents with work, do drugs...just anything rather than school. I hate school.

-Jason
Teachers have this idea, at this school anyway, that, like, Mexicans don’t care about school, they, you know, are going to have babies, they’re gonna go to jail, and the Whites are, kids that, you know, go to all AP classes and they’re gonna go to, like, Stanford.

-Jane
The most at-risk cluster (of students) is the Latino boy...Well I would say crime influences them sometimes before they get to high school or after their first year.

-Ms. Sutton
“Latino students don’t really care about learning and you can’t force motivation.”

“School is just not a priority in their home.”

“Many Latino students relish the role of being academic drop-outs.”

“The only way I can control them is by texting the SRO”

“I feel safer when I have a security guard in my class”
Educating Through Race
AP and Honors Classes
AP and Honors Classes
AP and Honors Classes
College Prep Classes
College Prep Classes
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Transformative Justice
Promotion
Oral Tradition (Omolewa 2007; Chang 2005; Emdin 2016)
Counterstorytelling (Delgado 2009)
Collective Civic Action (Sampson et. al 2005)
Civic Empowerment (Levinson 2012)
Restorative Justice in Schools
(Arnott, 2013; Morrison & Martinez, 2015; Porter, 2017; Riestenberg, 2007; White, 2015; González, 2018)
Project GRIT: Generating Resilience to Inspire Transformation
Promotion program in Watts, CA (27 Latinx and 12 Black low-income “pushouts”)

Pre- and post-interviews with all 39 students; over 90 self-recordings during six-week program
They told me it wasn’t going only to be writing or reading books, it was going to be more of a program where we all would communicate with each other and get to know and see how our lives fit together.

-Ernesto
They’re teaching teamwork to change the way the system works and to change our communities. Because if I go by myself and I try to change it, it’s just not going to happen. But if I go with every single student, that’s a different story

-Jesse
It’s not only going to help me but everybody and it’s going to help me be even more confident, be more proud and say “hey, this is where I am from...I didn’t choose it, but it don’t make me a bad person”

-Valerie
Their stories are like our stories...like some of what they have lived, we have lived it...for some reason, when you connect stories, you don’t feel like strangers anymore. So it’s like, “OK, I’m gonna do it. I’m going to try it”

-Dorinda
I’ve learned...what kind of people to trust...where I should like put my walls down...and what places I should put them up

-Karen
I finally realized...I *am* a successful woman, I am powerful...I’m just going to keep it real to the fullest

- Quinn
Promotion

• At-promise students need environments that promote them
• Regeneration not reproduction
• Enchantment not alienation
Policy Implications

• Implement Restorative Justice Discipline Practices in All Public Schools
• Grow Your Own Programs
• Post-Quarantine Reopening: Careopening
  – First 6 weeks: care, well-being, embrace, SEL, and restorative practices
• Mandate pre-charge diversion before booking and fingerprinting and provide schools resources to engage in diversion.
• SRO’s out of School