He puts his hands up
Not willing to continue to have me be
The water
That rises over others’ heads
Providing them the scary sensation
Of dying-drowning—cannot breathe
In the sea of choking words

"I can’t get dirty," he says.
"My mom will beat me if I get paint on my clothes."
"I am going to get in trouble!"
"Will you tell my mom you made me get dirty?"
"I am not sitting on the floor!"

I wrote this poem to reveal the disparities between what I wanted to be doing, thought I was doing, and was actually doing in the classroom.

I am a Black struggling-class educator who has incorporated reflection around issues of (in)equity as one of the most integral components of my teaching practices. I have come to realize that reflecting upon the communities in which I participate and upon my educational practices sustains how I advocate for diversity and equity issues. Reflection has also helped me to see that we as educators are often part of perpetuating the
same systems that we seek to dismantle.
Throughout my teaching career, I have worked to make poor and working-class children’s experiences visible, redistribute resources more equitably, and provide a diverse range of social class representations within literature. Whether through staff development, grant writing, or providing food for students, my teaching practices have fought inequitable school structures that ignore poor and working-class children. But I have also been a teacher who disregarded poor and working-class children’s experiences by having them do literature projects on filthy floors. I remember not prioritizing children’s tensions and negotiations around art projects with unwashable paint and no smocks. Although I did not implement such inequitable practices often, reflection makes visible how I valued the children’s academic learning experiences above their other circumstances.

Despite the fact that I too had been a poor child, I still managed as a teacher to privilege inequitable class structures by negating poor and working-class identities. It is significant to note that I did not always successfully negotiate my teacher identity with my classed identities and the classed identities of many of my students.

It is in light of past, present, and future reflection as a researcher, educator, teacher educator, and scholar who experienced schooling as a poor child and who continues to identify as a “struggling-classed” individual that I encourage educators to reflect on how their teaching practices impact how poor children experience school. This article is intended to support educators—most of whom identify as middle-class individuals and all of whom identify as adults who desire to reflect upon how their teaching practices both perpetuate and/or challenge class, age, and status inequities. First, I present an overview of two theoretical constructs that are grounded within this work—critical literacies and culturally responsive pedagogies. Second, I highlight the narrative context from which this article arises. Third, I provide three examples in which Pam, a Dominican first-grade poor female, utilizes her critical literacies around inequitable school incidents. With each example, I illustrate how Pam reads these incidents from a critical literacies perspective by detailing both her interventions against inequitable teaching practices and her affirmations of her cultures. Then I discuss what constitutes a more traditional view of this interaction. In two cases, I include data from a conversation with Mr. Williams, Pam’s teacher, about his teaching practices surrounding the incidents Pam describes. Finally, I posit implications for educators to reflect on culturally responsive practices that can affirm children’s age and class identities.

**CRITICAL LITERACIES**

There is an expanding cadre of researchers and educators who are exploring the definitions of critical literacies and how critical literacies are implemented inside and outside of the classroom (Dixon, 2002; Kelly, 1997). For many scholars, critical literacies involve analyzing the connections between words, social practices, representations, and power (Lankshear & McLaren, 1993). These efforts illuminate the critical reflections involved in literacy and the struggles people engage with around texts. Recent understandings of critical literacies situate texts not just as print-based but as all things with meaning. Thus, texts can be audio, visual, gestural, spatial, and body, in addition to print (Short & Kaufman, 2000). Within this article, reading is defined as making meaning of texts, and writing is defined as acting upon and changing texts (Freire & Macedo, 1987). In light of these understandings, I demonstrate how Pam situates educators as texts to be read and reads and writes herself as a valued text. I also evidence how I read Pam and Mr. Williams as texts and how Mr. Williams reads Pam, the educators, and himself as texts.

Most work on critical literacies places these abilities in the hands of academics, critical pedagogues, and adults (Dixon, 2002). In the few studies in which educators and researchers focus on the critical literacies of young children, the context of this research is located in a critical literacy classroom (Vasquez, 2004). Within these critical literacy classrooms, greater attention is often paid to how educators shape curriculum and provide children with critical literacies. This view positions students, especially young children, as beings without knowledge and critical pedagogues as those who are able to fill the vacancies. This focus denies the knowledge and agencies that young children bring with them to negotiate their classrooms.

In contrast to understandings of critical literacies that leave out the perspectives of young children, I call attention to how children use their agencies to make sense of and act upon their worlds as well as to make decisions about their futures (Norton, 2004). Like Thornton (1999), I define agencies as purposeful actions to...
change the conditions of people’s lives. By highlighting Pam’s
growth, we see how children utilize critical literacies with or
without the support of teachers. Critical literacies is defined here as
enacted agency at the intersection of intervention
and affirmation (Knight, Dixon, Norton, & Bentley, in press). I
recount examples of how Pam, a
Dominican female child, employs
critical literacies as interventions to
name, critique, and challenge how she is inequitably impacted by
her teachers’ practices in ways that marginalize her class, age, gender,
race, and ethnicity. As affirmations, she uses critical literacies to work
against these positionings and to
(re)position herself in more
equitable, self-affirming ways. Pam
reads and writes her body as a text
affirming her identities that are
developed in her experiences (The
Latina Feminist Group, 2001).

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE
PEDAGOGIES

Another theoretical construct essential
to this article is the notion of culturally
responsive pedagogy. Culturally
responsive pedagogies are defined as
pedagogies that use cultures and lived
experiences to enhance, support, and
further learning processes (Gay, 2000).
As ideologies shift, researchers from
multicultural, feminist, and/or critical
perspectives push for teachers and
school officials to embrace these ped-
agogies that promote academic
success for all students in an increa-
singly diverse society. Researchers such
as Ladson-Billings (1994) challenge
teachers to “demonstrate a connected-
ness with each of their students” and
“consciously work[ing] to develop
commonalities with all the students”
(p. 66).
Despite the theorizing and
implementation of culturally respons-
sive pedagogies to create more equity
for all children, this work has been
limited by conceptualizations of cul-
ture as race and ethnicity. Culture is
defined here in a more expansive
way that includes but is not limited to
total ways of being around race,
class, age, ethnicity, citizenship, able-
lihood, and spirituality (De Gaetano,
Williams, & Volk, 1998). Attending
to class is significant because poor
and working-class children are increas-
ingly represented in public
school systems (Hicks, 2002). As
these demographics continue to
change, many multicultural, critical,
and feminist scholars assert that
teacher practices, in particular those
of middle- and upper-class teachers,
devalue and marginalize the cultures
of poor and working-class children
due to discounting their knowledges and
experiences (Oesterreich, 2003). They
question the ways that the student
population is often homogenized
within research and educational
practices because homogenization
ignores the cultural variation that
exists among children’s age, class,
and educational opportunities (Nort-
ton, 2004). Likewise, the ideas, reflec-
tions, and critical literacies presented
in this article seek to challenge blank-
keted notions of culturally responsive
pedagogies and bring issues of class
and age to the fore.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

During a year-long multicultural femi-
nist critical narrative study, I created
storytelling spaces for those who have
been silenced, including Latinas/Lati-
nos, Blacks, and children, in order to
include their voices in the theorizing
that occurs about the practices that
inevitably impact their lives. I situated
storytelling as a political practice that
served to create more equitable
societies and educational institutions
(Brant, 1994; Minh-ha, 1989). Together,
the participants and I engaged in criti-
cal reflection about how identities and
power manifest themselves within
teacher–student relationships and
knowledge processes (Solorzano &
Yosso, 2001). Our reflections focused
on how race, class, age, gender, sexual-
ity, ability, and spirituality impact how
and when one sees and challenges
This research began with purposeful
sampling of a Black male teacher, Mr.
Williams, who was willing to create
more culturally responsive curriculum
in his classroom through collaborative
work with myself and three children
cos-researchers (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Gabe, a Puerto-Rican/Black
male, Kevin, a Black male, and Pam, a
Dominican female, together with Mr.
Williams, examined their literacies
practices and how these practices cre-
We collected and analyzed data
through numerous methods, including
interviews, collaborative conversations,
focus groups, artifact discoveries, and
observations. Collaborative conversa-
tions were designed so everyone could
serve as activist, teacher, and learner to
guide the discussions and planning of
classroom practices and curriculum
(Hollingsworth, 1994). These conversa-

Pam, a Dominican female child, employs critical
literacies as interventions to name, critique, and
challenge how she is inequitably impacted by
her teachers’ practices in ways that marginalize her class,
age, gender, race, and ethnicity.
tions lasted approximately two hours and provided ongoing opportunities for discussion, reflection, analysis, and planning in regards to the inclusion of multiple literacies practices inside the classroom (Norton, 2004). I focus on the stories that Pam tells about the inequities that she experiences within her classroom. Pam is a seven-year-old Dominican Spanish- and English-speaking first grader who immigrated to the United States when she was in kindergarten. Read and listen carefully to her words. Stop immediately after the data and take a minute to reflect on the thoughts that arise for you. Then continue to read on as I analyze her words from a critical literacies perspective and from a traditional teaching perspective.

SEATING ARRANGEMENTS, CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT, AND CLASS IDENTITIES

Nadjwa: Can you think of anything unfair that happens in your classroom?
Pam: Yeah, when Ms. Kai didn’t let us sit in the chair no more. I don’t like when the teachers make us get on the floor and get all dirty. Like when Ms. Kai made us stop sitting on the chair. Don’t she know I can’t get my clothes dirty? My mother has to wash them.

Nadjwa: Yes, that is true, and you don’t have that many uniform pants.
Pam: No, just two pants and two skirts.

Nadjwa: So if they get dirty or messed up, then you don’t have no more and sometimes you might not have the money to get more.
Pam: I am getting tall and these are getting too small. I don’t have a lot of money, either. Sometimes I can’t get what I want. I have to wait to get new shoes and new clothes for school. I have had these uniforms for two years since kindergarten and I am going to get new ones next year.

Nadjwa: What do you do when Mrs. Kai says that?
Pam: I sit on the chair anyway and get yelled at and screamed at by Ms. Kai. Most times I am made to get up. She says things like, “Do you think you’re special?” It makes me real mad and angry. I start yelling and screaming. But Mr. Williams lets me sit on the chair.

In situating Pam’s words as critical literacies, we can see how she reads the presence and actions of Ms. Kai as texts. Ms. Kai was a school staff developer who came into the classroom twice a week to help Mr. Williams with classroom management. Pam intervenes by disregarding Ms. Kai’s classroom rules against teaching practices that she reads as inequitable because they ignore her classed identities. She makes visible the realities of poor children who have different life experiences than children and/or teachers with money. Her critical literacies challenge inequitable teaching practices that make poor children such as Pam, with one or two pairs of uniform pants and no washing machine and/or money to go to the Laundromat, sit on the floor. Pam also demonstrated critical literacies by reading herself as a text and affirming her classed identities. In defying Ms. Kai and getting the chair anyway, Pam’s actions affirm her poor and lower-classed identities and seek to disrupt the violence that devalues and erases lower-class perspectives (The Latina Feminist Group, 2001).

Reading the incident from a critical literacies perspective provides a distinctly different analysis than if one reads the same incident from a traditional educator view. Although all educators are not the same and there is more than one traditional teacher perspective, it is important to reflect upon how different perspectives would bring about different understandings. Educators reading this example who value classroom management and technique more than individual children’s experiences or classed identities might focus on how they will get their lesson taught if everyone is not required to do exactly the same thing. They might be concerned with how other children and administrators would respond to a few children sitting in chairs. They might also think about how a few chairs in the meeting area would disrupt the safety and space of the students. Often we read about educators who think students should respect adults by following classroom rules without questioning teachers’ practices. Such educators would probably read Pam’s determination to remain in the chair as disruptive, bad behavior, and a negative attitude. Rather than reading Pam’s behaviors as critical literacies to affirm classed identities, they would construct her as the problem and name her sitting in the chair as disobedience and a reason to further focus on classroom management strategies.

Because I was interested in understanding how Mr. Williams read this incident and eager to create more culturally responsive teaching practices, I brought this story to Mr. Williams’ attention. Here is a portion of the conversation that followed:

Nadjwa: Can you tell me what you notice about Ms. Kai’s interactions with Pam?

Mr. Williams: Ms. Kai would often tell me that, “Pam is disrespectful. She always has something to say and wants things her own way. She never listens and never follows directions.”

Nadjwa: What do you do about the chair?

Mr. Williams: I do let Pam sit in the chair. When she sits in the chair, she is focused and everything is fine. I tell her to ignore Ms. Kai and sometimes I give her other things to do. But then
Ms. Kai kept asking why Pam wasn’t with the rest of the class and how she thought she was so special. So then I would tell Pam to just sit on the rug.

Nadjwa: Why didn’t you talk to Ms. Kai?

Mr. Williams: Because I was a new teacher and she was the staff developer. I had no choice. They just sent her into my room to help me. She already thought I didn’t know what I was doing, and they thought my class was so bad and that I had all the behavior problems.

In considering this data through a critical literacies perspective, one can see how Mr. Williams reads himself as a text who intervenes against the tensions between Pam and Ms. Kai. He tries to alleviate some of the conflict by giving Pam different tasks that make it possible for her to learn in an environment away from Ms. Kai. Mr. Williams also reads and writes himself as a teacher from a lower-classed background. During an interview he stated,

“I know what it is like to be hungry at 8 o’clock in the morning and not have breakfast. I am in the same bracket as these kids. . . . I feel like I know what the struggle is for these kids because I went through it myself.”

By reading and writing himself as an agentic teacher from a lower-classed background who experienced public school as a poor child, Mr. Williams also enacts critical literacies that affirm Pam’s lower-classed identities. He engages culturally responsive pedagogies around issues of class and lower-classed children in changing the class inequities that existed when Ms. Kai was present.

Traditional readings of this incident might value the ways in which Mr. Williams was able to hear and help Pam. Some educators might read Mr. Williams solely as a man inscribed in school structures that do not value poor and lower-classed children in changing the class inequities that existed when Ms. Kai was present. Further, as a new teacher, Mr. Williams would not be expected to manifest critical literacies because he is struggling to handle day-to-day issues of teaching. Other educators would understand that, as a new teacher, direct intervention by Mr. Williams might have caused political upheaval.

A critical literacies perspective acknowledges all of the above contexts as well as the complicated political negotiations that inscribe Mr. Williams as a teacher. However, critical literacies and multicultural feminist critical scholars who advocate for equity maintain that people must be aware not only of not doing harm, but of creating some good for the communities in which they work (Walker, 1999). Mr. Williams needs support in enacting a plethora of critical literacies strategies to intervene against and affirm marginalized identities.

**Classroom Organization, Classroom Management, Age, and Student Identities**

As I continued to work with Pam, she told me stories about how she challenged visiting educators who engaged in inequitable teaching practices that made invisible the voices, opinions, and identities of young children by privileging adult age and educator status. What follows is an example of one such account.

Nadjwa: Can you think of something else unfair that has happened in your class?

Pam: Yea. When Ms. Kai came in and changed the classroom.

Nadjwa: Why do you think that was unfair?

Pam: Cause I don’t like when she changed the classroom.

Nadjwa: What did you like about the other classroom?

Pam: Which classroom?

Nadjwa: What did you like about the way your classroom was before?

Pam: I like it because each time it had cool things in it. When she changed it, it was not like a classroom . . . and I got really upset.

Nadjwa: What made you so upset?
In situating Pam’s words as critical literacies, we see how she reads the body, presence, and actions of Ms. Williams, Pam, or any other child. In light of this reading, Pam intervenes against teaching practices that she reads as inequitable because they ignore the children’s perspectives on how they think their classroom should be managed. Unlike her previous direct intervention, Pam’s intervention with this incident is indirect. In retelling this story, Pam intervenes by making the inequity visible to me, knowing that I, in turn, share my knowledge with Mr. Williams. Her critical literacies read and write herself and other children as texts capable of having opinions about classroom management. She affirms the knowledges and abilities of children to dialogue about how classrooms should be designed, organized, and decorated.

Reading the incident from a traditional perspective might entail educators focusing on their roles as adults who have the power and knowledge to shape classrooms. Rather than seeing the inequities in ignoring children’s voices and opinions or the fact that children are as much owners and shapers of their classroom as any teacher, most adult educators might focus on the good that was done in reorganizing a classroom. Attention might be paid to how much time it would take to reorganize, trying to think of other classrooms to model this one after, following administrators’ orders of what needs to be posted in classrooms, and integrating the newest best practices regarding environmental print. Moreover, many educators do not conceptualize children as being able to reflect about their learning processes and environments. On the rare occasions that educators move to this realm, there is a high probability that many might dismiss asking children because they would construct children as only talking about what looks nice or what would allow them to have the most freedom. Perspectives such as these are sustained by teacher education programs and staff development practices that encourage technical and surface level examinations of classroom management and do not encourage educators to read and include young children as shapers of the classroom.

**PAM’S CRITICAL LITERACIES SURROUNDING YELLING AND STATUS INEQUITIES**

During our conversation, Pam also repeatedly identified yelling as an inequitable classroom management strategy that adult educators use to inflict violence upon her and other children and maintain inequitable hierarchies. Pam shared an incident that occurred when she used her critical literacies to directly challenge an older mentor teacher, Mrs. White, who came in on a weekly basis to model for Mr. Williams because he was a new teacher. Pam illustrates critical literacies that read teachers who yell at children as educators expressing inequitable pedagogies.

Moreover, many educators do not conceptualize children as being able to reflect about their learning processes and environments.

**Nadjwa:** Why do you think that was unfair?

**Pam:** You know that teacher who came in to help us? She screams.

**Nadjwa:** Yes, she did scream. And that made you feel like what?

**Pam:** Embarrassed.

**Nadjwa:** Embarrassed. So did you ever tell her not to scream at you?

**Pam:** Me and her speak about that.

**Nadjwa:** Uh-huh, and what did you tell her?

**Pam:** She told me to be nice.

**Nadjwa:** Was it hard to tell her don’t scream at you or what?

**Pam:** It was hard. But I don’t want no mean teacher who yells and screams.

**Nadjwa:** I know you don’t like when teachers yell and scream. Teachers shouldn’t yell and scream at children. 

In situating Pam’s words as critical literacies, we can see how she reads the body, presence, and actions of Mrs. White as inequitable texts. Pam’s critical literacies enable her to read and write herself as a person who suffers inequities as a result of classroom pedagogies that subject children to disrespect, yelling, and the erasure of their identities by educators. Pam intervenes by bending the rules and yelling back at teachers and ignoring what teachers ask of her. Despite the difficulty Pam describes in confronting Mrs. White, her critical literacies also intervene against these inequities by
writing herself as a text powerful enough to challenge Mrs. White despite their differing statuses. Pam’s critical literacies affirm her voice and her status as a student. She reads and writes herself as a person deserving of equity and respect.

Reading this incident from a more traditional lens might make it difficult for many educators to read Pam’s behaviors as critical literacies that seek to maintain age and status identities. Rather than listening to Pam, or children such as Pam, and developing more equitable culturally responsive pedagogies, most educators might continue to marginalize Pam’s suggestions and critical literacies on account of her young biological age and her status as student. Many teachers would not read Pam as a knowledgeable person with a valid concern. Instead of affirming the voice in which Pam critiques, they would dismiss her and her perspectives. By focusing on the perceived disrespect of a child reprimanding them, yelling at them, or confronting them, many educators would miss the opportunity to contemplate both on their pedagogies and on how Pam experiences her classroom as a young child and a student.

When I read the previous incident from a critical literacies perspective, I was further convinced that teacher yelling is unfair, a violent erasure of children’s identities, and an inequitable pedagogy that privileges adults. I believe that educators who yell at children maintain hierarchical relationships of power since power is maintained within most schools so that children can’t yell back at adults or, if children do yell back at adults, they receive disciplinary actions (Oesterreich, 2003). Because of those beliefs, I was eager to know whether or not Mr. Williams was aware of these practices. I also wanted to know what he was(n’t) doing to challenge these inequities. In light of these concerns, I created spaces for Mr. Williams to dialogue and reflect about this incident.

Nadjwa: Can you tell me about Pam and Mrs. White’s interactions?

Mr. Williams: She constantly complained about Pam and said that she had an attitude and misbehaved. She yelled at Pam often and said she acted too grown. She would remove her from activities, threaten to call home, and report her to me.

Nadjwa: What do you do when this happens?

Mr. Williams: I tell Pam to stay away from her and I give Pam something else to do when this teacher comes so she didn’t have to participate in the whole-class activity.
Nadjwa: Why didn’t you talk to Mrs. White?

Mr. Williams: I was a new teacher and she was a mentor teacher. I thought she had something to teach me.

Nadjwa: Do you see inequities in yelling?

Mr. Williams: Yes I do, because the same way I don’t want nobody yelling at me, like I’m sure they don’t want nobody yelling at them like a power thing. We yell sometimes because they’re little kids. You know if you yell, they can’t yell as loud as you. And if you yell, you might frighten them; but that doesn’t make it right for you to yell at them.

In reading this data through a critical literacies perspective, one can see how Mr. Williams reads himself as a text who intervenes by creating culturally responsive pedagogies that support Pam in affirming her aged identities and in challenging a teacher. Once again he reads himself as an agentic being who is able to alleviate some of the conflict with Mrs. White by giving Pam different tasks that make it possible for her to learn in an environment away from Mrs. White. However, Mr. Williams also reads himself as a new teacher who is less powerful than more experienced teachers; therefore, he is unable to collaborate with and challenge fellow educators to develop more equitable culturally responsive pedagogies.

When I read Mr. Williams as a text through a critical literacies perspective, he once again signified an example of the ways in which educators can simultaneously fight and maintain systems of inequities. Similar to the incident with Ms. Kai, Mr. Williams’ interventions are subversive and temporary solutions that do not change structural inequities. But, throughout my collaboration with Mr. Williams, I also read him as a text who was willing to identify (in)equities around age in his teaching practices. Consequently, I created reflective spaces where he could ponder the inequities in yelling and the plethora of ways in which language, expectations, and student–teacher interactions reflect assumptions of age (Oesterreich, 2003).

PARTING THOUGHTS

In discussing Pam’s experiences, I have explicated how children, despite their ages, engage critical literacies to affirm their classed, aged, and student identities and intervene against inequitable teaching pedagogies. The more that I interact with children such as Pam, the more I am convinced that age has been and still is used to prevent early childhood and elementary students from talking about issues that impact their realities. The implications of these age and status inequities extend beyond Pam and are germane to all children. As I strengthen my own critical literacies, I name age as a social construct and challenge linear developmental constructs that are predicated on age. Like Kessler and Swadener (1992), I believe that by constructing early childhood classrooms as sites of (in)equity, children and adults can struggle for equity. We can uphold children’s literacies to affirm their identities, sustain their voices, produce knowledges, and shape classrooms. Viruru (2001) challenges us with these questions:

Can early childhood education ever become something else? Could that something else be a field that constantly questions the categories and assumptions of colonial/imperial forms of knowledge and that reinvents itself on the basis of the many subjugated knowledges that the children in our classroom bring with them? (p. 138)

One of the greatest implications of Pam’s words is the need for teachers to create spaces that allow reflection time to assist in creating culturally responsive pedagogies. Whether this reflection occurs individually or collectively, it must involve critique and questioning of current practices. Educators might ask:

- How can I see which behaviors are critical literacies that affirm marginalized identities and/or intervene against inequitable practices?
- How often have I penalized a child for enacting critical literacies that I did not recognize?

Moreover, educators trying to identify class (in)equities in their teaching must recognize how class values and assumptions pervade classroom language, rules, and practices (Hicks, 2002; Nieto, 2004). It is possible to begin to address some of these inequities by asking questions such as:

- What do I take for granted as a result of my classed experiences?
- How do my pedagogies privilege children of higher classed statuses?
- How am I willing to create more equitable pedagogies around classed identities?

Similar reflective questions might be asked of educators trying to identify age and status inequities in their teaching. Although most educators know yelling is not considered good teaching pedagogy, many have yelled at some point in their career or have ignored other teachers’ yelling. Reflecting on Pam’s experiences helps me to further understand how age is compounded by race, class, gender, education, status, and sexuality. It is quite possible that children like Pam cross the (in)visible line drawn with stereotypes and social constructions that dictate how children are supposed to interact with adults, how students are supposed to respond to teachers, how Latinas are supposed to be obedient, and how females are supposed to be passive (hooks, 1989; Quiroz, 2001). Thus, we might ask:
Exposing Issues of Race and Power in Schools

A special themed issue on Race, Power, and the Ethnography of Urban Schools was published in the March 2004 Anthropology and Education Quarterly. The articles focus on "race" as one of the most socially dividing categories but also examine how race/ethnicity interacts with gender, language, and social class to produce particular educational practices and outcomes. The inequities in urban schools are carefully documented through ethnography along with the transformative possibilities in these schools. The volume is available from the American Anthropological Organization (www.aaaneet.org).

The articles include a focus on:
1. Identity and schooling in the lives of Puerto Rican girls
2. Youth engaging in strategic racialization
3. The struggles and resistance of Latina/o youth
4. Teacher expectations and responsibility for student learning related to race and class
5. Urban families and the power of Black and Latina/o counterstories
6. Teaching about the concept of race
7. Commentaries from a range of scholars in the field about issues of race and power

—Kathy G. Short, University of Arizona

- What patterns exist in who is being yelled at according to age, class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, ability, and language?
- What do these patterns say about the assumptions I make about aspects of identities and social markers?
- How have I (not) considered issues of age and status within my own classroom as I attend to (in)equities?

It is urgent that educators examine how they increase the penalties for marginalized people who counter inequities by fighting for visibility and value. The implications of educators reading Pam’s behaviors as delinquencies rather than as critical literacies contribute to low academic achievement for poor and working-class children of color, high suspension rates, and the overpopulation of ethnic minorities in special education classes (Agbenyega & Jiggetts, 1999; Mendez & Knoff, 2003). Understanding these factors and the negative consequences that many children like Pam face should challenge educators to become more critical about our teaching practices.

The second implication entails building on these critical literacies by creating opportunities for children to have support for these practices in their curriculum experiences. Together educators and children can explore where, how, and when pedagogies promote (in)equities. Teachers and children need opportunities to discuss their realities, to examine strategies of contestation and transformation, and to understand the positive and negative consequences that arise from enactments of critical literacies. They need suggestions about how to fight these inequities in the contexts of standards and mandated curriculum in order to make sure that teaching and learning are occurring in ways acceptable to all vested parties. Spaces, such as collaborative conversations where the children and teachers meet as a group to discuss classroom practices, create curriculum and discuss, research, and write about inequities, are viable curricular options. Collaborative conversations increase the possibilities of developing and implementing culturally responsive pedagogies by foregrounding the interactive learning processes that occur between students—teachers, students—students and students—researchers. Nieto’s (2002) words provide insight on the power of such spaces,

... listening to students can help teachers develop curriculum that is respectful and affirming of their experiences. Rather than begin with the assumption that language minority students have nothing to bring to their education, a more helpful approach is to seek out their suggestions to build a curriculum that is grounded in those experiences. (p. 170)

Through collaborative conversations, educators can move students’ voices into the center of theorizing about and creating culturally responsive curriculum. This type of pedagogy needs to provide children with equitable collaborative structures that support their critical literacies without fear of consequences. The silenced and marginalized pedagogical implications and dilemmas of critical literacies sparked by Pam are relevant to young, poor children in schools everywhere. Educators willing to reflect and deepen their
understandings about how children draw on their classed and aged identities to read, write, and speak about the (in)equities that they face from their teachers and in their classrooms on a daily basis increase the possibilities of creating culturally responsive pedagogies.

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