

**Theorizing *Oppressed*
Family Pedagogy:
Critical Lessons
from a Rural Black Family
in the Post-*Brown* South**

By Sherick Hughes

Introduction

***Freedom of Choice:
A Post-Brown Educational Obstacle***

Seeking more time and justification to circumvent *Brown* and Title IV, the North Carolina State Superintendent of Schools, Charles Carroll, wrote a letter to the State Attorney General's office requesting legal expertise and advice. State Attorney General Bruton and Deputy State Attorney General Moody responded with an unequivocal message:

The members of the office of the Attorney General of North Carolina did not promote or urge the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 but the Congress did pass the Act. No county or city board of education in this state is required in mandatory fashion to accept any Federal funds to promote school programs but if

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the funds are accepted then the conditions must be complied with and administered in good faith and this means total and complete desegregation of all schools in the county or city school system. If the funds are not accepted then such manner of operation affords no protection because the Attorney General of the United States under Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 can institute legal proceedings to force the desegregation of any school or school system, and this is true whether the school unit receives Federal funds or not. In short, the whole Act contemplates total and complete desegregation of public schools whether Federal funds are received or not.

Neither the State Board of Education nor the county and city boards of education asked for this situation, but they must live with it and they will have to work with such clay as it is handed to them. *No form of token compliance, clever schemes, chicanery or subtle or sophisticated plans of avoidance—no matter how crafty or cunning—will in the end prevail. No devices or plans whether ingenious or ingenuous will constitute any legal defense to the mandates of this Federal statute* [emphasis added]. (Bruton & Moody, 1965, p. 10)

Despite the strong advisement of the state Attorney General's office, North Carolina schools would engage one final "sophisticated plan of avoidance" to stall the "total and complete desegregation of all schools" (Bruton & Moody, 1965, p. 10). In 1966, North Carolina schools would begin implementing the *Freedom of Choice* Plan, whereby local school boards "opened doors to previously all-white public schools to black children and black schools to white children" (Crow, Escott, & Hatley, 2002, p. 171). When reassignment was requested by a parent, the boards held the legitimate authority to deny each request. In essence, the Plan fed the national mystique boasting North Carolina as a democratic model for desegregated Southern schooling, while its enactment was actually far from the democratic ideal (Hughes, 2005a). Freedom of Choice was operative for three years and during that period of desegregated schooling, "85% of the state's black schoolchildren continued to attend all-black schools, and not a single white child elected to attend such a facility" (p. 172). Thus, as Crow, Escott, and Hatley (2002) suggest, the burden of implementing school desegregation fell to Black families. By the 1968-1969 school term the *Freedom of Choice* Plan was ruled unconstitutional and an ineffective means toward ending school segregation by a federal court in *Boomer v. Beaufort County Board of Education*. The 1970 school year would launch mandatory school desegregation throughout the state, approximately sixteen years after the initial *Brown* decision.

Unfortunately, this oppressive period of educational and social history remains largely in the forms of oral history and state archival documents. This article in general, (a) provides more public access to the hidden transcripts (Scott, 1990) of that critical point in educational history, and (b) moves a step further to address sociological questions regarding how members of the oppressed survive and triumph in the post-*Brown* era by exposing and countering their lived "reality" of the *Freedom of Choice* from the past, in the present, for the future (Noblit & Dempsey, 1996).

Specific Purpose of the Article

The specific purpose of this article is twofold. First, the article addresses critical teaching and learning evident in two generations of one nuanced Black family, the Foresight family, who appear to be surviving and thriving during and after the *Freedom of Choice* era of rural public schooling. The phrase “nuanced Black family” is intended to reflect the subtle degrees of difference in pedagogic meaning, feeling, tone, and action that may separate one Black family from another. Second, the article delves further to consider their critical teaching and learning at home within the framework of Oppressed Family Pedagogy (Hughes, 2005b).¹ It explores a deceiving, and yet distinct political discursive innovation of the Post-*Brown* era and how one oppressed family is teaching and learning to overcome that deception by cultivating counter discursive efforts at home. The counter discursive narratives of this nuanced Black family exist in ways that could expand our purview of the possibilities of critical pedagogy as approached in the ethnographic work of Educational Foundations.

When considered broadly, oppressed families could also include but not be limited to Native Americans, Latinos, Bi-ethnic Couples, Same-Sex Partners, and impoverished Whites. It is imperative to note here that rather than being viewed through a deficit model lens, these families can be enlisted as resources to help us explore the good as well as the harmful potential of desegregated schooling from an alternative critical pedagogical perspective. The oppressed Foresight family, as highlighted in this article, exposes intergenerational voices living with the daily contradictions and goals for addressing racism in schooling and policymaking. Their survival and social mobility appear to be contingent upon the engagement of a particular type of family pedagogy that conveys how to operate within an inequitable racialized schooling structure, while maintaining a critically conscientious position outside of it.

My experiences with the Foresight family suggest that one would be remiss to dismiss their current and potential utility as informants to our understanding of critical pedagogy as counter discursive. As the Foresight family shared stories with me and pieces of the *Freedom of Choice* puzzle came together, I began to understand the pedagogical connections. I began to understand their narratives of hope and struggle as pedagogy. They were actually teaching and learning with me, re-teaching and re-learning themselves and telling me the parts they wanted to teach you; the parts that are for you, the reader, to learn. Within Foresight family narratives of struggle, were narratives of hope and all were counter discursive means to offer the Foresight children every educational possibility that the *Freedom of Choice* would not. When considered in tandem, the Foresight family’s narrative trials and triumphs became educative enough to support an argument that nuanced Black families operate within critical pedagogical sites conducive to further theorizing Oppressed Family Pedagogy (OFP). The remaining text addresses how one nuanced

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Black family's pedagogy continues to challenge the power of political discursive innovations. What might I learn from this site of OFP to inform current and future theory and practice? What might I learn about critical pedagogy from oppressed families on their own terms?

Theoretical Framework:

Discursive Innovation and The Praxis of Critical Pedagogy via Freire and Ladson-Billings

Discursive Innovation

Discursive Innovation (Foucault, 1970) as conceptualized here involves words and phrases characterized by relative simplicity, dichotomization, incessant repetition, deceiving metamorphosis, timely pithiness, and a certain societal familiarity. Due to these characteristics, the terminology of any given discursive innovation has proven to somehow have the ability to wax and wane in the public sphere, while continuing to convince a critical mass of citizens that a message they've heard before, is actually a new language of reform (Noblit & Dempsey, 1996). Once reintroduced, a discursive innovation can be reused politically to convince citizens that schooling change "this time" is necessary, possible, and imperative. Prozorov (2004) in his recent dynamic and somewhat analogous work in discursive innovation concurs as he assesses "effects of the *discursive innovations*, elicited in the political field in Northwest Russia" (p. 2). He argues that the "very introduction of such discursive objects as 'strategic planning,' 'macro-regionalism,' 'new assembly,' etc. within the field of political discourse" should be conceived as a "constitutive political act" in and of itself (p. 2).

Historically in the U.S., discursive innovations in Education tend to attach themselves politically to either "excellence" or "equity" as they surfaced to the forefront in our desegregated public schools (Noblit & Dempsey, 1996, pp. 3-4). All such discursive innovations by default are merely recycled themes and phrases reintroduced by legitimate authorities (e.g., politicians, professors, wealthy influential business owners, etc.) and accepted by a majority of our constituents. The example centered in this chapter illustrates the metamorphosis of the Jim Crow era discursive innovation *Separate but Equal*, which was largely refuted by legitimate authorities and a critical mass of people in the U.S., only to reappear in the form of *Freedom of Choice* (1960s) and *School Choice* (1980s), thereby convincing citizens that school choice was not only an innovative idea but also a good democratic alternative.

Like *Separate but Equal* before it (Anderson, 1988), *Freedom of Choice* as an object does not [actually] "exist, in the strictest ontological sense, apart from the project of its construction, and its entire existence is contained in its function of the representation of the project itself" (Prozorov, 2004, p. 6). The discursive

attachment and positioning of *Freedom* in relation to *Choice* seems to provide that extraordinary “something” necessary to solidify *Freedom of Choice* as a timeless, powerful, and deceiving component of Post-*Brown* politics (Foucault, 1970). *Choice* and *Freedom*, are always somehow *less* than reality in the lives of the oppressed (Anderson, 1988; Cecelski, 1994; and Hughes, 2006). In fact one could argue that prior to permeating schooling in North Carolina, *Freedom of Choice* first became “real” to a relatively small group of privileged Whites (Leonardo, 2004) with legitimate authority (Weber, 1918) who applauded the Plan as a viable and socially just alternative to total and complete school desegregation. Therefore, *Freedom of Choice* was likely much closer to a political reality for privileged White families than it was for their oppressed Black counterparts. How might critical pedagogy help diminish the influence of such deceiving political discursive tools?

Critical Pedagogy

Much of the way we consider critical pedagogy in the U.S. today can be attributed to the work of two scholars representing race, class, and gender oppression: Brazilian Paulo Freire (Wink, 2005) and African American Gloria Ladson-Billings (Hughes, 2006). Their works are commonly referenced for their applicability to international dialogues and action that take traditional applications of pedagogy a step further toward fostering praxis; the reciprocal relationship between theory and practice. Traditional thought regarding pedagogy usually presents it as either “the art of teaching” or “the science of teaching.” I can identify with Joan Wink (2005) when she explained how she once viewed pedagogy in this rather simplistic and somewhat shortsighted manner that fails to acknowledge the role of students in learning. Peter McLaren (1995), however, details a more comprehensive conceptualization of pedagogy that recognizes the positioning of teachers and learners “within discursive practices and power/knowledge relations” (McLaren, 1995, p. 34).

“Pedagogy” refers to the process by which teachers and students negotiate and produce meaning. This, in turn, takes into consideration how teachers and students are positioned within discursive practices and power/knowledge relations. “Pedagogy” also refers to how we represent ourselves, others, and the communities in which we choose to live. (p. 34)

Freirean Critical Pedagogy by distinction “underscores the partisan nature of learning and struggle” and it begins from the “starting point for linking knowledge and power” of a more dynamic, multi-centered self replete with self repair through critical reflection, and reflexivity (McLaren, 1995, p. 34). Freire (1970) offers a more direct, daily personal experiential approach that involves first understanding one’s position in an oppressive educational system and second learning and teaching others to be critical and strategic about navigating within and outside of that system (Wink, 2005). Unfortunately, the common sense leading us to a critical reading of

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racialization in our cultural world is only as critically sound and applicable as our limited daily experiences.

This limitation is addressed by Ladson-Billings (1994 and 1995) who moves toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy to advance possibilities of praxis for teachers and teacher educators of African Americans. Her pioneering work in theorizing culturally relevant pedagogy has a vision that “empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents” not only as vehicles for connecting students to the dominant culture, but as aspects of the curriculum. (1994, p. 18). Ladson-Billings (1995) uses ethnographic data to theorize that culturally relevant pedagogy is exhibited where pedagogy is art used to paint a portrait of community in the classroom; where all students and teachers see themselves as knowledgeable and giving community members; and where knowledge and assessments are diversified and critiqued (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 481). While experiencing and validating the local community, culturally relevant teachers maintained fluid student-teacher relationships and created critical thinking and learning settings for African American students. Connecting theory to practice, Ladson-Billings (1994) offers the following example of how a culturally relevant pedagogical style can be used by a fifth-grade teacher to impart “knowledge, skills, and attitudes” in a lesson on the U.S. Constitution.

She might begin with a discussion of the bylaws and articles of incorporation that were used to organize a local church or African American civic association. Thus, the students learn the significance of such documents in forming institutions and shaping ideals while they also learn that their own people are institution-builders. (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 18)

As Freire and Ladson-Billings illustrate, the theory and practice of critical pedagogy involves a “commitment to developing forms of community life that take seriously the struggle for democracy and social justice” (McLaren, 1995, p. 34). Unfortunately, I find that no scholars who apply critical pedagogy, via Freire or Ladson-Billings, apply it (a) to enhance our understanding of how to critique the deceiving political discursive innovations that permeate society or (b) to advance a consistent concentration on families as necessary aspects of critical pedagogy. Mannheim (1936) alludes to the need to check critical pedagogy by applying it outside of the current structure that binds us:

Philosophers have too long concerned themselves with their own thinking. When they wrote of thought, they had in mind primarily their own history, the history of philosophy, or quite special fields of knowledge. This type of thinking is applicable only under quite special circumstances, and what can be learned by analyzing it is not directly transferable to other spheres of life. Even when it is applicable, it refers only to a specific dimension of existence which does not suffice for living human beings who are seeking to comprehend and to mould their world.

Meanwhile, acting men [and women] have, for better or for worse, proceeded to

develop a variety of methods for the experiential and intellectual penetration of the world in which they live, which have never been analyzed with the same precision. When, however, any human activity continues over a long period without being subjected to intellectual criticism it tends to get out of hand. (pp. 1-2)

Noblit (1999) actually describes theory as akin to pottery, and albeit precious, it eventually cracks due to the applied pressure, frequency and diversity of usage during practice, which includes an intense scrutiny or observation through different contexts of time, person, and place. For Mannheim (1936) and Noblit (1999), the external lens of oppressed families could be explored as we seek to sharpen our purview on community life and democratic struggle by critiquing and supplementing the current theory and practice of critical pedagogy.

Oppressed Family Pedagogy (OFP)

Hill-Collins (1990) describes oppression as extant interlocking systems that comprise a matrix of domination in which “race, class, and gender” are particularly dominant and oppressive. Oppression is perpetuated, exposed, and resisted “on three levels: personal biography, group or community level of the cultural context created by race, class, and gender; and the systemic level of social institutions” (Hill-Collins, 1990, pp. 226-227). OFP, as applied in this article, *involves the intergenerational art of critical and reciprocal teaching and learning that is engaged at home by families battling oppression*. Oppressed groups live at the crossroads of domination, accommodation, and resistance. They tend to represent numerical or political minorities that are often perceived to be a threat by a dominant group who sees them as potentially encroaching upon their values, beliefs, and/or resources perceived as precious and/or limited. Oppressed groups must learn when and how to resist (Scott, 1990), and they must prepare to live with consistently negative consequences in the matrix. As Hill-Collins (1990) further explains, the matrix presents “few pure victims or oppressors . . .” because an “individual derives varying amounts of penalty and privilege from the multiple systems of oppression in which everyone lives” (p. 230). Hughes (2006) found that narratives of oppressed families are educative and indeed, pedagogical (Hughes, 2005b) in ways that expose and resist the matrix of domination at home—in ways that inspire hope for their struggle. OFP tends to exhibit at least three hopeful possibilities adapted from the work of Clark (2002, pp. 91, 94, and 95):

1. Oppressed family pedagogy can restore the subject to history by documenting the history of communities that have been excluded from historical accounts and encouraging individuals to see themselves as historical actors. It is possible to encourage people to remember as a way of entering and transforming history and our understanding of past k-12 experiences in the present (Noblit & Dempsey, 1996) for future reference.

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2. Oppressed family pedagogy can spark a dialogical encounter based on rapport between the researched and the narrator-researcher. It can support healing, reconciliation, and developmental teaching and learning affording me the currency to validate and to exchange important k-12 experiences with the families.

3. Oppressed family pedagogy can work as an artistic practice that can transform relationships and build new cultural perspectives, thereby opening new dialogues to engage positive k-12 home-school-community-university relationships.

Oppressed family pedagogy offers suggestions for ways (a) to collaborate and (b) to expose any barriers of oppression that limit the type of praxis that optimizes the potential to liberate our k-12 school communities. Albeit based in family narratives, OFP has the potential to convey some convincing evidence (also see *counter storytelling* in Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 42) rendering it a useful theoretical tool for highlighting and critiquing the counter discursive possibilities of critical pedagogy. Arguably, an oppressed family comes to its nuanced invention of counter-discursive tools and distinct position to highlight and critique theory and practice by the necessity of their oppressed condition (Murillo, 2004). If necessity is the mother of invention in this case, then there should an uncharted sea of evidence supporting nuanced Black family teaching and learning settings as sites that epitomize a critical pedagogy of the oppressed.

Methods: Explanation and Justification

Native Historical Ethnography

Recently, in the *Educational Researcher*, scholars called for “greater clarity and transparency regarding methods in qualitative research” (Harry, Sturges, & Klingner, 2005, p. 3). I agree with the authors’ contention that published articles, particularly those illustrating applied grounded theory and ethnographic qualitative methods, can be advanced by adding details to clarify processes and findings. I feel compelled to mention here before moving forward that I disagree with any interpretation of this push for methodological clarity as being akin to the justification of qualitative methods by quantitative means. The qualitative methods of Native Ethnography were adopted for this study. It is described in detail below this paragraph. This Native Historical Ethnography was funded in part (2001-2003) by a Spencer Foundation grant awarded to Dr. George Noblit, Educational Foundations distinguished professor, and Dr. Jim Leloudis, Associate Professor of History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Native Historical Ethnography perhaps best describes the empirical research methods employed in this article because unlike ethnographers preparing to “go native,” I am a “native” of the Northeastern Albemarle area of North Carolina. In fact, most of my family still lives there. The latter fact heavily influenced my decision to protect the anonymity of the participants by replacing their names, the names of

their towns, and the names of their schools with pseudonyms. Also called “Native Ethnohistory” the methods employed here were selected as the means to study oppressed family pedagogy because of its designed ability: (a) to search for ways the historical and racialized context shapes family pedagogy, (b) to be concerned for issues of intersubjectivity, and (c) to focus upon a social constructionist interpretation of the counter-discursive response evident in oppressed family pedagogy. Villenas (1996) describes the particularities of the native ethnographer as involving the internal dilemmas of colonizer-colonized, insider-outsider. To some degree, the native ethnographer as North Carolinian Thomas Wolfe suggests “can’t go home again,” yet he or she is forever unable to leave all ties to the scene completely.

Chain Sampling

Chain or snowball sampling was the strategy used to locate information-rich cases, stories and voices, from black northeastern Albemarle families. Since I attended northeastern Albemarle schools from kindergarten through twelfth grade, I began the “field” component of the ethnographic year by implementing a chain process. This process required interviewing people that I remembered to be well known and widely respected among blacks in northeastern Albemarle. Each of these initial encounters involved one-shot interviews that ended with, “What families should I talk to?” Or, “Who else knows a lot about school desegregation in northeastern Albemarle?”

As the chain sampling list of black families grew, potential information-rich cases became quite sizable. A few names or incidents were mentioned repeatedly. As Patton (2002) describes, “the chain of recommended informants typically diverge initially as many possible sources are recommended, then converge as a few key names get mentioned over and over” (Patton, 2002, p. 237). Thus, the family case of interest in this article was identified from this sampling technique involving “people who know people who know people who know what cases are information rich, that is, good examples for study, good interview participants” (Patton, 2002, p. 243). This sampling technique led to the native ethnohistory of the black family highlighted in this article.

Nuanced Black Family Participants

Black family nuances acknowledge first and foremost the particularities of Blacks as a people. I often find myself saying to students, “there is no consensus for how to be a Black family in the U.S.” The work that I do as a Black male theorizing in the academy and operating outside of it as a practitioner, and as a family man is nuanced. I recognize a degree of privilege in my work, because I am able to sit here and use my fingers to write for “the field” after being in “the field.” My “field” however is the complete antithesis to the backbreaking hell of the fields hoed by my siblings, parents, grandparents and other ancestors of poverty.

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Black families are nuanced and so are our pedagogical narratives. We have strands that connect us (albeit unrecognized or ignored by some) to a collective story that is now spoken from the lips of self-identified liberals, conservatives, and radicals. Indeed, there are nuances that influence Black family responses to racialization and racism. It is my contention, however, that we must explore all possible nuanced Black family voices that may represent oppressed family voices. We must explore these possibilities as long as any distances exist in our country separating the freedoms and choices of privileged families, now living well beyond safety and survival modes most of the time; and oppressed families who still cling daily to mere husks of hope.

Foresight Family: Nuanced Black Family, Oppressed Family

A working description of the Foresight family participants (pseudonyms to protect participant anonymity) includes: (a) first-generation adult, Warren Foresight, who was a parent during the *Freedom of Choice* period, and (b) Warren's child(ren) or second-generation adults included Janice, Joanne, Frank, and Frank's wife Joan, who were high school and early college students at the time. They are now themselves parents, aunts, and uncles responsible for children who attended the consolidated, desegregated, Northeastern Albemarle Area schools situated in the rural Coastal Plains of North Carolina. Mother Foresight, Warren's wife, passed away in 1970, which was the year ending the *Freedom of Choice* period. Participants' ages ranged from forty to eighty-eight years old. Participation was limited by participant availability.

White Teacher Participants

Participant Gean Whitehall taught during the *Freedom of Choice* period in Northeastern Albemarle's White High School. She is currently retired, but she remembers the period vividly to provide additional evidence to support the Foresight family story. Participant Barbara Needham was a student at the same high school during the *Freedom of Choice* period. She is currently a recent Teacher of the Year recipient. Barbara noted being proud that she was mentored by Black teachers. Both Barbara and Gean were noted by the Foresight family as being two of the only White teachers trusted by most Black families to be fair to their children.

Collection of Data and Triangulation

Native Historical Ethnography: Oral History Interviews

Family cases presented here were built upon three in-depth and focused visits each with the first and second generations of the families. At least one of the three visits was at a home; usually all three were. Other visits took place in workplaces or leisure spaces for one to three hours. Sometimes, two visits occurred during the

same day (e.g., one morning visit and one evening visit). The interviews took place over two to three days. In some instances, more than one generation was interviewed during one visit (Phillipson, 1999). Interview questions and raw data rendered by them have been added to the school desegregation collection in UNC-Chapel Hill's acclaimed Southern Oral History Archives. They are available upon request.

Native Historical Ethnography: Observation

The oral history interviews of nuanced black family members were supplemented by in-depth observations that included concerns for issues of race, social justice, and intersubjectivity. This work involved concerns for the non-verbal environment (home and neighborhood condition, preferences, etc.) of the black families, my own reflexivity, and the intersubjective nature of my relationship with the family members. The observations were never unobtrusive, because I was in the families' intimate spaces—their homes and places of leisure. The observations of their neighborhood's condition, their home décor, and their meaning-making and strategic use of language afforded me some necessary tools for understanding how they socially construct an oppressed family pedagogy of counter-discursive innovation. Including the preliminary pilot family "field" study, I spent approximately two-three days per week for about six months interviewing and observing for the portion of the larger ethnography highlighted in this article.

Native Historical Ethnography: Archival History

Archival historical documents were collected in addition to one year of library research on the national, state, and local history of school desegregation. Archival documentation allowed for the triangulation of data sources (Siddle Walker, 1996). During the empirical research period, I spent forty days in the North Carolina State Historical Archives gathering documents general to the state and specific to northeastern Albemarle's school desegregation. Phase I of archival research focused on general correspondence from the state superintendent's papers to get an understanding of North Carolina's early transition into school desegregation from 1959–1970. Phase II of the archival research began in the state historical archive papers and archival microfilm from NE Albemarle school board minutes. Other local historical and demographic information about northeastern Albemarle was obtained from the archives of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

Analysis and Synthesis Procedures

Narratives and themes presented here emerge from slightly more than 1½ years of collecting data that included documents, interviews, and observations. This native ethnohistory research analysis and synthesis involved several elements: data management, coding field notes, narratives and stories, searching for themes, writing, and theorizing (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

Data Management

Two transcriptionists were hired to transcribe interview data. Along with handwritten running notes, field notes, spoken and recorded on audiotape, were also transcribed. Such efforts helped me to compile more than 100 transcribed pages of data for the portion of the project highlighted in this article. The data were grouped by creating and recreating codes from the field notes. The latter coding process was closely followed by an initial search for themes and tentative interpretations. A second element of the analysis involved the narratives and stories obtained from participants. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) suggest that qualitative researchers can probe for who, what, when, where, and why of the narratives shared. Part of my position as a researcher allowed me to translate, compare, and contrast any consistencies in the participants' narratives that could be later coded as themes. The more complete the narratives and stories, the better they are contextualized and allow more possibilities for a deeper understanding of themes.

During the process of analyzing narratives and stories from participants, I again searched for themes and issues of contrast and comparison of pedagogy across families, within families, and between first- and second-generation participants. During this analysis stage, I searched not only for patterns, but also for particularities of the observed family contexts. Next, I attempted to develop a final set of themes that represented the family's recounted experiences. Some themes are "emic" (from their words), and other themes are "etic" (from my interpretation of their words). Some of the themes are relatively simple, and others complex. All themes should be considered as particular to the nuanced Black family, its members, and me, the researcher.

Along the lines of Coffey and Atkinson's notion of qualitative writing, the writing that follows my analysis and synthesis includes, but is not limited to: (1) general statements about one black family pedagogy's counter-discursive innovation, (2) general statements about settings and contexts from two White teachers, (3) general statements about counter-discursive innovation situations in black families and emerging themes, (4) specific statements about one black family's pedagogy in the Northeastern Albemarle Area of North Carolina, (5) specific statements about a particular scene or incident, and (6) summary statements regarding particularities of scenes, situations, and contexts in relation to general black family pedagogy and counter-discursive innovation. Let us turn now to the results rendered by these methods and procedures.

Results: Historical Context and Major Themes

Thomas (2002) laments that extant literature primarily treats communication as it relates to discursive innovation as a linear, mechanistic process. She cites Fairclough's three dimensional view (i.e., *text, discourse, and social practice*) as a more accurate model for portraying the processes of discursive innovation in organized spaces of interdependent and intersubjective human action, like orga-

nizations and families (Thomas, 2002). By the same token, oppressed family understandings and responses to the *Freedom of Choice* innovation demonstrate a linkage of (1) historical con(text), historical-political *discourse*, and (3) counter-discursive family *social practice* (Thomas, 2002). I adapt Thomas' (2002) work to articulate the Foresight family's critical teaching and learning setting as a site of Oppressed Family Pedagogy.

Historical Con(text)

The Foresight oppressed family history, and its corroborating evidence offer a triangulated demonstration of the *Freedom of Choice* through the lens of lived experience (Van Mannen, 1997). The Foresight *Freedom of Choice* story is centered at the plight of the youngest daughter, Janice Foresight. Janice was the only family member of this native ethnography representing one of the 15 Black students who attended the formerly all White, Northeastern Albemarle High School. Thematic "lessons" of the family's story are shown through the lenses of four members of the Foresight family in their own words (i.e., Warren, Frank, Joanne, and Janice).

Evidence supporting their storytelling themes is offered first in narrative form from Gean Whitehall and Barbara Needham, two White Northeastern Albemarle lifelong educators. Barbara Needham recalls *Freedom of Choice* as her "Freshman, Sophomore and Junior Years," beginning in 1965, when the "first Black students, (2 or 3 per class) came." Barbara laments, "We [sympathetic White students] students felt sorry for them . . . Some of us, not all." Gean Whitehall remembers, "Everybody watched everyone else to see what was going to happen. Not many children came. There was more rumbling and mouthing than anything else." When asked what was lost for Blacks during school desegregation Gean reluctantly responded, "I do think we messed up on discipline. I think the Blacks were treated unfairly with discipline; that was a bad mark on us." Gean also lamented, "Blacks lost control of schools and part of culture. . . . There were no Blacks as administrators."

Barbara would go into more depth and critique, "during integration all White commissioners made the funding decisions [not to build a new school out in plain view like the other two formerly all white schools] . . . it's like they said, "let's hide them, so people can't see the inequality. . . ." Barbara also spoke highly of the Black female teachers with whom she later worked as an assistant. The backlash she notes from other Whites helps to support the Foresight stories of racist White teachers, "most people probably would say "oh my, I work for a Black woman. . . ." During the early transition into school desegregation, one teacher in the system asked Barbara, pejoratively "how can you take orders from a Black?" Barbara sighs, "She thinks she's above and beyond anyone. I enjoyed her the least. And she was White." Gean and Barbara construct narratives representing "liberal White" perspectives of the *Freedom of Choice* period. Let us turn to four major themes emerging from the same era in the Foresight family. These four major themes emerged as keys to

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justifying the importance for the Foresight family to engage a type of counter discursive critical pedagogy that transcends the deception lying beneath the *Freedom of Choice* Plan.

Foresight Freedom of Choice Main Theme 1: Cross Burning

Janice: . . . They sent letters out maybe like during the summer and like I said, Mary Sanders was all Black, and [Northeastern Albemarle School] was all White. And on the top of the letter was “Freedom of Choice.” And you had a choice. And Black parents could decide. Down at the bottom it said, “if you want your child to continue at an all Black school, you check that.” “If you want them to go to the all White school, you check that one.” So when we brought the letters home, I guess they discussed it, and I didn’t have a whole lot of voice in it, but they checked down that I would go to the all White school. . . . I really didn’t want to go. I was satisfied where I was. . . . And my daddy, I’m sure it was his idea, because he was the one who really pushed education. And my mom, too, but she was more [the enforcer] and my dad just pushed education. . . . It was about 15 of us Blacks that went to the . . . White school. . . . What happened was, after they burned the cross in our yard, I didn’t know it that night. It must have been a Saturday night. And that Sunday morning I think is when I found out. And I don’t know who saw the cross. I don’t think anybody told us, did they? Was it burning then? . . . We didn’t see it burning.

Joanne: They [racist Whites] sure did [burned a cross in our yard]. Daddy, [Warren] do you remember that?

Warren: Somebody come along and told us, said, “Did you know somebody is burning a cross in your yard?” I think she was about the only one up here that started at the White school at that time. . . . Keep going [I told her after the cross burning]. Keep on going. Yes, keep on going. She didn’t mind it, Janice didn’t. . . . They [Whites] felt like you were leading the rest of them.

Joanne: And they thought they would scare. I think they thought that they would frighten them and they wouldn’t come back. It didn’t stop them.

Frank: The incident did not affect her negatively in terms of grades. She still did fairly well in school.

Foresight Freedom of Choice Main Theme 2: Opportunity or Pyrrhic Victory?

Joanne: I think there were . . . others, they said they had a choice, they didn’t have go but they wanted to go so they could get some of that same opportunity that you hear about that the White folks get.

Warren: . . . She said she had to sit on a seat by herself. . . . Or she got on a seat and nobody else sat on there. . . . On the school bus. Only one or two of us here would send our children. They would get on the bus. The rest of them wouldn’t send them. They wanted to keep on going where they were going.

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Frank: . . . I know that they were doing a lot of name calling that she mentioned there. And there would be a lot of contact in halls and all, and that's one of the reasons why she didn't go back was because there was really no one to complain to. All the teachers were White teachers. And you really couldn't go to the White teachers, because they didn't want the Black kids to have any more than the White students did. So there wasn't anybody there who they could actually go to for support. And the same thing, she said she caught hell in the classroom from the teachers. Probably so, [because she was an A student] too. But mainly because they were Black kids, and they didn't want them to be there.

Janice: And when I got on the bus in the morning, they would yell, "Hey, here come that nigger. We don't want to sit beside her. She's dirty!" . . . This was segregation. It was you're not supposed to mix with them. They wanted us to stay in the Black schools, and they stay in the White. . . . And that's what happened to me in getting on the bus. But it was fearful. Every morning I dreaded getting on the bus. . . . In the classroom, like I said, most time it was just me, the only Black in the class, because there wasn't that many of us, maybe sometime with two or three of us Blacks in the same class. And every grading period, Ms. Williams would give me a grade to keep me off the honor roll. One grade. Yeah, they did. I'm telling. That's why I know how they can be. I would have all, I just looked at my report card before I came over here, because I wanted to get the year. It was 66-67. I would have all A's, and I think I had a B, and she gave me a D. So that way I couldn't get on the honor roll. Every grading period, I can prove it. Every grading period I mean, "A, B, A, B." Then I would get a C or a D. And that kept me off the honor roll. Um hum. And one time she gave me a U in something. Physical Education probably because I didn't know about dressing. You know, here I am new, and scared. I wouldn't ask any questions.

***Foresight Freedom of Choice Main Theme 3—
A Roundtrip of Choice Without Freedom***

Frank: She went to [the White High School] one year and she transferred back to Mary Sanders (all Black school) the next year. I guess you can imagine it kind of had to be hard that year they were [the first 15 Blacks], and there were so few of them.

Janice: I stayed a whole year. The whole year . . . [At the end of the year, my family decided] I didn't have to go back. So I didn't. I went back to Mary Sanders. And then 9th and 10th was at Mary Sanders. And then 11th we fully integrated. Everybody. So my 11th and 12th grades we were integrated. . . . And that was an experience, because when we got there, they did not want us to have any Black leadership. No Black (inaudible), no Black cheerleader, no Black cafeteria workers, no Black bus drivers.

Foresight Freedom of Choice Main Theme 4—Hopeful Signs

Janice: . . . But what happened on the bus. I had a good bus driver. He was White of course. He lived down here in the same house Rory McCord bought. And his name was J.R. I can't think of their last names. But he noticed how scared I was. And he

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must have had a little of God in him, or a little bit of something. But God just touched his heart. One day he told me, "Now when you get on the bus, I'm going to save you a seat right behind me." Because I guess he knew I was scared. I'm a little teeny girl. What was I? Let me see. I was 13 years old maybe? 14. I mean that was scary, and no other Black person on the bus, but me and like I say Gerri Rundy. And he said, "Sit behind me. I'm going to save this seat for you so they won't bother you."

Frank: She was still able to get A's and B's through it all; Even after returning to the White High School [during the mandatory year], and she graduated with honors.

Janice: . . . I was the only Black that graduated from Northeastern Albemarle High with honors. The only Black. I've got the program at home with me to prove it. . . . And we were the first class to get a Black speaker, Reverend Holiday, for our What's that Sunday, day? Baccalaureate. He was the first Black. Yes sir. I got all my programs. Yes, he was the first one. Because I said, "We're Black students. So we're going to have all White speakers." So we were the first class who said, "Oh, no, we want some of our Blacks" "But, Janice, do you have anybody in mind?" I said, "Yes, sir, I got somebody in mind."

Joanne: . . . You always told us that we needed to go to school, because the White children, if they didn't go to school, their parents were big farmers, and owned the sawmill or whatever. And you told us that we needed to go to school because they're going to get a job anyway. You know you used to tell us that, Dad? We had to work twice as hard as the White students for us to make it. . . . No, we can't get the jobs. So we can be better qualified that they are right now and we still can't get the job a lot of times, because of our color. And I think of how we, I remember over there at Rosenwald, when we got books. We didn't ever have brand new books. We always used the books that the White children had already used. That's right. . . .

Analysis of Discursive Innovation and Counter-Discursive Efforts of *OFF*

Revisiting Freedom of Choice as Historical-Political Discourse

The Excellence vs. Equity debate in Educational Foundations is alluded to by Noblit and Dempsey (1996) as an unequivocal example of innovative historical-political discourse. The tension of excellence vs. equity has ebbed and flowed through the U. S. to induce intellectual waves under the bridge connecting post-*Brown* schooling to the political economy, and ideology. Excellence became the mantra of many Whites during school desegregation who espoused a need to avoid the watering or "dumbing" down of schooling. Some whites feel that all their kids might be doomed if we do not begin "identifying a commitment to true virtue through great texts" (Noblit & Dempsey, 1996, p. 4). Excellence proponents used such negative examples as the bi-partisan "human relations and diversity training" as food for the cause. Such misguided trainings built largely upon stereotypes rather than breaking them down by excluding the multiple and authentic voices of non-

Whites. This gross neglect led to examples like that from some “liberal” White teachers like Gean Whitehall, who learned to believe that it was “frowned upon” to correct and appropriate Black English in high school English classes (Hughes, 2005b). By contrast, Equity proponents were tied to a mantra espousing “epistemological skepticism, free and intellectual search for a forever elusive truth, possibilities for all views to be tolerated and given an equal hearing, and final decisions left to each individual pursuing truths for truth’s sake” (Noblit & Dempsey, 1996, p. 4).

Historical data suggests that *Freedom of Choice* was a discursive innovation that grew out of *Separate But Equal* and gained momentum from the discourse of the excellence vs. equity debate. Indeed, it was espoused as a good, democratic ideal alternative for balancing excellence and equity. However, it would not lead to an ideal “free and intellectual search,” but seems to have led to both anticipated and unanticipated negative conditions and consequences (Giddens, 1979). And, upon any serious efforts at scrutiny, it does not stand erect as an all encompassing commitment to “true virtue” as the Plan induced a deceiving choice, bound to some extent by apriori inequitable conditions and structures (Giddens, 1979). Prozorov (2004) explains, a discursive “reality itself emerges only as an effect of the active projecting position” (p. 6). Therefore, one might presume that because *Freedom of Choice* was projected from the equity and excellence positions of the privileged, it is understandable how they would promote the Plan as a viable and just alternative—because it *was* for the privileged, but not for the oppressed. Following the rise of the deceiving political discursive innovation of *Freedom of Choice*, it was not unusual for a Black family to find themselves yet, again at the intersections of tradition and transition; resistance and accommodation; law and oppression (Hughes, 2006). With Gean and Barbara’s insight from white perspectives, and the deceptive *Freedom of Choice* revisited as innovative historical-political discourse, let us return to critical lessons emerging from the counter-discursive social practice demonstrated within the Foresight family case.

Counter-Discursive Family Counter-Discursive Social Practice

The Foresight family reminds us that *Freedom of Choice* reflects the direct or indirect residuals of previously explicit designs to maintain privilege and oppression. Foresight family pedagogy provides evidence to back the claims of Asa Hilliard (1994) and Derrick Bell (1980) who argue that although *Brown* outlawed certain manifestations of privilege and oppression in Education, it did not change practices associated with de facto desegregation, like the *Freedom of Choice* movement. Foresight family members appear to occupy an “informal” pedagogical space that exists as both a space for a language of critique (Giroux, 1997; Bell, 1980; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001) and as a space for a language of possibility (Giroux, 1997; Freire, 1996) in the Foresight family home. Within the Foresight family’s response to the discursive innovation *Freedom of Choice*, we find spaces for both

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languages, so to speak, in a joint effort to disarm its potentially harmful innovative bearings. In short, the Foresight family presents family counter-discursive pedagogy of struggle that works in conjunction with a counter-discursive family pedagogy of hope (Freire, 1996). Both struggle and hope pedagogies seem to induce conditions that help the family endure the arduous counter-discursive homework of problem posing, problem finding, and problem solving to prepare for the apparent inequities of “too much schooling, too little education” (Shujaa, 1994).

Lesson 1: Countering the Freedom to Choose

Foresight children did not receive meals at home, unless they went to school and did well at it. Fortunately, none of the Foresight children would go hungry by this rule. It was all part of Warren “Daddy” Foresight’s pedagogy and his fight to prevent and to counter any possible thoughts his children might have about receiving handouts from anyone during the turmoil of the *Freedom of Choice* period. It may initially seem cruel or indicative of pre-abuse and neglect at first read, but his children seemed to understand the message as he intended it. My interpretation of his message was that it was intended to counter discursive innovations including *Freedom of Choice*, because he knew his children would never be afforded such a freedom. Following her father’s teaching me the No-School-No Food lesson, Joanne Foresight alluded to the rule as one family counter discursive tool to push the children to seize every learning opportunity in school “no we sure didn’t [miss any meals]. We sure didn’t. Not any. Like he said we wanted to go to school. We loved school. And that [was] a big difference.”

Warren: . . . They had to do what White children didn’t do. . . . Um hum, yeah. A Black child had to be prepared to do something in order to make a living, and other children didn’t. I think why I was so hard on my children. . . . And our children had to work twice as hard to get what he was getting in order to compete with the White, and he wasn’t doing as much, because they just do enough to get by with a lot of other things that our children couldn’t. And it’s still like that now. A Colored person has to learn how to give their children something of substance [at home while they’re] in school. . . .

Prior to *Freedom of Choice*, many Southern Whites “*have no perception of being a single entity with non-Whites with common interests and consequently common threats*” (Prozorov, 2004, p. 12). White politicians who organized *Freedom of Choice* seemed to introduce purposefully a discourse that could falsely claim a sincere preservation of the duty and right of White and Black Americans to the “*coordination of life in the broadest sense in the whole*” (Prozorov, 2004, p. 13). Therefore, *Freedom of Choice* as a political discursive innovation, itself became a tool to advance a Eurocentric *justice for just us* school district policy. Politicians tend to publicly distance themselves from the “*‘theoretical,’ ‘academic,’ or ‘abstract’*” while “*furnishing their own political identity as depoliticised, ‘down-to-earth’ managers attuned to local concerns and aloof from grand strategic designs*”

(Prozorov, 2004, p. 13). However, no matter what politicians publicly espouse, oppressed family pedagogy lives in a condition to expose their underlying motives and counter the messengers of political discursive innovation in order to navigate a sometimes shady desegregated educational system.

Janice: But every grading period [During *Freedom of Choice*] they kept me off the honor roll. That's how they did. And that's how they do now. That's why I tell my niece and nephew. They have a plan to keep us down. But we've got to do double and triple and quadruple what they do. We can't just get by and "do good" and do better. But we've got to do the best. And that's the only way we're going to make it. . . . And I try to let them know [things are different for most whites here]. My nieces and nephews may say, "Well, they [Whites] do . . ." So what? You know. "They didn't go to college." "But their mamas or their daddies own Wachovia Bank," I remind them. . . . And it's Serby and Sons. They are looking out for their children. But [even after *Freedom of Choice*], we don't own anything, so we can't pass anything along to our children and grandchildren. We don't have anything. So one thing I would encourage any Black is that they try to get into a profession where you can go in business, and be your own boss. That's what I wish more Blacks would do.

Lesson 2: Countering Local Norms of Engagement

The Foresight family offers counter-discursive political pedagogic action to challenge the school district's pedagogic action, because their lived experiences in the past and of the moment suggest that educational rules and "*norms that have been designed without [their] participation*" (Prozorov, 2004, p. 11). Oppressed family pedagogy represents "local knowledge and experience as a means" of critically conscientious resistance to such education policies—essentially, to protest a system of mental taxation without representation (Prozorov, 2004, p. 12).

Janice: . . . It was an all White school. . . . It was like a trial and error thing. I think they were trying to see. First of all I don't think they thought the Blacks were going to go. That's number one. And we shocked them when we went. And when we stayed the whole year. Because they probably didn't think we were going. So they really didn't make any plans for us. But after they saw that we were going, they could have done some things like with the bus. I mean, my teacher was nice [superficially], but it was already planned for me to fail, or never to make the honor roll. . . . I would always make a grade, so it was almost like "They're coming, but we're not going to make it easy for them. They're going really have to struggle." . . . [Once the *Freedom of Choice* was found unconstitutional and school desegregation became mandatory, we needed representation], so I told all the Blacks, "Don't go to class until we meet with the principal, and . . . he is going to give us some of the things we ask for." And so they did it. And I think Mr. Warner was the principal then. He was scared. You got a mob of Blacks, [in his eyes] well, that's scary. But he knew he had to do something. He said, "I'll tell you what, I'll meet with 5 or 6 or something like that." So that's how we met. He wasn't going to meet with a bunch of us niggers, no. But anyway, a small group of us got together and we met. And we told him this is what we wanted. And

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that's how we got a Black advisor, Ms. Grahams. We got Black cheerleaders, bus drivers. But their aim was to have everything White, even though we were represented in the school, we were just there as a number. And we told him, no we had to have some representation.

Lesson 3: Countering Ready-Made Discursive White Space

For oppressed families, like the Foresight's, it is undeniable that the discursive structure of *Freedom of Choice* as elucidated above, "corresponds most favorable to the contemporary" middle- to wealthy-class White American educational discourses. Such correspondence confirms "the existence of a ready-made *discursive space*" (Prozorov, 2004, p. 12) for most Whites. It was up to the Foresight family to counter and overcome the obstacles of this ready-made discursive space that had been cultivating a tradition of White-only schooling since its inception.

Janice: I learned during [*Freedom of Choice*] that most of them [Whites] had been exposed to things. They had been taught by Whites. They had the better books. They had everything. And here I am coming from an all Black school. We had the least of everything, books, materials, etc. And I had to catch up. And it was a struggle, but I was just determined. Because I've always been a good student, but I was not going to let that stop me, just because it was all Whites. And I just wanted to prove to myself first that I was just as good as they were. And then I wanted to prove to them, uh huh, [now that I know your game] I can do it too... Because I knew how to compete already. It [*Freedom of Choice*] really taught me how to compete with Whites [in a space constructed by and for them].

Lesson 4. Countering "Vertical Discursive" Space

Although, the incapacity of the *Freedom of Choice* did not allow it to play a long-term role in top-down "vertical discursive" space, it did have some educative effects on the bottom-up "vertical discursive" space. (Prozorov, 2004, p. 15). Ultimately, the state's introduction of such discursive "innovations into the societal and academic discourse" (Prozorov, 2004, p. 15), rather than keeping them clandestine, allowed oppressed families to expose inherent flaws from the bottom-up. In essence, it allowed families like the Foresight family, particularly its wise elders, to construct a pedagogical lesson that prepares the family to better identify, cope, and thereby, excel when facing the disappointing reality of a discursive innovation, and perhaps its future metamorphosis.

Janice: The Cross in our yard was already burned, and so I thought in my own mind. Ooh, I don't have to go back to school. Daddy isn't going to let me go back. And then he said, "Yes, ma'am, you've got to go back." But see, that's where he saw ahead. That's why you say old people have wisdom and knowledge and understanding. You know, Daddy saw up the road this was going to help me. To be where I am today. So I can help somebody else. Other nieces and nephews and other children. And so, I went back. I had not more trouble with the (inaudible) as far as I know. But they

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thought they were going to stop us. But it didn't. . . . But my daddy's thing was, "You need to go. And it'll help you." I said, "Why?" And he said, "First of all, it will prove to you, to let you know you're just as smart as the White kids. And it will give you some experience in knowing how to deal with people other than your own people." And so they checked it and I went. And I was in the 8th grade. It was in 1966-67 school year. And I can tell you it was an experience I will never forget. And I think that's why I push my nieces and nephews so hard. . . . And I was telling a group of Black kids, one Sunday I was speaking at a church in Windsor, and I told them what I did was I found out who the smartest Whites were. And I sat with them. Because I knew they were going somewhere in life. And that's what I wanted to do. And if some of the Blacks would say, "You think you're better than me?" "Call me what you want. I'm going somewhere." And I found out who the smartest Whites were, and the Puerto Rican guy there. . . . were the smartest, about 6 Whites. I mean smart. And in class I'd get me a chair and my desk, and I'd be right in the midst of them listening. Seeing how they take notes. When I graduated, I graduated right along with them. They were number 6 and I was number 7. The only Black. Um hum. With the gold ring around the neck.

Countering "Applied Machiavellianism"

The measure of success of Oppressed family pedagogy must consider how the family navigates "in a narrow domain" between philosophy, religion, and secular practice, "focusing on neither 'thought' nor 'practice' but on the nexus of the two" (Prozorov, 2004, p. 18). Oppressed families should "indeed receive 'innovational discourse' skeptically as yet another in the series of dubious modes of knowledge" (Prozorov, 2004, p. 18). *Freedom of Choice* embodied political discursive innovation with a certain powerful "esoteric character" (Prozorov, 2004, p. 18). Prozorov (2004, p. 18) mentions an author who "half-jokingly" refers to such intentional projections of political discursive innovation, as "applied Machiavellianism," which doesn't seem so far fetched from a critical examination of the case at hand. The Foresight family like many other nuanced Black families countered the esoteric, Machiavellian characteristics of the *Freedom of Choice* with two faiths: faith in family pedagogy, and faith in God.

Janice: I think family is number one. Having that good support from the family, and my oldest sisters and brothers. Family support. I mean, knowing that they were always there. Because see, my mother did not work outside the home per se. She was here when I was here. When they were growing up, she might have worked in the fields or something, but Mama was home. So I knew what it was like to have a good home, nutritious meals, warmth and love and encouragement. And my Daddy just instilled in us that he only went as far as the 10th grade, because I think that's as far as they went back then. And he knew. He used to tell us stories about what he had to go through at the shipyards. And he was determined that his children would be 3 or 4 times better than he was. And the only way to do that was education. He stressed, "You've got to get it." It was only because of him that I went back and got my Masters. Because I had no intention, but the more you get, he would always let us know, you've got to have it. You've got to. And that's what I try to tell young Black kids now. A high

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school degree now is nothing for Blacks. It's like 5th grade graduation. And even 4 years now is almost like a high school, for us. I mean, it's so sad that even in 2002 that we are still behind.

Warren: . . . They would say the Lord's Prayer every morning. I don't know whether they allow it now or not. That's the first thing you done when you got in your classroom was say the Lord's Prayer. I suspect a lot get grown now and don't even know it. . . . They're kind of busy now, they ain't got time.

Joanne: I think prayer really helped because I can't remember in school, but we did a lot of praying. . . . You know that prayer was the foundation of things.

Janice: We were raised in the church. My parents were praying parents. And they had to be back then. I think most Black parents back then had to know something about God, because we wouldn't have been where we are. You know, in the fields, they sung hymns to keep them going. And like I say, we were raised in the church. We had to go to church, and it did not hurt me. You know, as I got older it has strengthened me and helped me to know because of God I have gotten some things in life that would not have probably if I did not have education and God. . . . And I was still preaching [the Foresight Family pedagogy and religious faith] back then. I have baby sat them for summers at a time, preaching. . . . I would always let them know that if they could be anything they wanted to, even the President of the United States, if they wanted to. And I really believe, Terrence, the one that is with the city he's going to go places. I don't know how far.

The type of critical theoretical and practical pedagogical condition that emerges from such a study of oppressed family pedagogy illustrates the home as one necessary place to counter the powerful racialization and resistance that can accompany transitions in multiethnic as well as mono-ethnic k-12 school settings. In essence, it is also a pedagogy that is critical by default to help stunt old political discursive innovations, while breaking down any newly morphed political discursive innovations before they are fully hatched and disguised as tools of empowerment that might further cripple oppressed family members and any Educational Foundations "workers" they encounter.

Discussion: Why Are These Voices Important?

Considering the Value of OFP in Ethnographic Research

Someone once alluded to the notion that the right utterance, taught and learned critically and conscientiously, and then communicated verbally and nonverbally in the right order, and at the right time can nudge a movement. Critics of the power of words, storytelling, narratives/counter-narratives, and discursive innovation/counter-discursive innovation tend not to note instances where their claim is falsified. It was words in 1976, approximately 100 pages of narratives from practitioners, not the quantitative data that ultimately changed a Kalamazoo,

Michigan school system's new accountability process so that teachers could have a more legitimate voice in their daily lives at work (Patton, 2002). It was also words that helped the Foresight family survive and succeed in life by critiquing *The Freedom of Choice* in their own pedagogical style. In the counter-discursive efforts of the Foresight family, we find evidence refuting the part of McLaren's (1995) portrayal of "pedagogy" as involving partially "the communities" in which we "choose to live" (p. 34).

The Foresight family suggests that those of us produced by oppressed families don't tend to simplistically "choose to live" in "the communities" we represent through pedagogy. Our communities are also sites of law, transition, accommodation, and resistance to the living spaces imposed upon us. OPF as a critical informant of pedagogy invites progressive insights for more sustainable internal and external criticism of our work. The critique of "pedagogy" above showcases precisely one minute critical possibility for OFP as a theoretical and practical tool in ethnographic research. The potential relationship of OFP to our work is elaborated below in Chart 1 in a problem-possibility format to address common critiques of Educational Foundations scholarship in critical pedagogy.

Oppressed Family Pedagogy affords us an additional place to employ the dialectic approach to critical teaching and learning where we arrive closer to (a) disclosing and posing a resolution to espoused vs. actual conditions signified by a particular political discursive innovation, and (b) disclosing and posing how to overcome these daily contradictions in a movement toward enhancing the possibilities for social justice within and outside of our communities. Oppressed Family Pedagogy might be enlisted as an additional resource for applying critical pedagogy as praxis, because it can open a door to generative perspectives on teaching, learning, philosophy and practice. I don't intend for readers to enlist and thereby, objectify oppressed family pedagogy, but to critique it as part of the critical pedagogical community. Without a critical purview, we are less capable of dismantling the discursive power that can become ethnocentric, materialistic, and oppressive—that which potentially allows old inequities to persist, while creating new ones. Paulo Freire (1996) also warns us of the oppressed becoming the oppressors. Freire's notion that many among the oppressed seem to dis-consciously aspire to manipulate some of the same forces and to monopolize some of the same force relations of power that oppress them implies that a critical component of oppressed family pedagogy is imperative. With this critical purview, I return, in the end, to understand better how the Foresight family did what they did with their educational histories. Albeit from a "lay" standpoint, the Foresight's implement an oppressed family pedagogy that counters the discursive innovation tools of the *Freedom of Choice*, and engages conditions for critical praxis at home in a way that can open itself for critique, while also linking, critiquing, and informing members of the Freire and Ladson-Billings critical pedagogical families and our critics.

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Chart 1
Oppressed Family Pedagogy & Critical Pedagogy: Critiques and Possibilities

<i>Critiques of Critical Pedagogy</i>	<i>Possibilities of Oppressed Family Pedagogy</i>
<p><i>Critiques of Freire:</i></p> <p>(Critique 1) Studies pose a binary argument that one is either for or against the oppressed—</p> <p>(Critique 2) Studies are not accessible due to academic “jargon” —</p> <p>(Critique 3) Studies are disguised as informal education, but pedagogy of the oppressed actually involves a curriculum, which makes it more “formal” than not—</p> <p>(Critique 4) Studies are not explicit about their agenda and hide an underlying banking model, the very same model that was actually critiqued thoroughly by Freire himself (1970)—</p>	<p>(Response 1) OFP pushes us to see the oppressed as reflections of our own liberation. Australian aboriginal artist, Lilla Watson, at the 1985 UN Decade for Women Conference in Nairobi elaborates: “If you have come to help me, I don’t need your help. But if you have come because your liberation is tied to mine, come let us work together” (Leonen, 2004, p. 41).</p> <p>(Response 2) OFP is presented primarily in participants’ own terms and from the plain language of historical documents related to education and schooling.</p> <p>(Response 3) OFP acknowledges that pedagogy at home can have a sort of curriculum or planned lessons that are transferable and translated by generations of family members and can be taught to educators.</p> <p>(Response 4) OFP is not meant to be used as a banking model, but as an example of the potential learning that can surface from what Freire calls mining or digging knowledge out at school that oppressed families teach and learn at home to cope with any constraints of oppressive education; including family pedagogy that connects religious faith to grounds for rational-ethical thoughts, actions, and hope.</p>
<p><i>Critiques of Ladson-Billings:</i></p> <p>(Critique 5) Studies lack direct suggestions for the white teachers to gain accessibility to enough experiences to validate oppressed groups beyond the Black community—</p> <p>(Critique 6) At the grade-school level, studies represent political discourse from the teacher’s</p>	<p>(Response 5) OFP considers oppression an epidemic of humanity and purposefully extends oppressed family pedagogy to include families penalized locally by privileges of class, gender, sexuality, ability, religion, and whiteness.</p> <p>(Response 6) OFP attends to oppressed family needs for legitimate authority (Weber, 1918),</p>

Chart 1
Oppressed Family Pedagogy & Critical Pedagogy: Critiques and Possibilities
(continued)

<p>interpretations based on meetings, observations, and interviews, rather than from the oppressed family as legitimate authority “teaching” their interpretation of political discourse and their counter-discursive efforts, thereby checking the potential for too much being lost in cross-cultural translation—</p> <p>(Critique 7) At the post-secondary level, studies limit examples of Black family members acting as legitimate authorities in educating educators—</p> <p>(Critique 8) How do we balance high stakes accountability testing with liberalizing, anti-oppressive education efforts like culturally relevant pedagogy—</p>	<p>and regards oppressed family members as legitimate school decision-makers (Epstein, 2006; and Comer et al., 1996), whether the school acknowledges it or not; Hence, teachers and oppressed family members might work together best in planning and performing dyads (Hughes, 2005a) or triads to create necessary inservice lessons/units for their peers regarding pertinent pedagogical issues at home and school. In this way, OFP could enable more meaningful cross-cultural, learning opportunities, and collaboration/translation (Glazier, 2004).</p> <p>(Response 7) OFP indicates that in the post-<i>Brown era</i>, we must find appropriate spaces for oppressed families to do pedagogic work that enhances culturally relevant pedagogy. Perhaps a ripe place for such a partnership could involve oppressed family members intellectually as co-equal instructors (voluntary or paid), in university/college pre-requisite and core teacher education courses like the archetypal “School and Society” course taught throughout the U.S. Local Education alumni represent one important pool of individuals from oppressed families that could be tapped for this purpose.</p> <p>(Response 8) OFP might be used to teach preservice- and graduate-level teachers how to create liberalizing, and anti-oppressive lesson/unit plans that also move children toward reading proficiency by high stakes accountability test standards (Hughes 2005a). Again, local Education alumni represent a promising population for this type of necessary university engagement with current grade school practitioners.</p>
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Conclusion

Indeed, it seems that by necessity, oppressed families live in a “critical condition” of sorts. It is a condition evolving from a history of not being able to trust education policy at face value, partially because so oftentimes, there is no critical mass of legitimate authorities to represent, authenticate, or promote oppressed group challenges and triumphs. It is a condition where the philosopher vs. practitioner dichotomy converges as oppressed families seek to counter, prevent, survive, and/or succeed in the face of educational oppression—an oppression that unfortunately includes being overly researched by non-native Educational Foundations researcher-practitioners without ample reciprocity. Arguably, oppressed peoples are the most studied people in Educational Foundations throughout the world. Perhaps, the more we take the traditional “human subjects” route to hearing oppressed voices as “the needy,” the more difficult it will become to take the route less traveled by, where we hear oppressed voices as legitimate authorities (including authorship) to inform us of yet unseen pedagogical possibilities.

Future endeavors with Oppressed Family Pedagogy might also seek to illuminate any unintended negative consequences (Giddens, 1979) of counter-discursive narratives. Later work with OFP could extend to address how certain counter-discursive efforts might negatively influence oppressed family health. For example, as HIV-AIDS continues to plague oppressed families, OFP could unveil counter narratives at home that challenge discursive innovations like “safe sex.” During my time working with the pilot project that preceded the ethnographic data presented here, I learned that one oppressed family taught and learned that Gonorrhea could be detected by ear wax and immediate intervention with ice-cold water could deter HIV. Unveiling such pedagogy at home could teach us something about how to improve the discursive efforts of public health education and actually save lives. The Foresight family provided strong evidence for the potential to engage more informed and fulfilling choices and thereby increasing the liberalizing potential of the education of oppressed families and our counterparts. Although Chart 1 is intended to highlight the possibilities of OFP, per se, the ultimate goal is for scholars to center OFP, “validate it, and judge it by its own standards without need of comparison or need to adopt the” OFP framework as one’s own (Hill-Collins, 1990, p. 237). OFP doesn’t intend to de-center one form of oppression in order to center another. Ultimately, Oppressed Family Pedagogy can be and should be applied to “constantly, appropriately, pivot the center” (Hill-Collins, 1990, p. 237).

Note

¹ The conceptualization of *Oppressed Family Pedagogy* was first introduced by the author of this article in the form of a book chapter in his edited volume titled, *What We Still Don’t Know About Teaching Race*. Portions of that book chapter were applied to this article with permission from Patricia Schultz of Edwin Mellen Press.

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