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# Untold Civil Rights Stories: Asian Americans Speak Out for Justice

Edited by Stewart Kwoh & Russell C. Leong

A Resource Book for Students, Teachers & Communities

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*At the end of the Pin@y Educational Partnerships' (PEP) community show, over a hundred and fifty of us squeezed together, barely fitting on the stage. From those as young as five year olds all the way to doctoral students, we posed for a picture to celebrate a year's worth of teaching, learning, as well as the growth of our barangay<sup>1</sup>, our community and our family. The cameras snapped and flashed as the sea of brown bodies intermixed with smiles and hard stares, spirit fingers and fists rising; with arms around one another, the feeling of camaraderie filled the air. Yet these photos are only snapshots of the powerful connections made between the elementary school, middle school, high school, community college and university students, teachers, professors, and community members. The pictures can barely capture all the struggles and sacrifices—direct and indirect, historical and current—that were made for us to even be allowed to take center stage, let alone use the stage as means to express a critical and collective voice. As the brightness of the flashblubs began to fade, our ending ritual began. A voice rang out with "Isang Bagsak"<sup>2</sup> and everyone stomped and a clapped in one unified sound to honor the past. Another voice yelled "Dalawang Bagsak" and the crowd clapped twice to represent the present. And finally another person roared "Tatlong Bagsak" and the room witnessed three synchronized claps to show their hopes for the future.*

Practitioner's Essay

# Pin@y Educational Partnerships

## A Counter-Pipeline to Create Critical Educators

Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales,  
Roderick Daus-Magbual,  
and Arlene Daus-Magbual

### Abstract

This practitioners' essay is about the programmatic and pedagogical development of Pin@y Educational Partnerships (PEP), a collaborative teacher pipeline that spans kindergarten to the doctoral level. As a "counter-pipeline," PEP has been able to "grow our own" critical educators and provide a more critical and socially engaged education for all of its students. Since the fall of 2001, PEP has grown to provide services at five public schools with over forty teacher apprentices. This essay aims to provide PEP's story as a resource for academics and practitioners in the hopes that more partnerships between the university, schools, and the community can be built to address the inequities and gaps that are prevalent in education, especially in the experiences of youth of color.

### Introduction

This collaborative essay, written from the perspective of practitioners, will examine PEP's creation of counter-pipeline that responds to the lack of Filipina/o American educators in public schools, colleges, and universities and the minimal inclusion of Filipina/o American representation in the K-12 curriculum. PEP is a spatial and curricular intervention that does what most formal educational settings have not been able to do for Filipina/o Americans; PEP has been able to "grow our own" critical educators through the teaching and learning of our own narratives. In this essay, we will describe two main components of PEP's "counter-pipeline": one, a teacher apprenticeship built through "barangay pedagogy"<sup>3</sup> and two, the development of a critical Filipina/o American studies curriculum.

PEP is a service learning program that has created a “partnership triangle” between the university, public schools, and the community to develop this counter-pipeline that produces critical educators and curriculum at all levels of education and in the community. PEP’s partnership triangle includes: San Francisco State University’s (SFSU) Asian American Studies (AAS) Department, San Francisco public schools, the Filipino Community Center (FCC), and the Filipino American Development Foundation (FADF). Uniquely, our counter-pipeline implements a transformative decolonizing curriculum and pedagogy, incorporating all grade levels including primary, middle, secondary, and post-secondary students. As volunteer teachers of the program, graduate and undergraduate SFSU students, most of whom want to pursue careers in education or community service, receive a unique opportunity to teach critical Filipina/o American studies. They gain skills in the practice of critical pedagogy, curriculum development, lesson planning, and teaching.

Using an ethnographic case study approach that draws upon decolonizing methodologies and critical hermeneutics,<sup>4</sup> we collected stories through participant observation, in-depth interviews, focus groups, and weekly reflection journal entries written by the PEP teachers over the past nine years. We will provide an insider’s look at the following:

1. The *context* in which the counter-pipeline is conceived;
2. The *history* of the PEP partnerships with the university, schools, and community;
3. Details describing PEP’s unique teacher *pipeline* through barangay pedagogy;
4. The *impact* that PEP has on the teacher apprentices through the development of a critical Filipina/o American studies curriculum and pedagogy.

We conclude by providing the possibilities for the future of PEP and suggestions for more communities to establish partnerships between the university, schools, and community to provide a more critical and socially engaged education for all students.

Context: The Need for Critical Filipina/o Teachers and Curriculum Committed to Social Justice

According to recent statistics from the National Center for Education Information and National Educators Association, stu-

dents of color account for almost half of the students in the nation's K-12 public schools. In contrast, teachers of color only comprise 15 percent of public school faculty (NEA, 2005; NCES, 2006). The demographic profile of today's teachers has changed little, even after the Civil Rights movement. The average teacher is a white, married female, approximately 43 years old, with a master's degree (NEA, 2005). To remedy the glaring racial disparity between students and teachers who look like them, more people of color are needed to become educators. But this disparity only characterizes the current need to provide students with teachers who mirror their racial background. The major benefit that teachers of color provide is that they are more likely to understand the backgrounds, attitudes, and experiences of marginalized students. Teachers of color also bring cultural and historical experiences that can inform majority teachers on effective ways of engaging and communicating with students of color (Dilworth, 1990).

PEP emerged because of the lack of critical Filipina/o American teachers and subject matter represented in the curriculum. According to the Department of Education, the schools where PEP is located have some of the largest Filipina/o student populations in San Francisco, but with an alarmingly low percentage of Filipina/o teachers:

Longfellow Elementary: 30.6 percent (173 students) to 13.3 percent (5 teachers)

James Denman Middle School: 22.6 percent (131 students) to 3 percent (1 teacher)

Balboa High School: 16.2 percent (182 students) to 8.1 percent (5 teachers)

Burton High School: 16.4 percent (153 students) to 5.6 percent (3 teachers)

Of the total student body of 30,014 students at SFSU, Filipinas/os comprise 9.5 percent of the student body, one of the highest number of Filipinas/os at any public university in the United States, yet they only comprise about 1.5 percent of the 867 tenured and tenure-track faculty members.

The statistical disparity between the growing number Filipina/o students and the small number of Filipina/o teachers/professors is only the surface of the problem. The following quotation

highlights the importance of having a teacher population that reflects the growing student diversity in our schools:

It is [also] essential that students of color experience a variety of teachers of color during the course of their schooling. Bicultural educators who are socially conscious bring a wealth of knowledge and experience that often resonates with the realities that students of color experience in their own lives (Darder, 1997, 226).

In addition to hiring teachers of color who reflect the racial and cultural background of their students, there is a need to recruit and retain “bicultural educators who are socially conscious” (Darder, 1997). This distinction challenges teachers of color to go beyond epidermal representation. Similarly, Camangian delivered a compelling keynote speech at the educational town hall meeting, “Our Education, Our People.” In front of youth and community members in San Francisco, he called for a change in our views about how people of color should be reflected in our education. He asked the youth of color to demand more than just teachers and curriculum that reflected their “image” but also an education that represents their “interests” (Camangian, 2009).<sup>5</sup> It is not enough for Latino students to have a Latino teacher or Filipina/o students to have a teacher that is Filipina/o.

There is a need to have teachers of color who are concerned about social justice and care deeply about the livelihood of their students, their families, and their communities:

If students are told that their expectations are unrealistic, that education is white or that teaching is a profession for ‘white folks,’ why would they [people of color] stay engaged in school long enough to graduate from high school, to go on to college, to get that teaching certificate? (Gordon, 2005, 35)

To address the lack of representation of students of color in credential programs and in urban schooling, Gordon (2005) describes how schooling dissuades them from entering the field of education. In discussions of more than 200 teachers of color throughout America, Gordon documents the experiences of Latino, Native American, African American, and Asian American educators. Gordon concludes that the low status of teaching due to economic reasons is central to

the reason that families may not encourage their children to pursue teaching. Negative school experiences, dismal academic/emotional preparation/encouragement, limited support in college, discrimination based on accent, and the lack of centering educational discourse based on race and racism are additional issues that also prevent people of color from entering the fields of education. Gordon posits that the larger issues of racism, at institutional or personal levels, create internalized trauma so that people of color do not feel welcome or accepted in formal educational settings. In most cases, teachers of color reported that they do not find a supportive space in education that values their experiences (Nieto, 2000; Gordon, 2005; Yosso, 2005; Ramanathan, 2006).

PEP responds to these inequities with the recruitment, training, and support of potential “critical” Filipina/o American educators. A critical Filipina/o American educator goes beyond multicultural models that teach only a potpourri of the dates, facts, foods, and heroes in Filipina/o history and culture. In PEP, the purpose of teaching critical Filipina/o American Studies is to provide youth with curriculum that provides them with the critical lens and skills to evaluate both the literature and their lived reality to improve their lives and their communities.

#### History: The Development of Pin@y Educational Partnerships

PEP was born out of the needs of Filipina/o American teachers and students in the Excelsior neighborhood of San Francisco. Professor Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales started PEP in 2001 as a lunch-time youth mentorship program in which 11 undergraduate and graduate student mentors from SFSU worked with 25 students at Balboa High School. Since Tintiangco-Cubales’s interdisciplinary courses on community development and Filipina/o American Literature at San Francisco State University already had an emphasis of community service learning, she was able to recruit her students to volunteer in PEP. PEP initially placed particular emphases on addressing the issues and divisions in our community and the lack of Filipina/o American content in the curriculum. The results of a needs assessment showed tension between Filipina/o American and Filipina/o immigrant students. The students told us that there was a clear need to address this conflict within our community, along with other issues that were also present, including the growing rates of high school dropouts, unplanned pregnan-



cies, suicide attempts, increasing rates of HIV / AIDS, and a lack of Filipina/o American teachers and professors nationwide.

Filipina/o students, who were attending the PEP lunchtime program, became aware of the multitude of problems facing their community, and expressed a dissatisfaction with the lack of Filipina/o content and curriculum in their classes. Several students asked us to turn our lunchtime program into a regular class during the school day. The mentors then turned to learning how to teach; they began to study critical pedagogy and created lesson plans for a Filipina/o American experience course. With Tintiangco-Cubales, PEP's teachers developed a year-long curriculum that was approved by the administration at Balboa High School and students could take the course for elective credit.

PEP expanded quickly after the success of the course at Balboa High School and PEP's reputation grew within the larger Filipina/o American community, especially in the Excelsior neighborhood located in the southeastern portion of San Francisco that borders Daly City, where most Filipinas/os in the city call home. Tintiangco-Cubales, in collaboration with the PEP teachers, worked to expand the program throughout the neighborhood's schools through a number of strategies. In many instances, PEP was approached by administrators who were interested in bringing the unique program to their schools. In some cases, PEP coordinators and teachers approached administrators, particularly assistant principals in charge of curriculum. PEP teachers and coordinators met with counselors at each of the schools and service providers at the wellness and health clinics at local public schools to identify and address the social, personal, and academic needs of Filipina/o and Filipina/o American students. Key to the program's expansion were a handful of Filipina/o American teachers at local K-12 schools and at City College of San Francisco who gave time, resources and assistance to the growth of PEP. Most important to the growth of the program was a large population of smart, capable undergraduates and graduate students SFSU who were passionate about teaching and had plans for careers in education, and were willing to teach Filipina/o American studies to local K-12 and college students on a volunteer basis.

In 2005, PEP began a lunchtime program at Philip and Sala Burton High School, and began to reach elementary school students at an afterschool program at Longfellow Elementary. In 2007, PEP developed a concurrent enrollment course at City Col-

lege of San Francisco, in which college students and high school students could take conversational Pilipino/Tagalog and Filipina/o American studies in one course. The same year, PEP began to offer a Filipina/o American experience course at Burton to replace the lunchtime program. In the fall of 2008, PEP began a lunchtime program at Denman Middle School.<sup>6</sup>

As the program expanded, so did the infrastructure and capacity of the organization. The many lesson plans developed by PEP teachers at the various PEP sites since its beginnings at Balboa High became the basis for the two-volume PEP book, entitled: *Pin@y Educational Partnerships: A Filipina/o American Studies Sourcebook Series*, published by Phoenix Publishing International in 2007 (Volume 1) and 2009 (Volume II). In 2006, the growth of the PEP program was facilitated by the financial sponsorship of the Filipino American Development Foundation and community partnerships with the Filipino Community Center. A \$25,000 seed grant from the San Francisco Mayor's Office of Community Development (MOCD) allowed for the hiring of two full-time Associate Directors, Arlene Daus-Magbual and Roderick Daus-Magbual, who would work alongside Director Tintiangco-Cubales. PEP was transformed and a new leadership *barangay* was developed that included the Director, Associate Directors, and two coordinators from each school site.

All of the schools served by PEP are in San Francisco and the majority of the students served through PEP live in the working-class Excelsior neighborhood. PEP has sought to serve Filipina/o American students who were born in the United States as well as those who were born in the Philippines. The majority of students in PEP were born in the Philippines, but some came to the United States when they were young. The split between Filipina/o American and Filipina/o immigrant students is not a new phenomena. It is a problem that plagues the community regardless of region and generation. This tension has been present in the broader Filipina/o American community and has often been a source of division and conflict. PEP is a space where the divisions can be addressed through dialogue about the issues and collaborative projects that encourage Philippines-born and American-born students to work together. PEP curriculum has been designed to be inclusive of and engaged with both immigrant and American-born Filipinas/os.

PEP has grown and evolved from a modest mentorship project into a educational pipeline for the creation of critical educators and

a space for the development of critical Filipina/o American curriculum and research. PEP serves the low-income youth and students of San Francisco by providing them opportunities to connect the worlds of history, culture, and art through direct community engagement and action. The mission of PEP's partnership triangle is to:

1. Address the limited services for Filipinas/os in San Francisco;
2. Address the disproportionate absence of Filipina/o educators, leaders, role models, and mentors in San Francisco;
3. Provide creative and critical curriculum on Filipina/o Americans and ethnic studies in schools, colleges, and community settings;
4. Engage youth and students who are underperforming their potential;
5. Nurture creativity, self-determination, and community involvement with youth and students;
6. Develop a community of socially-engaged educators, artists, scholars, and service providers.

### PEP as a Counter-Pipeline: Using Barangay Pedagogy to Create Critical Educators

PEP has been able to create a spatial and curricular intervention that uses critical pedagogy as its theoretical framework. Critical pedagogy is a fundamental tool to understand the moral, historical, cultural, and political responsibility of education to create a just society. Thus, through this approach, teachers understand education as praxis for freedom and humanization (Freire, 2000). Drawing from the foundations of critical pedagogy, PEP has built what we call "barangay pedagogy." This section will first describe the the birth of barangay pedagogy and illustrate how it is infused within the PEP pipeline and the impact that it has on the PEP teaching apprenticeship and curricular development.

#### **Barangay Pedagogy**

In Tagalog (a Pilipino language), *barangays* refer to communities and small political units; the word is derived from *balangay*, the name for the sailboats that originally brought Malay settlers to the Philippines prior to Spanish colonialism. In some ways, the philosophical statement that "we're all in the same boat" as a community

parallels with “Filipinas/os are all on the same balangay.” Hence, the people in a barangay are in the struggle together, for better or for worse. Some Filipinas/os believe that one’s barangay is central to one’s identity and livelihood. Through the use of the barangay model as an organizing and teaching tool, Tintiangco-Cubales (2007) has developed “barangay pedagogy”—the creation of barangays/communities amongst teacher apprentices, students, practicing educators, and community organizers—as a central method in the training and practice of transformative teachers, service providers, organizers, and leaders. Barangay pedagogy provides teachers with a sense of what Lawsin (1998) describes as “*bayanihan spirit*,” a strong feeling of belonging to a community.

The process of developing barangay pedagogy is directly related to decolonization, which Strobel (2001) describes as “the process of learning to love oneself” through the suturing of one’s dismembered self:

The healing process is simultaneously an individual and communal effort. What is summoned from the depths of one’s soul comes from the wounded collective memory of colonized peoples, but so does the healing power that comes from woundedness. The memories must be shared with others. It is the telling that makes them available to the consciousness for further critical reflection (Strobel, 2001, 51).

Teaching has been a tool of colonialism throughout Philippine history and around the world. For the purposes of colonialism, the teacher’s individualistic role is to be the sole impartor of knowledge and values in the classroom. Knowledge and values are often relegated to district adopted texts and state standards. Consequently, the only narrative that is portrayed is that of the victors in wars, and, in most cases, the stories of the masses are deemed insignificant. This colonial education teaches more than dates and facts; it teaches students who are not reflected in the curricula that they are also insignificant. A PEP Elementary Teacher expressed:

It’s amazing the information our students learn and at such a young age and they absorb it and they get it and they know it and it totally helps them and its just you know, I know everyone says it, but I wish I had this when I was in elementary school you know?. To...help...me realize what it means to be Filipino American because I mean our students do know and

they encounter what it means to be Filipino, but what do they really know? They know their family and stuff like that, but the history aspect and things like that, they're like 'Wow that really happened? And that's why mom is a nurse...' It totally begins to sink in for all of them and for them to have a root in something because you really don't get anything about being Filipino in any history book.

Paving a path toward decolonization, ethnic studies courses, like those provided by PEP, have attempted to remedy this educational injustice through the presentation of counter-hegemonic narratives.

Decolonization aims to be a libratory praxis of unlearning a colonial mentality, which is described by Halagao (2004) as a denigration of self and aspiration to be like the colonizer. Teachers, regardless of the color of their skin or their cultural heritage, are often trained to operate like colonizers. In credential programs, teachers are taught how to teach as individuals who have knowledge that they will then impart to their students, rather than learning to draw upon students' experiences and histories to engage them in learning. Reflecting upon her teaching education program compared to PEP teacher training, a PEP teacher conveyed:

[In] teaching you really need a lot of support...And if you don't have that support you burn out, I think for a period of time I didn't want to be a teacher anymore it was so tiring, but then I had good folks around me... And I think that's what is cool about PEP... is that PEP doesn't really stay the same and I think that's what is some of the problems of the credential programs, that no matter what, it stays the same, their curriculum stays the same...PEP is critical of itself...it transforms itself which I think always needs to happen.

PEP provides a unique decolonized model for teacher training. This decolonization process is both individual and communal (Strobel, 2001). PEP's barangay structure allows for individual teachers to engage in a process of decolonization with a community of similarly critical teachers. Barangay pedagogy provides a means for decolonizing teacher education and training by:

1. Providing a barangay structure that challenges individualistic models of teacher internships through the creation of teacher apprentice communities;

2. Showing how an extended barangay/network of effective educators, who participate in the training, support, and maintenance of teacher education can reproduce more effective educators;
3. Developing curricula that engages community-based pedagogical praxis that marries critical content and teaching method.

### **PEP Pipeline**

PEP's educational pipeline implements barangay pedagogy at all levels of education; in essence, all participants regardless of age or educational level are valued as teachers. At the university, community college, high school, middle school, and elementary school levels, PEP promotes a curriculum centered on the building of community, creativity, and cultural power in the hopes that youth and students learn to "read" their global world and find ways to "write" (create) positive change in their local communities and personal families.

PEP's teaching pipeline connects San Francisco State University upper-division undergraduates and graduate students who have an interest in pursuing careers in the field of education, with community college, high school, middle school, and elementary school students who are primarily from low-income backgrounds. The PEP Program engages students who are underperforming by providing them the support and opportunities necessary to achieve their goals, in particular creating a space where they feel like they belong. Rather than treating underperforming students are treated as "failures," PEP employs what hooks articulates as a "radical pedagogy [that] must insist that everyone's presence is acknowledged" (hooks, 2003, 8).

The PEP classroom serves as a critical counterspace that validates the identities of the students where they can critically explore and deconstruct oppression to create possibilities for hope and social justice. This sense of belonging goes beyond making sure that the students feel like they belong; it also makes possible the inclusion of the PEP teachers. A former PEP high school teacher articulates:

[PEP] is a bonding experience... The reason why I would be coming back [to teach] is because there is so many questions out there and about me that needs to be answered... I feel like every year I'm gaining a new level... You start realizing that everyone is growing... What you get to learn here, you can apply it

anywere... It gives [students and teachers] a sense to completely define themselves because they know they're not done.

This sense of belonging is rooted in barangay pedagogy and also PEP's curriculum. Counter to many traditional classrooms, PEP implements an engaging and critical cultural curriculum that focuses on Filipina/o American studies, which includes introducing the students to Filipina/o history, literature, visual and performing arts, and contemporary issues and movements. This inclusion of the Filipina/o American voice or counternarrative in the curriculum draws students in because they have often felt neglected in their mainstream classrooms. Building on their initial interest in the topics that we present, PEP also encourages students to connect what they are learning in our classroom to their families and communities. PEP's social justice curriculum also calls for students to go beyond being passive recipients of information, but rather to uncover historical, social, and contemporary problems in our community and develop ways to address them in their everyday lives. In one of his weekly journals, a PEP teacher wrote about how one of his students said, "PEP helped me realize that Filipinos have been really oppressed, but instead of accepting it, we find ways to fight back."

Building on the curriculum, PEP also provides a critical leadership, self-determination, and active research training. Along with our programmatic goals to teach and serve youth, PEP is a space where teachers, students, community members, and scholars can collaborate to develop and examine critical Filipina/o American studies, curriculum, and research. PEP's overall vision is to produce critical educators who also see themselves as artists, scholars, service providers, and community members who are engaged in improving the conditions of their lives, their families, and their communities.

The following describes PEP's praxis at each level of education and their intersections:

**University:** PEP currently serves over forty university students and recent graduates annually who are interested in pursuing lives as educators. Although PEP aims to produce future teachers who are vested in public school classrooms, PEP also views the category of educator as also including future professors, scholars, artists, service providers, and community members who participate in critically educating their communities. PEP provides the university students—the "PEP teachers"—an intensive training on interactive

and creative instruction and lesson plan development by professors, social justice educators, and community teachers in the summer and weekly throughout the school year. PEP teachers co-teach at the local school sites in barangays (teams) of two to four. The teachers work together to construct lesson plans that are structured to specifically develop community collaboration, cultural production, and creative expression amongst both the teachers and students.

PEP has also served as a springboard for existing teachers to elevate their personal, educational, and professional aspirations towards becoming educators and leaders in their respective communities across the nation. A former PEP elementary level teacher stated:

I can sit here and say I want to be a teacher and like why though? PEP helps me remind me its more than... just a pay-check... PEP has helped me realize what my goals in life are and it helps me direct where to go and its been like companionship... its been really transformative, it has helped me become more prepared for the future.

The PEP teacher training is an intensive process, which includes learning critical pedagogy, the PEP teacher training is an intensive process, which includes: learning critical pedagogy; Filipina/o and Filipina/o American history; issues of identity and oppression; imperialism, decolonization, teaching simulations, team building, and learning to develop lesson plans through PEP's Critical Creative Plan (CCP). The CCP entails three components to a lesson plan:

1. *Cultural energizer*, to begin the class through an activity that engages the student kinesthetically, based on the topic of the lesson plan;
2. *Community collaboration*, which involves an interactive lecture that engages students to participate through critical dialogue and/or cultural production;
3. *Conclusive dialogue*, revisiting the problem or topic of the lesson plan.

The training begins with an introductory two-week training program entitled *Tibak*, in which teachers connect Filipina/o American studies to activism; Filipino high school teacher Arnelson Concordia developed the *Tibak* curriculum, derived from term activist in Tagalog, in order to educate people on community organizing.



The fall and spring retreats are three-day training and planning sessions that focus on curriculum and lesson plan development, community building, and event planning. PEP teacher training is also integrated throughout the year through weekly meetings and monthly educational dialogues called PEP'EDs.

**Community College:** PEP teaches semester-long courses in partnership with the Philippine Studies program at City College of San Francisco (CCSF). The students in the course are comprised of community college students, who are oftentimes interested in transferring to four year universities, along with concurrently enrolled high school students. The course is taught by a team of instructors who are usually graduate or recently graduated master's students. The community college course has two sections: Filipino language (taught by a City College instructor) and Filipina/o American history and community issues (taught by the PEP teachers).

The lesson plans often have the students developing creative projects to engage historical problems and contemporary issues in a manner that interests students. Some examples of the lesson plan activities include having the students create theatrical representations of historical events, the utilization of dance to explore movement as an expression of youth struggles, and poetry and spoken word as a way to debate the social issues that face marginalized communities.

**High School:** One of the main objectives for the PEP Program is to reach out to the students who are academically underperforming by providing them the support to plan and achieve positive goals for themselves. Filipinas/os in San Francisco have high dropout rates, exposure to violence, unplanned pregnancies, and suicide (Wolf, 2002; Tintiangco-Cubales, 2009; Daus-Magbual & Molina, 2009). PEP responds to these social challenges by giving youth an opportunity to engage themselves in positive activities. PEP teachers from the university teach at two high schools in San Francisco in the Excelsior neighborhood: Balboa High School and Philip and Sala Burton High School. A daily elective course is taught at both school sites for which the students receive graded credit that can be used toward graduation.

The students are put into barangay groups to foster collaborative learning and teaching in the classroom. The year-long course is

divided into two semesters. The first semester focuses on the teaching of Philippine and Filipina/o American history and connecting it to the immigration experiences of the families of the students. The second semester builds on the history and takes a specific look at the ways in which Filipina/o Americans create culture through social movements, including artistic and literary production. Both semesters culminate in creative projects. The first semester usually ends with a visual/oral history project or audio CD of poetry or spoken word of original student work. The second semester often has several projects including the High School Teaching Project, where the high school students teach what they learned in the PEP class to middle school and elementary school students. This project highlights the students' ability to teach what they have been taught and also do it in a way that is creative and interactive.

The PEP teachers train the high school students as they have been trained in critical pedagogy, engaging instruction, and lesson plan development. In addition to the culmination projects described above, the high school students also participate in a Filipina/o Community Issues (FCI) plan of action project that requires them to choose a challenging issue in their community, study the background of the issue, design the collection of current information and data, and then create a plan to develop an artistic response to the original issue. At the end of the year, all the students and teachers in PEP participate in a community show/performance where they use creative elements like theatre, music, dance, song, poetry, and visual art to show their families, friends, peers, and teachers what they learned from PEP and how they plan on making change in their lives and in their communities. One of the goals of PEP is to move students through our pipeline by encouraging them to go on to college and in some cases become teachers in PEP.

**Middle School:** PEP's middle school relationship began with the High School Teaching Project. At Denman Middle School, where Filipinas/o students make up about 23 percent of the population, there is currently only one Filipina/o teacher. Without teachers, administrators, or role models from their cultural background, these students are at a critical age where they are searching for an identity and a place of belonging. PEP provides an engaging and fun lunchtime program, for middle school students where they learn more about their cultural heritage and history through art

and educational dialogues. To provide more support to the middle school students, PEP has also partnered with a Denman teacher to expand their services by teaching one class a week on Filipina/o American history in a social science class.

**Elementary School:** To complete the pipeline, PEP has an after-school elementary school program that spans kindergarten to the fifth grade. The students are divided into three courses according to their grade level: (1) kindergarten, (2) first and second graders, and (3) third, fourth, and fifth graders. The kindergarten class learns about the Philippines beginning with pre-colonial culture and history; the first and second grade class covers Filipina/o American culture and history; the third, fourth, and fifth grade class learns about Filipina/o American social movements. All the students learn Filipina/o American culture and history while having fun.

The PEP afterschool program at Longfellow Elementary School includes artistic activities that are about visual and performance production. PEP teacher teams create accessible and age-appropriate lesson plans about complex topics in Filipina/o American history, such as colonialism or the Philippine American War. These younger students actually digest challenging concepts and are unafraid to come up with amazing solutions to the issues facing their communities.

Students also learn some Filipino language reading and writing skills in addition to presentation strategies. The PEP elementary school program has come up with a several projects including a fashion show, where students create traditional and indigenous clothing with wax paper and found materials. The elementary school teachers are usually from performing arts backgrounds and their afterschool lessons are often mini-shows with acting, singing, music, and dancing infused in many of the activities.

**Community:** PEP has partnerships for training and programming with a wide array of non-profit and community based organizations, including the Filipino Community Center, United Playaz, Asian American Recovery Services, League of Filipino Students, Japanese Community Youth Council, Babae, Asian Women's Shelter, Manilatown Heritage Foundation, Asian American Communities for Education, Upward Bound, Asian Youth Prevention Services, Active Leadership to Advance the Youth, and student organizations from each site. These organizations also participate in PEP through-

out the year by coming into our classes to conduct workshops and trainings and provide services for our teachers and students.

### **Impact on PEP Teachers**

PEP teachers are deeply committed to the organization and the work, because they believe that they are able to materialize the theories of critical pedagogy in a PEP counterspace. Yosso (2005) describes counterspace as an academic and social space that fosters and validates the identities and learning of students of color within a hostile racial campus climate. The PEP classroom serves as a possible counterspace in challenging traditional forms of pedagogy, curriculum, and student expectations. A PEP high school teacher professed:

We really build off [of] each other and we're really flexible about our space... For me personally, I learned about myself and how to become a better leader and I don't have to be the one that always has to do all the work, I can delegate and depend on other people... We're always reflecting while we eat, at our meetings, when we're talking on AIM and we're always talking about Burton and how we can improve as teachers... I think we really try to nurture each other in our personal growth, our student's growth, and our personal lives. I mean we're constantly teaching our lives and experiences.

Through barangay pedagogy, the counterspace that is created in PEP does challenge racism in educational settings, but it also creates a nurturing community/familial space where learning and reflection are encouraged outside of the classroom.

The teachers work solely on a volunteer basis, but they understand that their experience working in their community, teaching and learning from other Filipina/o and Filipina/o American students has more than a monetary value. A PEP elementary and middle school teacher emotionally described her experience:

I have learned skills such as lesson planning collaboratively with other teachers, building confidence in the classroom, and becoming knowledgeable of political issues, social justice, and critical pedagogy that we are trained on as teachers of PEP. Because of my involvement, teaching to me has become about building relationships with the students and instilling the love of learning in their lives to become engaged and driven to want more, to learn about their stories where they came from.

The teacher apprenticeship involves time, commitment, and teamwork. As volunteers, PEP Teachers and Coordinators sacrifice their personal time and efforts to their family, work, and academic responsibilities. Their commitments as PEP teachers go beyond the classroom, as they are student leaders, community organizers, and artists. Some PEP Teachers, as graduate students, extend their academic scholarship through additional research, writing, and participation at various conferences throughout the nation. This delicate balancing act characterizes the type of passion, purpose, and patience that PEP teachers take with them when they leave the PEP space.

Through barangay pedagogy, PEP provides both graduate and undergraduate students with a cultural support group that addresses their needs as teachers. One of the goals of PEP is to create and sustain community within and beyond the classroom. This is critical for teachers to feel a sense of inclusion by validating their experiences, as well as their students'. Along with their teaching barangays, the college students belong to a larger barangay consisting of about forty teacher apprentices and a broad network of educators. As for the praxis of barangay pedagogy, teachers are responsible for collaborating with partnering teachers to create curricula, syllabi, units, and lesson plans that are engaging, culturally affirming, and political. They are then able to understand the comprehensive process of implementing critical pedagogy by developing a course, providing instruction, and dealing with urban youth of color first-hand.

In PEP's teaching barangays, each teacher rotates weekly as the lead teacher, while the other team members contribute to the lesson plan through energizers, lectures, and classroom management. In traditional educational settings, teaching is an individual act. This act becomes isolating and may lead to attrition in the teaching profession. PEP serves to counter the individual and isolating nature of traditional teaching settings, by providing teachers with a community. A PEP teacher expressed:

I really do value and appreciate PEP...You can't find this in every space. We build from each other. I think everyone brings something valuable. I really appreciate and value folks cause we know that folks have your back. We may not have the same ideas or political beliefs but we know folks have our back to be better teachers and better people.

PEP provides a space where teachers can take their experiences and training, and bring it into the classroom. As many of the PEP teachers were or are Asian American Studies, ethnic studies, or education majors and graduate students, they are often dissatisfied with direct opportunities to use what they have learned in their college classes. PEP provides a rare chance to put into practice what they have learned in their classes. A PEP high school teacher explains:

PEP is the only space where I can practice everything I learned. I feel that it's a process to do something with what we learned. What makes me stay is the students, teachers and also knowing that there's a space to be reflective and to constantly grow.

PEP promotes trainings that are applicable to the classroom, but also to the lives of our teachers by allowing PEP teachers to be critical of how they teach, articulate, and transform the world. PEP hopes to grow social justice educators so they can take the skills they learned beyond the PEP classroom and into other spaces, such as other classrooms and workplaces, as well as to their families and their communities. PEP's training is not only about developing the teaching skills, but it is also about a creating space where PEP teachers can grow and develop their purpose. A PEP high school teacher described her experience:

PEP is a space that challenges me a lot and in my life, I had this opportunity and I took advantage of it. Everything! As I began my process of becoming a teacher, my self-esteem, confidence and everything went up, and as a student. I needed to get my game together and get good grades. PEP gave me a purpose too.

The foundation of barangay pedagogy and Filipina/o American studies challenges them to be critical of the world and to become agents of social change. PEP teachers are actively engaged in and with the community in ways that foster the goals of social justice-oriented political and social agenda (Angrosino, 2001). Teachers have also gained a sense of purpose through a humanizing process in PEP.

The teachers believe their service learning experience in PEP has assisted them in their growth as educators. Some PEP teachers stay for more than a few years, and many have gone on to higher

education or to work in the community. PEP has been a space where people have inspired each other to do better and, no matter where they end up after PEP, they carry that experience with them. Out of the 110 PEP Teachers, 95 percent of the have gone on to become educators, artists, scholars, community organizers, and/or service providers, 48 percent have participated in master's and teacher credential programs, and 15 percent have pursued doctorates.

### **Curricular and Pedagogical Impact**

PEP has provided a community for teachers to develop their craft while also contributing to the development of a critical Filipina/o American Studies curriculum and pedagogy. In PEP, our curriculum focuses on providing a critical discussion on "culture." The lesson plans encourage students and teachers to go beyond reclaiming and maintaining cultural heritage, and move toward using cultural production as a means to build power to take action in their communities. The lesson plans in PEP are called "Critical Creative Plans," and more commonly known to the PEP teachers as the "CCC." Tintiangco-Cubales developed the CCC to have three main parts: cultural energizer, community collaboration and/or critical cultural production, and conclusive dialogue. Imbedded in this CCC format is the creation of PEPagogy. PEP begins with critical pedagogy as a basis to develop and implement context specific pedagogies such as barangay pedagogy, epistemological pedagogy, and decolonizing pedagogy. These are essential elements of the framework that guide both the content and methods in each of the lesson plans.

From the lesson plans that have been created over the last eight years, PEP has published two sourcebooks with units, lesson plans, workshops, projects, worksheets, and comprehensive bibliographies on Filipina/o American studies. *Pin@y Educational Partnerships: A Filipina/o American Studies Sourcebook Series* is the culmination of the efforts of many teachers and professors. This resource was designed especially for educators, students, service providers, families, and community members. With this book, PEP shares our classroom beyond our classroom.<sup>7</sup>

### **Conclusion**

As Filipina/o student and student of color enrollments increase throughout the United States, faculty representation that reflects this growing diversity is needed. PEP provides a cultur-

ally supportive training space to ensure that Filipina/o Americans become critical educators. Service learning partnerships, like PEP, should be implemented in diverse communities to provide hands-on training in education.

Although PEP has accomplished a great deal in the last decade, the efforts have not been without challenges. PEP's rapid growth came with growing pains, including the need to evaluate and restructure our mode of operation. PEP has never been fully funded, but has always managed to survive. The tireless planning and preparation, continuous constructive criticism and feedback, and intellectual dialogue debating ideology and hope have become part of the culture in PEP. Many sacrifices have been made by the teachers and the leadership barangay. The challenges in PEP have always been coupled with never feeling alone in the struggle. PEP's sense of barangay is its major accomplishment.

Despite the challenges, PEP continues to provide services to youth in San Francisco and hopes to provide assistance to organizations and communities to develop their own spatial and curricular interventions specific to their own contexts. The intersections between the university, schools, and the community offer a critical juncture to address the inequities and gaps that are so prevalent in education, especially for students and youth who have been marginalized and underserved.

## Notes

1. *Barangay* translated in Tagalog means community.
2. *Isang Bagsak* roughly means "one down" in Tagalog. The Chant/Clap originates in the Philippines during the anti-martial law movement in the 1970's to represent that the people are unified and "down" with each other. PEP has adapted the chant to include *Dalawang* and *Tatlong Bagsak* which mean "two and three down" to represent the connections between the past, present, and future.
3. "Barangay pedagogy" was coined by Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales. There are more details on "barangay pedagogy" later in the essay, starting on page 12.
4. Critical hermeneutics involve the study of interpretation through a historical and cultural understanding of identity, the manifestation of the present, and the possibilities for change. Herda (1999) explains that critical hermeneutics reveal "a story as a whole that opens up new ways of thinking and acting... and provide a new sense of time and order of importance of our activities" (4). Through this lens we can explore PEP within the context of history, identity, and the social



influences that inform our understanding of a critical Filipina/o American identity through the teaching and learning of Filipina/o American Studies.

5. This was taken from a speech at "Our Education, Our People," an educational town hall meeting held to address the serious problems in our education system on December 17, 2009 at Balboa High School in San Francisco.
6. High school students who take the concurrent enrollment course receive both high school language credit and college units.
7. According to Don Nakanishi, the PEP Sourcebook is groundbreaking as it provides "a much needed longitudinal understanding of both the historical and contemporary experiences of the rapidly growing and diverse Filipina/o American population." Nakanishi notes that PEP is a "model to develop innovative and exciting teaching and learning programs on the experiences of other ethnic and racial groups in the United States." To learn more about this first-of-its-kind resource, please visit [www.phoenixphi.com](http://www.phoenixphi.com).

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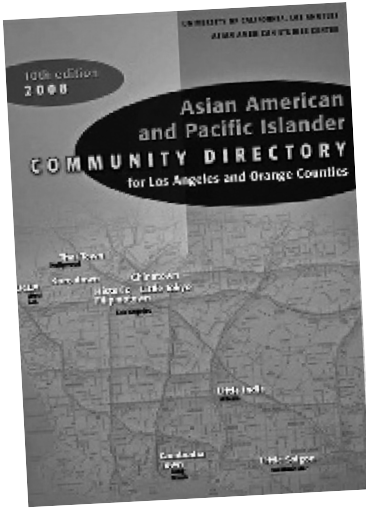
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