Disrupting the Normalized Continuities of Racial Injustice: The Imperative and Opportunity for Teacher Education

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Map of Tonight’s Talk

1. How is teaching powerful?
2. What are “continuities of racial injustice”?
3. What does it mean to talk about “normalized” practice?
4. What is the imperative for teacher preparation?
5. What does any of this have to do with “antifragility”? 
1. How is teaching powerful?
Video: Is there a teacher who had a significant impact on you?
Teaching is powerful for individuals.
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2. It can cause individual and lasting harm.
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2. It can cause individual and lasting harm.

It is also powerful systemically.
2. What are “continuities of racial injustice”?
DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDE IN THE U.S.: K-12 TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Brown (2014); Carver-Thomas (2018); Gershenson, Hart, Hyman, Lindsay, & Papageorge (2018); Irvine (2003)
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Racial injustice is systemic.

1. Social systems are structured with patterns of racism and injustice.
2. The people who work in these systems are educated in our nation’s schools.
3. The teachers and curricula dominant in our education system comprise a curriculum of white supremacy.
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It is also systemically embedded in normal teaching practice.
3. What does it mean to talk about “normalized practice”?
Everyday normalized practice

CLASSROOM RULES

Do as you’re asked when you are asked.

Listen in silence.

Put up your hand to speak.

Arrive on time to lessons with the correct equipment.

Keep hands, feet, objects and comments to yourself.
Patterns of discipline and punishment

- **Black girls**
  - % of enrollment: 15.6%
  - % of single suspensions: 36.6%
  - % of in-school suspensions: 41.6%
  - % of multiple suspensions: 52.0%

- **White girls**
  - % of enrollment: 50.1%
  - % of single suspensions: 32.9%
  - % of in-school suspensions: 28.4%
  - % of multiple suspensions: 22.7%
Normalized practice is familiar

But we can also be fooled into not seeing normalized practice even in “reform.”

Norms are often invisible, precisely because they are “normal.”

Their harms, and how they contribute to harm, are often not noticed.
Re-seeing the familiar

**Context**
- Fifth grade class
- Predominantly Black children, a few Latino/a/e, a few white
- Working on mathematical reasoning, permutations

**Viewing focus**
- What is likely to happen next?
- This is a lens on “normal” practice.
Find all the ways to arrange the light green, purple, and yellow rods into three-car trains, using exactly one of each rod.

How are you sure you have found ALL the ways?

Prove that you have all the possible ways to arrange the light green, purple, and yellow rods into three-car trains.

Miah presents her proof.
VIDEO: Miah’s solution

When you- I drew the first part, the first colors first- at first, and then I just mixed the bottom next to them- these two
What is likely to happen next?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIKELY NEXT MOVES</th>
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UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SCHOOL OF EDUCATION | TEACHINGWORKS
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<td>“Great job, Miah. Miah showed us that we can arrange the rods 6 ways. Does everyone see that?”</td>
<td>Miah, a Black girl, is praised for having the right answer. But she is not positioned to take up comments from her peers.</td>
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**LIKELY NEXT MOVES**

- “Great job, Miah. Miah showed us that we can arrange the rods 6 ways. Does everyone see that?”
- “Very nice, Miah. Miah showed us that we can put the purple rod first two times and switch the green and the yellow rods, then put the green rod first, and switch the purple and yellow two times, and then the same, putting the yellow first and switching the other two.

**RESULT**

- Miah, a Black girl, is praised for having the right answer. But she is not positioned to take up comments from her peers.
- Miah’s answer is taken over and revoiced and extended by the teacher. Her agency is removed.
What is likely to happen next?

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<td>What Miah did was something that mathematicians figure out with a factorial—3 times 2 times 1.”</td>
<td>The class is not engaged in restating and commenting on Miah’s solution, so neither she nor her classmates are positioned to do collective work.</td>
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VIDEO: Miah explains her solution

Miah: You have purple, with yellow, and green. You mix these two parts and you don't worry about the first one,
How does this disrupt normalized practice?

- Miah is positioned as the author of the explanation and the class as her peers to consider her solution.
- Miah is supported to hold the floor.
- Miah and her classmates are trusted to engage in the work.
4. What is the imperative for teacher preparation?
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1. The power of the “apprenticeship of observation.”
2. Teaching attracts people who liked being in school.

Teaching is a conservative occupation.
What does this explain about the normalized continuities of racial injustice?

- Teacher candidates have been steeped in the curriculum of white supremacy through their apprenticeship of observation.
- Norms of practice are taken for granted. These norms contribute to the persistence of racial injustice.
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2. Making visible the curriculum of white supremacy, normalized practice, continuity, and harm

3. Showing discretionary spaces and developing repertoires of practice that are not reproductive of these continuities

These can be developed separately and also intertwined.
One example: Practice with scenarios

STRUCTURED WORK IN THREE PARTS

1. What are your reactions? How does the scenario make you feel? How does that relate to your identities and experiences?

2. What patterns of normalized practice and the curriculum of white supremacy does it make visible or imply?

3. What are possible responses or actions that avert or disrupt patterns of harm?
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**Scenario 1**

Adele, a white girl in your class, comes to school wearing short shorts. This is against the dress code. When you remind her that this is against the rules, she starts to get very teary. She says that her mother told her it would be okay because they are not really very short and she was going to a birthday party after school and they are going swimming.
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### Scenario 2
During your sixth period class, your principal enters your class and interrupts the discussion to tell you that two of your Black girls were fighting at lunch and they need to come with him. One of them, Delia, is in the middle of explaining her thinking about one of the cases the class is discussing today. Other students go “Ooooh, Delia, you are in trouble now!” Lynette, the other girl whom he named, closes her book loudly and throws her pen down on her desk.
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What does this have to do with anti-fragility?
What is fragility? What is *anti-fragility*?
What is fragility? What is anti-fragility?

**Fragility**
- Does not adapt to sudden changes
- Is threatened when knowledge, skill, authority is questioned
- Avoids conflict
- Has a rigid worldview
- Experiences “burnout” regularly
What is fragility? What is *anti-fragility*?

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**Anti-fragility**
- Thrives in uncertain situations
- Welcomes dialogue with people with different backgrounds, identities, experiences
- Seeks to expand worldview through authentic relationships
- Honors the full humanity of self and others
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Examples:
• Setting healthy boundaries
• Getting sufficient sleep
• Engaging in activities that bring joy
• Finding a community of peers that celebrate your full expression of self
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- Getting sufficient sleep
- Engaging in activities that bring joy
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Teacher education should help novice teachers develop these dispositions and habits as part of their professional practice.
Looking back across this session

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Teacher education cannot change the world by itself.

But we sit at a crucial place in the system of reproducing or disrupting the continuity of racism and white supremacy in this country.
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This is our opportunity. It is also our imperative.
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Upcoming In-Person TeachingWorks Events

**Laboratory Methods Courses (May 2–13, Ann Arbor, MI)**: TeachingWorks instructors will demonstrate methods course instruction aimed at developing curriculum literacy.

**Introduction to Practice-Based Teacher Education Workshop (May 18–19, Houston, TX)**: Participants are introduced to the basics of practice-based teacher education, with multiple opportunities to practice.

**Spring Coaching Institute (May 20–21, Houston, TX)**: Teacher educators will be able to practice leading rehearsals and coaching teacher candidates to enact the high-leverage practices called for in several examples of open-source materials.

**Elementary Mathematics Laboratory (July 25-29, Ann Arbor, MI)**: Instructors will make visible the work of delivering equitable mathematics instruction using elementary math curriculum materials.
Upcoming Virtual TeachingWorks Opportunities

- **Certificate Sequence in Practice-Based Teacher Education** (application deadline: April 1) Participants learn to develop practice-based methods courses aimed in part at developing teacher candidates’ curriculum literacy.

- **Canvas courses**
  - Introduction to Practice-Based Teacher Education (asynchronous)
  - High-Leverage Practice Primers (asynchronous)
  - Using Rehearsal-Based Pedagogies in Teacher Preparation (begins March 4)
  - Building Novice Teachers’ Content Knowledge for Teaching English Language Arts (various start-dates)
Thank you!

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Slides will be available on my website
https://deborahloewenbergball.com/

(“Google” Deborah Ball)
@deborah_ball
Credits

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Retrieved from http://askthejudge.info/what-is-corporal-punishment/

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