The Need for Critical Race Theory in Education & Beyond

How CRT Reveals Educational Inequities (and Shows Us How to Tackle Them)

What students are learning

How they’re being taught

A GUIDE TO TEACHING TRUTH – PART 4
How do We Achieve Educational Equity?

What do BIPOC students need to gain equal and culturally responsive opportunities?

Beyond just “equal treatment,”

We need a way to redress past inequities.

CRT is the explanatory tool needed to do so.

In this section, we use CRT to analyze:

- Curriculum
- Instruction
- Assessment
White-Centric Curricula Upholds White Supremacy

Curriculum is dominated by “white, upper-class, male” perspectives.

BIPOC history is often muted or distorted

If not erased all together.

BIPOC students’ lived experiences aren’t reflected.

BIPOC thinkers are dismissed or ignored.

“White, upper-class, male” viewpoints become the standard knowledge students need to know.
Colorblind Curricula Teaches the Myth of Meritocracy

Course content refers to a homogenized “we,” implying that we all face the same challenges.

Example rhetoric:

we... are all “immigrants”

It denies the unique burdens of systemic racism students face

Which invalidates their experiences and makes them feel guilty for not doing as well as “every other group”
Colorblind Instruction Punishes BIPOC Students

- Colorblind instruction views students’ “deficiencies” as an individual phenomenon.

- Rather than the result of daily systemic discrimination,

- Or a difficulty expressing themselves by white, hegemonic standards.

- This creates a punishment mindset, where students must be “fixed” or controlled,

- Leading to the disproportionate disciplining of BIPOC students.
Assessment Measures Reinforce Inequities

Intelligence testing doesn’t take into account the challenges experienced by systemically oppressed communities.

It measures “aptitude” as if everyone is on an even playing ground.

Inequitable curriculum coupled with inequitable instruction adds up to poor performance on traditional assessment measures.
EFFECTS ON BIPOC STUDENTS

Black & Latinx Students in the School-to-Prison Pipeline

IMPACT OF EDUCATION & CARCERAL SYSTEMS

**Colorblind Teaching**

BIPOC students are perceived as responsible for their own trauma and racialized struggles, to them being seen as "trouble makers"

**Zero Tolerance Policies**

Black students are suspended and expelled at 3x the rate of white students; Latinx students at 2x the rate

**School Policing**

Black and Latinx students account for 70% of all in-school arrests

This is just one (simplified) example of how systems are complex, nuanced, and working together.

**Carceral State**

60% of high school drop outs will experience incarceration at least once.
South East Asian and Latinx Students in the School-to-Deportation Pipeline

Many of the same mechanisms that facilitate the school-to-prison pipeline produce the school-to-deportation pipeline for immigrant students.

Colorblind Education

- Ignores the trauma caused by immigrating, often alone and/or illegally, to a foreign country with little money or cultural capital.

Deportation (or the constant fear of deportation)

- Sees immigrants’ “non-normative” behavior as strange and threatening.

The impact of these harmful systems add to the racialization of students of color.

Since 2001:

Local criminal justice systems are coupled with national immigration enforcement.

ex: Students filing for DACA are assessed based on their disciplinary & police records.
Sources

“Just What is Critical Race Theory and What’s It Doing in a Nice Field Like Education?,” Gloria Ladson-Billings

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