

Donna Giguere

Dr. Trevor Kinlock

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

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Reading Six – Milner/Beyond Test Scores

In this week's reading, the author poses a somewhat different research perspective: look at the way students have learned instead of focusing on the results that reflect achievement gaps. Too often, educators are not held accountable for their deficits. Milner gives the five ways disadvantaged students are unfairly educated – color blindness, cultural conflicts, imagined meritocracy, deficit mindsets and low expectations; the author then gives possible solutions to these issues.

Each issue of inadequate mindset is addressed. Color blindness puts students of color at a disadvantage as educators fail to recognize their differences and instead treat these students as less-than the norm, which is juxtaposed to the norm of White culture and society. Second, cultural conflicts arise when students are essentially imprisoned to function within the societal expectations that degrade the students' culture. Third, educators do not consider the pre-existing meritocracy and biased themselves due to their own experiences. Since they played by the rules and worked hard and became successful, then their students should be able to do the same. Next, low expectations and deficit mindsets make it difficult for educators to develop curriculum that will enable students to perform well on standardized testing, and therefore set the students up for further failure.

The answer is for researchers to change their way of analyzing our education system. New researchers should open their "world view." Second, the researchers may address "framework" and focus on those aspects of education that are in their control. Lastly, researchers should provide alternatives as they build on the framework. However, it is clear that the existing system is not helpful nor adequate to educate students properly, and therefore, alternatives need to be considered.