

Weekly Pedagogy Summary #6

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“Those of us in education must persistently question what knowledge is”, Michael Apple a critical theorist, explains education as constantly evolving and increasing validation through values and meaning-making. H. Richard Milner, IV rejects the term “achievement gap” and replaces it with opportunity gap, introducing the marginalized disparities Black and Brown communities encounter. Believing achievement gaps compare people of color to their White counterparts without including the micro-oppressed and unstable environments students are experiencing. Addressing the nuanced issues of marginalized communities, such as financial and housing inequities. Deeming the struggles of Black are abnormal, animalistic, and irrelevant, with White students being considered the standard.

Standardized testing is used to measure the academic readiness of students, but only capturing a certain demographic in a positive light. Testing is not inclusive or culturally relevant for academia to use as a measuring tool for competencies. Applying color blindness to education to make curriculum universal consequently, broadens the gap of inequality in educational systems. James Banks explained it as a privilege that rejects racial identification and the oppressive trauma that follows or the creativity students of color can contribute. Ignoring the cultural perspectives of students can lead to a disconnect between teachers and students, creating cultural conflicts in what should be a safe space. Empathy for students and their home environments, accepting racism as a factor when addressing societal disparities.

The myth of meritocratic educators acknowledges the results of oppression but ignores the creator of inequality, racism. Believing hardship is earned and not predisposed to struggle based on their skin. Acknowledging the hurdles of your students builds trust and relationships, instead of dismissing their traumatic experiences.