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Critical Reflection #2
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This week's readings shed light on a very dangerous world. Gorski points out that when we do not know something or have limited knowledge of something, we use stereotypes to fill in the blanks. Gorski further states, "cognitive reasoning research (De Neys & Vanderpeutte, 2011) has demonstrated that when people find themselves in contexts with which they are not familiar, their decision-making cognition defaults to intuition and stereotyped beliefs" (Gorski, 303).

First off, ***THERE IS A LOT WE DO NOT KNOW!*** So to fill in the blanks with stereotypes, especially stereotypes that might be untrue or dangerous of an entire group, culture, etc can be quite damning. From last week's readings, we know that power dynamics are created by the dominant group to oppress the less dominant group. So what happens if the dominant group does not have a well-developed viewpoint of cultural competence? If they look at the world with a deficit viewpoint, the stereotypes that can be created could be way off base, especially if you take into consideration that the dominant group always wants to stay on top...therefore a level of self-preservation will exist.

Howard, quoting T.D. Wilson, says, "The adaptive unconscious is not governed by accuracy and accessibility alone. People's judgements and interpretations are often guided by a quite different concern, namely the desire to view the world in the way that gives them the most pleasure" (Howard, 117). Furthermore, "what makes us feel good depends on our culture and our personalities...people can go to great lengths to see the world in a particular way, and as a result see the world in a way that is consistent with existing paradigms and comforting epistemological stances" (Howard, 117). So overtime, with comforting epistemological stances, hardened facts regarding dangerous periods of time such as The holocaust happened, white people enslaved black people, women have been mistreated and underrepresented, the lgbtqa community has been marginalized and discriminated against could easily begin to be erased, or at least their burden softened.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a famous African author and speaker states in her TedTalk called The Danger of a Single Story that "The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story...The consequence of a single story is this, it robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different instead of how we are similar."

I agree whole-heartedly with Howard that it is extremely important for us to continually check ourselves, our privileges, and our viewpoints, especially as educators so that we are not creating false stereotypes, and dominant narratives that will further marginalize people. It is extremely important to have these hard conversations, because let's face it...ignorance and fear of having these conversations is akin to inaction.

I recognize that I am a white male and that affords me a lot of privilege. I don't have to worry about being underpaid for a job because of my gender or worry about being profiled because of my skin color. I also cannot help my privilege (I did not ask for it, I did not do anything specifically to obtain it), but I agree with Howard that "neutrality is equivalent to acting against equity, fairness and justice" (Howard, 119).

Part of this action comes from standing up and speaking out on intolerance and hate. Speaking out against these damning stereotypes. You cannot judge a book by its cover, you should not judge a person by their race, their culture, their gender, their orientation, or any other detail. Coaches always say, you can never score a goal from sitting on the sidelines, so I full-heartedly believe as an educator it is important to get off the sideline and enter the game.