

Shaun O'Malley
Critical Reflection #3
May 30th, 2021

During our 1st Class Meetup, Dr. Etienne made a comment about Critical Race Theory. Etienne said, "I don't understand why there is so much fuss about critical race theory. It is literally asking people to think critically about race in America."

It still baffles me why people are so afraid to talk about Race. I remember one instance when I was growing up, I made a very deft comment and said, I don't see color. I was trying to say that I believe all human beings are human beings and we need to recognize that we all have that same chord of humanity that runs through us and therefore we are all the same in this race of life.

I was not trying to say, "Your skin color, culture, heritage, traditions," do not mean anything to me, but in my deftness, that is how it seemed. I was rightly called out for my statement and learned a valuable lesson. I think one main reason why white people do not want to talk about race is the fear of saying something so deft, they end up insulting someone.

Earlier we learned that race was nothing more than a social construct to ensure that the dominating culture remains at the top. But with that dominating culture comes the erasing of the culture and traditions of those not in the dominating class.

These readings, open up an entire world to create cultural democracy and I think makes it even more frightening, because there are so many more ways to sound deft and ignorant. But in earlier readings, I agree that when you are part of the "dominant culture" and you recognize the privilege you have from that, inaction or fear of speaking up or speaking out for fear of sounding deft is just as bad as inaction and furthering the status quo.

If we follow Anderson and Sharma's EPE framework, we can see that people of a specific culture, group, etc have experiences, from these experiences they see patterns and then develop explanations for why these patterns exist. Take for instance Black Lives Matter...POC in America have shared or lived experiences about negative interactions with cops. It is not just one person of color, but multiple people of color have had similar shared negative experiences with cops. These experiences led to patterns that developed, which led to coming up with explanations...those explanations are that there is systemic oppression and negativity toward poc in America, especially from law enforcement.

A lot of white people do not have those experiences, therefore they do not see the patterns and therefore there explanations are different (POC are Thugs, They use Drugs, the whole stupid debate of "Don't do something wrong and you wouldn't have to fear a cop").

Furthermore, creating a multicultural educational experience is exhausting. I think that because of the fear of sounding deft or because of the larger lens to which we need to look at education, it requires more work and so convenience serves as a major hurdle for accomplishing a multicultural education. We try to fit round shapes into square holes and it does not work. So out of convenience, we just say, "No more round shapes are allowed" instead of taking the work necessary to start cutting out round-shaped holes.

I think that this was very interesting with the D'Andre story. When we force people to become square shapes, we like D'Andre make people "lose part of his cultural identity" (Brown). Just like in the article by Boutte and Johnson and forcing people to speak or take on a specific language..."attempting to eradicate a person's language can potentially be socially, emotionally, psychologically, and cognitively damaging." The example with D'Andre, "taking a binary approach...makes students' existing cultural knowledge fundamentally invisible" (Brown).

Fear of sound deft and convenience should never be a reason for not putting in the effort to create a multicultural educational experience for students.