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**Thread:** "The Trouble with Grit" **Posted Date:** February 15, 2022 7:05 PM

**Post:** [RE: "The Trouble with Grit"](#) **Status:** Published

**Author:** **Shaun O'malley**

Didn't we read in Dr. Etienne's class that when we don't know the reality we tend to jump to assumptions to explain things? I think it is a natural habit that we should all learn to make. I think that you are spot on though...regardless of how much of a growth mindset you have...when the system has been stacked against you for so long there are some struggles that are impossible to overcome.

I also like your commentary about assuming best intent. I think that is an important philosophy in life to follow.

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**Thread:** O'Malley Post Week 5 **Posted Date:** February 14, 2022 1:55 PM

**Post:** [RE: O'Malley Post Week 5](#) **Status:** Published

**Author:** **Shaun O'malley**

I think that power is a biological certainty. Even outside of civilization, Darwin talks a lot about the survival of the fittest. The fittest is anyone or anything that is in charge, that wields power over another. The power to adapt, to survive, to outwit, to dominate all carries with it a sense of power. The animal kingdom tells the narrative of the food chain (which is about power), Christianity tells the dominance of God over all things (power), civilization tells about countless times certain groups of people (a race, a country, a gender, a people) have gained control over or power over other groups. The story from the reading a few weeks ago, a man and a lion are all arguing over who is more powerful. A man shows the lion a picture of a man killing the lion and says that is proof. The lion says....who drew the picture?

Though there is no biological reality where race/gender/orientation/culture proves to be more superior...yet here we are. Even if we were to trace it back to the very first day that a white person said, "hmmm, a black person would make a good slave," I don't know what we would find. Was it a dominant group trying to supplement their right to lead? Was it a dominant group seeing difference and "fearing what they couldn't understand" and therefore subjective the minority group to be humiliated and looked down upon? Whatever happened and whatever led to the decisions that were made...the one thing is certain...POWER is a BIOLOGICAL CERTAINTY!

And I hope we don't have to live in a world where in order to ever gain acceptance is to kiss the asses of those with the power. But also...power changes. The Roman Empire didn't reign supreme...it fell.

### Forum Statistics

	O'malley Shaun (7)
<b>GRADE</b>	<b>200.00</b> /200
2/13/22 1:08 PM	

### Comments

#### Feedback to Learner

2/16/22 9:51 AM

Shaun:

Thank you for submitting your post on time. You had some very interesting discussions, especially with your interaction with your classmates in regard to Darwin and the survival of the fittest example. The idea and the creation of slavery didn't originate with whites. It might be a good idea to read up on that a little just for general knowledge. In regard to Power and Dominance, that has moved from group to group and from race to race (For example, there is literature that teaches us that blacks, the moors from northern African, ruled southern Europe for over 700 years and helped to "civilize" them) teaching southern white farming, plumbing, hunting, and other agricultural and healthy living innovations.


Also great work with the Derrick Bell discussion. Indeed you have to continuously ask questions like "why is the system like this". Great discussion with your classmates!

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**Thread:** O'Malley Post Week 5      **Posted Date:** February 13, 2022 1:24 PM  
**Post:** [O'Malley Post Week 5](#)      **Edited Date:** February 14, 2022 1:42 PM  
**Author:**  **Shaun O'malley**      **Status:** Published

One thing from the video that we had to watch this week really stood out to me. Dr. Dave Gillborn said that his job is to focus on issues in education policy. He said, "Policy which presents itself as being about including everyone and raising overall standards somehow always seems to reproduce the existing inequalities and quite often making things worse as it pretends to make things better."

This statement really stood out. We spend so much time trying to fix a broken system by putting band-aids everywhere...and sometimes those band-aids help and sometimes they don't. These band-aids push us to constantly change our strategies, as noted by Gorski and Pothini, "if it is not the now-debunked focus on 'learning styles,' it's 'grit.' If it's not 'grit' it's the mindset of poverty. If it's not that, it's just anything else that enables us to step gingerly around real conversations about issues like racism, heterosexism, and abelism in schools" (Gorski and Pothini, 2018, p. 9). So far everything in this class really has me questioning how to fix the system, especially because everyone who is trying to fix the system brings their own set of biases and issues to the table. A broken system trying to fix a broken system that has been developed for so long by broken systems seems hopeless. I find that the Equity Literacy Framework is a possible tool to challenge the status quo. This framework as noted is, "not to fix the cultures or mindsets of this or that group of students, not merely to appreciate diversity, but to root bias and inequity out of our classrooms, schools and communities" (Gorski and Pothini, 2018, p. 10).

When you think about what we learned from Derek Bell's perspective that most civil rights achievements were merely less about altruism and doing what is right for the minority group, but more importantly...helping aid the group in the majority to us consistently creating and implementing policies to further minority rights and instead end up doing more harm...its tiring. You have to continually question and ask important questions: 1) Why is the system like this? 2) Who benefits from this system, 3) How do we fix the problem and 4) What conscious and unconscious biases am I bringing with me to the table. As we saw in the case study with the 5th graders going to a college admissions tour...we all have BIASES that we bring to the table. To me though, it all always comes back to power. We do all have biases, regardless of our gender, race, orientation, creed, age, etc...but the people around the table who get the most "airtime" and whose voices are heard the most are the people in power...as noted by Dr. Gillborn, "Who gets to be privileged as white are political decisions, they are not accidental, and they certainly are not a simple reading of skin tone, these are issues about power."

I think in our readings from last week, the notion of culture was extremely interesting and making note that everyone has a different view of the term culuture and what that entails. We are so personally involved in the day to day of our daily lives that we fail to see what biases we bring to the table and we fail to notice how our "culture" plays a role into that. For the longest itme, white people were told that the Brown vs. Board of Education was a civil rights-landmark case pushing the rights of POC forward in this country to resolve racism and desegregation...it is something we all cling to as progress yet, the reality is that it may actually have been done out of necessity instead of altrusim.

What other things have we pushed, supported or worked towards thinking it was beneficial when in reality it was really necessity? Self-reflection seems vital to this entire process. If you don't now who you are and what you believe in and why you believe it, how can you ever reflect on the world as it is or how it should be? That is why pedagogical developments and advancements are necessary. That is why Critical Race Theory is necessary. Much like the saying from Cultures of Curriculum, "If a fish became an anthropologist, the last thing it would discover would be water" (Joseph, 2000, p. 25). If culture is our lens, the way we see the world, and "culture appears as usual life, what seems normal or natural" (p. 25) and we all come from different backgrounds and foundations of culture, we all have different lenses from which we see the world and the only way we are going to be able see that our lense is different, or maybe not accurate is by experiencing first hand and having cognitive dissonance...delving deep into cultures that we don't understand or view as primary.

Critical Race Theory is a challenge to create that dissonance. As Dr. Warmington notes, "And it is no surprise that Critical Race Theory and other critical approaches looking at racial inequalities...it is no surprise that they are viewed as quite dangerous because they ask a very unsettling question...when you look at racial outcomes in education, the assumption is 'oh these unequal outcomes happen because something has gone wrong somewhere...but what if these inequalities are actually evidence that in fact the outcomes are exactly as they were designed to be, not that something has gone wrong, but that it is business as usual."

In our first class, Dr. Etienne asked, "Why are people so afraid to talk critically about race?" It appears that if majority groups in power create unequitable systems to further the narrative of their dominance, people talking critically about RACE should cause a lot of people to fear, at least

from a specific majority group.

Our society and the entire world has always been about power dynamics, the shark is an apex predator to the seal, the white man is an apex predator to women, whiteness is an apex predator to blackness...this constant notion that white, male, masculine, heterosexual is the APEX...its a power struggle of epic proportions.

- Gillborn, Dave and Warmington, Paul. (2014). A Conversation on Race and Education. College of Education at Illinois. <https://youtu.be/iLaC4zHmgBo>.
- Gorksi, P and Pothin, Seema. (2018). Case Studies on Diversity and Social Justice Education. Routledge.
- Joseph, Pamela. (2000). Cultures of Curriculum. Routledge.





**Thread:** Fostering Equity Literacy & Interest Convergence **Posted Date:** February 14, 2022 1:34 PM  
**Status:** Published

**Post:**

[RE: Fostering Equity Literacy & Interest Convergence](#)

**Author:**  Shaun O'malley

Well this does create quite the pickle now doesn't it. I don't think this is a chicken vs. egg scenario. I think the ONUS falls on everyone. It is the responsibility to offer professional development opportunities to continue to put educators in situations to think outside the box and to expand their equity framework, but it is also the individual educator to see the benefit of expanding their equity literacy framework to better serve their students.

School districts need to hold their educators accountable while developing them professionally but educators need to practice self-reflection and check their biases and feels while holding themselves and their districts policies accountable.





**Thread:** Slagle Week 5 **Posted Date:** February 13, 2022 9:40 PM  
**Post:** [It RE: Slagle Week 5](#) **Status:** Published

**Author:**  Shaun O'malley

It is funny because this is one of those unconscious bias moments. I never saw it from this perspective until I read this case study but it totally makes sense. Literally "hot button" diversity topics are a part of every single decision made, we are just unaware of it until we are "educated" to think like that.

I currently supervise a Residence Hall on a college campus. I know that my Residence Hall costs \$1000 to \$1500 more per any other housing on campus. Therefore I know that this creates a disparity between who apply to live in my building vs. the other residence halls on campus. I am pushing to change the rate to live on campus and lower the prices. The building I supervise is the newest buildin on campus and is only 7 years old so the ammenities in the building are amazing (Kitchen, Pool Tables, lots of study lounges and study spaces, conference rooms, dining hall, classrooms, etc). I always challenge schools when they open a new residence hall to try to refrain from the model of charging more to live there because it is new. Unfortunately most schools see it ias "it is new" so it should cost more which creates an unequal distribution and once you budget for that extra money coming in, it is hard to go back to budgeting if you reduced the price after the new building wears out its shine.

**Thread:** Case Analysis: High Expectations or Unrealistic Goals? **Posted Date:** February 13, 2022 1:20 PM  
**Status:** Published

**Post:**  
[RE: Case Analysis: High Expectations or Unrealistic Goals?](#)

**Author:**  Shaun O'malley

I feel as an educator, my biggest job is to plant seeds. Sometimes I see the long term results and sometimes I never see it, but I keep doing what I am doing because a see planted on good soil oftentimes bares fulfillment. This is our legacy that we leave to the world, by hopefully making it better one student at a time and buy instilling in our students this excitement, curiosity, and adventurous spirit to seek out the future.

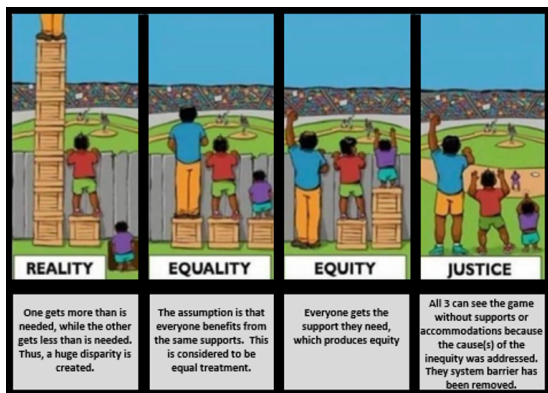
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**Thread:** Equality does not equal equity **Posted Date:** February 13, 2022 1:08 PM  
**Post:** [RE: Equality does not equal equity](#) **Edited Date:** February 13, 2022 1:11 PM  
**Status:** Published

**Author:**  Shaun O'malley

This is always such a fascinating topic...the lines of equality vs. equity. This past semester we paired up with a company that "adopts" families in need and gives them gifts for the holiday season. Each Residence Hall was given a family to get gifts for. My building has 350 students that live in it and we were given a family of 6. I decided to have a competition and give the floor that raised the most money a pizza party. We raised \$500.00 for this family. All of the donations came from basically 1 floor with the exception of \$25.00 which came from the 2nd floor.

I decided to open up the pizza party to the 4th floor and the person who donated from the 2nd floor and my Resident Assistants were like that is not fair, "You set it up as a competition" and now you are opening it up to other people, if you are going to do that you need to open it up to the entire building. I was like...first off, I want to recognize everyone that donated and participated. The RAs said that it is unfair and should be opened up to the entire building since maybe some people couldn't afford to donate. (We also had a day where students could come and wrap gifts). In my description of the event, I specifically said if you do not have any resources to give to help with the family you can donate your time by coming to the wrapping event to help us wrap upwards of 200 gifts. I tried to create a system for students that if they could not donate money, they could donate time so it would be a fair and equitable system. Your post also reminds me a lot of the following cartoon below. I feel that social justice and the push for equitable systems is a spectrum. I feel that is also what liberal policies get us. We start with reality, push for justice land in between equality and equity...overtime the spectrum is pushed back to reality (that's incrementalism at its finest). Some argue that there should be a fifth box, "Inclusion." As it stands the 3 spectators remain on the outside of the action...inclusion would invite them to come playing giving them the opportunities just like everyone else.



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