

Shaun O'Malley
Reflection #1

The readings have caused me to question everything about power dynamics in America. Everything in life is a social construct, created by the powerful to ensure that the "New World Order" remains the status quo. This power dynamic that has been created can be seen in every instance of life, giving new meaning to the idea of two sides of the same coin. What is on top, always wants to stay on top but everyone's perception of the world is uniquely different, and we must realize we all come to the table bringing our lived experience of the world with us and there is a lot of room at that table (it does not need to be a competition to stay on top).

What Jane Elliott did in her classroom of 3rd graders in 1968 America is truly TRANSFORMATIONAL instruction, and that is why transformative curriculums must exist, to allow educators the flexibility to implement creative instructional opportunities that can truly inspire learners to think deeply about the content that is being dispersed (as Olivia, states, "creatively transforming knowledge and theory into practice"). This is the importance of a cyclical need for curriculums to inform instruction and the need for instruction to help keep curriculums relevant (Oliva).

Watching Elliott's documentary, "The Eye of the Storm," was a powerful representation of how prejudices form and how discrimination can take hold so quickly. Because Elliott was an authority figure, she was easily able to convince her students that there was a difference between brown-eyed and blue-eyed people with no factual evidence and just mere speculation. (Based upon her experiment, it did not just work for 3rd graders, but also adults).

Words truly matter and we all have a responsibility to try to eliminate the dangers of this power dynamic by bringing a sort of balance to the world by making it more equitable for everyone.

Elliott's experiment has played out in real-life America over the past 4 years with a President (the most powerful man in the world from a cis-white wealthy male demographic) who stood at the bully pulpit telling America that immigrants are bad, let's build a wall, China is bad and created a virus to hurt us (Asian-American violence is on the rise), that white supremacists who storm Capitol buildings with the intention to threaten and harm are "Good people voicing their opinion," and that Black people gathering to voice their opinion at rallies and protests are "thugs and dangerous" and that law enforcement officers are "amazing people" just doing their job and that people have nothing to fear about law enforcement if they are not breaking the law. It is quite obvious where the power lies.

We know from Maslow, that students need to have certain needs met in order to be their best possible self. Without physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, esteem needs, students will never reach self-actualization. So representation is extremely important. When designing curriculums, it is important to incorporate content that speaks to all of the learners and not just members of the dominating culture, but there is also a need to create an environment where students can self-actualize and not feel defeated and unimportant, especially because of some ridiculous notion based upon an outdated power dynamic. That is why multicultural education is necessary, to not only create avenues of representation, but to take into consideration the entire spectrum that makes up that student to give them a fair and balanced playing field to be successful.