Ideology, Race, and Education

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Abstract

This article is taken from the Rethinking Childhood Series book: Earick, E. E. (2009). *Racially Equitable Teaching: Beyond the Whiteness of Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators*. NY: Peter Lang. The book utilizes a critical race theory lens to examine how education is being used as a tool to maintain white privilege. The specific text reprinted here calls attention to the racist ideologies that are being perpetuated in the classroom, gives examples of how these practices are harming children and challenges teachers to begin using transformative practices to create racially equitable teaching for everyone. The reader is referred to the complete book for a more in-depth discussion on race in early childhood education.

Full Text:

PDF

Photo by Alan Levine | CC BY 2.0. Education is one of those words that has a positive connotation for almost everyone – usually generating a warm and fuzzy feeling that suggests a richer and brighter future. But that is just an idealization of the concept. As I have stated before, as far as the state is concerned, education has two major purposes: to fulfill the vocational needs of the economy and the political need for ideologically loyal citizens. It is in the pursuit of this last goal that education can reveal a darker side. Here are a few stories concerning the interface between education Educational practices shape the frames through which students understand social success, and they shape the relationship of race to social success. Some argue that increasing education fosters attitudes that challenge the dominant ideology that opportunity is open to all, but we argue that the practice of education instills the opposite. Through participation in higher educational institutions, students acquire and reinforce a belief and interest in competitive individualism. The premise underpinning this ideology is correct: that racial inequality is shockingly persistent. Even though attitudes to race have improved, the quality of African-American lives has not kept pace. A third of black boys born in 2001 will probably spend time locked up, compared with one in 17 white boys. In 1968 black households earned around 60% as much as white households, and owned assets that were less than 10% of those of a typical white family. They still do. More integrated housing would integrate schools too and, given America’s locally financed education, mean that more would be spent on black children. Affordable measures, including advice and modest cash grants, have been shown to boost graduation from college. A third tool is the tax system. An ideology (ˌɪdəˈlɪdʒi/) is a set of beliefs or philosophies attributed to a person or group of persons, especially as held for reasons that are not purely epistemic, in which "practical elements are as prominent as theoretical ones." Formerly applied primarily to economic, political, or religious theories and policies, in a tradition going back to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, more recent use treats the term as mainly condemnatory.