

**Reflection 1: Week 4 Readings – Whose Knowledge**

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In Dr. Christine Sleeter's presentation, *Designing Lessons for a Culturally Relevant Curriculum* (2018, 22:20), she discussed the importance for educators to analyze the textbooks they use in their daily practice to discover the ethnic demographics represented within them. Sleeter suggested that the textbooks used in curriculum today tend to be narrowly focused through a predominantly white, Euro-American lens, especially in the core subjects of social studies and literacy. Through her research and work with educators, she came to the proposal that students are being led into multicultural ignorance. Additionally, Sleeter believed that students who do not see themselves reflected in their education have an increasing distrust for the school system. Sleeter presented that those students significantly differ in what they learn at home and in their community from what they officially learn in school. This systemic gap in learning leads students to feel a sense of boredom and alienation.

Educators in the classroom play a significant role in the moral and ethical development of tomorrow's citizens, and the idea of whose knowledge is taught in schools is fundamental in the curation of society's next generation. If teaching is limited through a constricted curriculum where the lens is skewed to a particular prejudice, it should be, by definition, discrimination, as outlined in, *Is Everyone Really Equal?* (Sensory & DiAngelo, 2017). In chapter 4, the authors describe discrimination as "action based on prejudice toward social others" (p. 54). By limiting educators' autonomy to select, create, and adapt their resources to incorporate an ever-changing need for diverse, multicultural worldviews and deep ethnic layering within teaching methods, society fails at the chance to move forward, breaking away from the old to find a new path on.

In her presentation, Sleeter (2018) provided several examples of how teachers can design lessons to allow students to uncover wider scopes of knowledge in the classroom without becoming "colourblind" (40:33). She gave a specific example from a teacher in

Watsonville, CA who taught using “head knowledge and heart knowledge” to describe the explicit content students were learning, as well as the social-emotional skill of empathy for another ethnicity (51:15). Sleeter suggested that educators approach the daunting task of designing culturally relevant lessons by aiming for quality within a more resounding theme using a “piece by piece” approach to building resources over time (1:08:56). Although, she warns that anything written is contingent on the “position of the narrator” and “there is no perspective free knowledge” (29:33).

In Canada, Kevin Lamoureux, contributing author to *Ensouling our Souls: Mental Health, Well-Being, and Reconciliation in the UDL Classroom* proposed that Canadian educators are currently at the preface of an opportunity for flipping the education system out of its historical norms into something completely new through the mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation’s Calls to Action for Educators (Lamoureux, 2022). In his professional development presentation on the Circle of Courage, he suggested that the Calls to Action are a gift given to Canada. This gift was given in hope by the survivors of Residential Schools to find a healing path to move forward in the world together. Lamoureux’s concluding *Story of Hope in Ensouling our Schools* sends a positive message within his vision to reinvent education:

“Canada is a nation that continues to wrestle with a difficult history and its impact on its citizens and children. There are many who grew up hearing only one story about First Peoples. There are those who still don't understand the need for reconciliation, or who believe that Indigenous peoples are unfairly advantaged in Canada. Racism continues to persist. Schools are going to have a central role to play in undergoing much of this misunderstanding. Where schools in Canada were once used as weapons against Indigenous peoples, the inclusive schools of reconciliation will be places of healing, empowerment, and hope. Children today are growing up in a nation where more than ever we have the opportunity to hear

each other's stories and recognized the commonalities of our shared humanity. It is in these relationships where reconciliation flourishes. (Katz & Lamoureux, 2018, p. 209)

Educators work tirelessly with children to promote a growth mindset toward learning daily. Through the development of a growth mindset shift in education itself, teachers will begin to give rise to the shifts necessary in society to cause systemic change. The critical deconstruction of barriers within our rapidly diversifying global communities and refusal to continue with what has always been done before will be the catalyst for the knowledge of an ethnically and culturally diverse new education system. Hopefully, Canada's educators will lead the way in deconstructing teaching through a predominantly white, Euro-American lens.

## References

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