

**Education 299**

**Summer 2017**

## **Equity and Schooling**

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### **Our goals are to:**

1. Examine relations within schooling and society by applying two frames of three parts each. The frames are at first glance heavily intellectual, but they have been shaped by decades of engagements with schoolchildren.
2. Apply these frames to professional discussions about our work in the class, in STEP, and in the broader society. All discussions should lead back to the lives of children and teachers in classrooms, whatever problems they have, whatever problems we have given to them.

### **Overview:**

This class is about the local level politics of education. By local we mean the stuff in your head and the words in your vocabulary. Over the next ten years, you are going to meet an amazing array of students and situations, and you are going to have to think and talk about them with words borrowed from other situations, some with a long ugly history, some tied to lovely dreams about how things should be. The words we are given to understand children often hinder our efforts to make things better and to live our dreams. Class bias, racism, sexism, and homophobia are as much problems of the tongue as of political economy. And twentieth century schooling has brought us new and mostly bad words for the conversation. Aptitude, ability, intelligence, motivation, skill, and success are all easy to use, easy even to measure, but all misleading as well. The last set has been doing us in, and in educational settings they are stand-ins for the jobs done by more traditional devils like race, class, and gender. They get in our way when we are thinking about children.

*. . . all one's life one struggles toward reality, finding always but new veils. One knows everything in one's mind. It is the words, children of the occasion, that betray.*

- William Butler Yeats (1932)

### **Another Take on the Course**

Words like *equity* evoke our most fervent hopes for education, prompting us to imagine how schools might just be in the best of worlds. Before we follow through on our *equity* impulses, with the luxury of a year in STEP, we get to tune our ideas about practices and responsibilities to the real-life complexities of teaching and learning. With *equity* in mind, the goal of this course is to encourage a growth in our understanding and appreciation of the complexity of the classroom and its relation to the rest of the world.

We strive for responsible descriptions of what is really going on in *real lives with real people*. This means that we have to interrogate our conventional understandings, including the conventional concepts we use to think and talk about school. We proceed as if we should revise our personal dictionary of terms for kids, learning, community, intelligence, and so on, as part of our work for equity. Perhaps we need to figure out an altogether new vocabulary if we are to get our way.

We are not the first people to take on such a project. We use the work of others to help us think, talk, and act collectively in more responsible ways. Rather than direct our readings and discussion exclusively toward the search for immediate “best practices”—always as unsatisfying as they are simplistic—we will work with each other to identify ideas that are useful and/or problematic; for the next month, yes, but for ten years from now as well. Overall, the course ought to be good, hard fun.

### **A More Aggressive Take on the Course**

Throw a topic on the table—say, tracking, level playing fields, bell curves, abilities and disabilities, race and social class, caring and fairness (these last two are often pitted against reality)—and people will go at them with great regularity. Each problem will be taken seriously, opposing sides will get defined, policies and reforms urged, and moral fibers questioned and asserted. At the end of the day, the year, and even the generation, if all goes well, the changes will have been subtle (not trivial, but subtle), and the overall production and distribution of cultural and economic resources may look terribly like they always have. As teachers, our victories will be small, local, and, to that extent, heroically important.

Our course is designed to contribute to the subtle changes by interfering with our—yes, our—knee-jerk responses to the ways educational problems are usually defined and confronted. Our three main goals are perhaps in the opposite order than you might expect.

Our first goal is to transform the discussion of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and surprise!, ability and cognitive capacity differences. We have five weeks to solve problems that can't be solved in five years. This is not an excuse to stop trying. The magic bullet thing ain't happening, but we can get the conversation started. If we are good, if we really struggle to say what is on our minds, or stuck in the back of our minds, we just might develop a new place to stand in relation to the educational fair (and

unfair) usually thrown our way. As a people, it took us decades to notice that Wonder Bread is awful; and so we might do the same for its educational equivalent, say: the SATs (cookie-cutter questions, with little sustenance or taste). If you leave the course knowing that everything is political, we will have succeeded.

Our second goal is directed to how you think about the problems right in front of your face in your classrooms and teacher-room discussions. What are you going to do with the first child you don't like, or want to give up on, or find one hundred reasons to forget? Or what will you do when you hear teachers bashing children you love. You will not be alone in these problems. They happen everywhere called educative. As the problems of the children you are asked to save and nurture, they are also your problem. Better said, they belong to everyone. How are you going to worry about them? If you leave the course with a few different ways of talking about and responding to our own investments in the production of the very troubles we are trying to solve, we will have together made a contribution to subtle change.

### **Theory and Practice**

What a drag. We are going to have to deal with the theory and practice divide. It is an annoying game that teachers and researchers have been using to beat each other since the rise of schools of education. By the rules of the game, practice starts on Monday morning and ends with a standardized test, and theory starts when researchers talk down their noses at teachers. We will do our best to move beyond the battle, and in that way, perhaps, to do both of them a little better. So here is a position to consider.

One great trap in human thought is to divide knowledge into theory and practice. Our take, and so too Dewey (and later in the course, Horton and Freire): no theory, no practice; no practice, no theory. So the question always is how to do better theory and better practice. If your practice is not theoretically interesting, don't bother; if your theory doesn't apply to practice, don't bother (or call it a hobby).

No theory, no practice. Even dumb practice is driven by a theory, likely a lousy one. Without a theory and practice split, there would be no way, at least not in a self-proclaimed democracy, to maintain a sophisticated replication of injustices and inequalities. Without a theory and practice split, there would be no way for school people and researchers (also people, of a kind, although not always kind) to not learn from each other and to leave the vast darkness of the teaching and learning business so thoroughly unobscured.

### **Safety**

We like to promise a classroom in which everyone will be safe to say what is on their minds. At the very least, we will not be yelling at each other much. Whatever anyone says becomes part of the data for the class to work with. We are more interested in what people find necessary to say than in who says it.

We cannot promise a class where everyone will feel comfortable. If you are not uncomfortable now and then you are missing out on the opportunity to rethink difficult issues. You are here to help change the world. So get used to a little risk. Don't be safe with yourselves. We are all loaded with racist, sexist,

class biased, and/or homophobic tendencies among others. It is in our language and institutional pathways. Cleaning up is the work of a lifetime. Just think about how invested you are in being smart (or afraid of not being smart). Can you be smart without being unjust? It should be possible, but can you do it in a society well organized to use school performance (smartness) to divide the whole population into those with and those without access to rewards. Rearranging your relation to race, class, intelligence, and so on, will make you uncomfortable; discomfort does not mean a lack of safety.

### **Course Essential Questions:**

The course is designed to help you formulate answers to the following questions. Some of them you may never have complete and satisfactory answers for, while others we hope to move you closer to feeling like your answer is satisfactory.

1. What kinds of problems are people teaching in the United States going to run into --and reproduce--when teaching in American schools?
2. How are we conditioned to see students? What are the alternatives? (How *might* we see them? How *might* we be in community with them?)
3. What should school be?
4. How do we move from our current ways of thinking to ways of thinking that allow us to enact "school as it should be" in our own classrooms?
5. What does it mean to be a transformative force in schools and beyond?

### **Course Assignments and Expectations**

**Readings** – Please complete the readings listed before each class. These will be integral to participation in activities and discussions each day.

**Assignments** – There are three types of assignments that you are expected to complete: small-group scenario; group reading response (one prior to each course meeting); and culminating assignment. Come to each class ready to talk, argue, and question. Please don't be easy with us. If you are going to make change in the world, you are going to have to be tough. Might as well get some practice shots.

1. **Small-group Scenarios** – In every section, a small group will come up with scenarios that highlight connections between the week's readings and practice. The scenarios are an opportunity for you to make direct connections between theory and practice. Teaching is full of unwieldy and confusing situations that are never as neat and simple as some of our readings may make it seem. Each week, you will work in a group of 3-4 students to come up with a scenario from your practice that is explicitly connected to **one** of the readings

and present that scenario with a few questions for discussion. Our expectations for these scenarios are as follows:

- Scenarios should be written using Google Docs and shared with your TAs by 6pm 48 hours before you present it so that we can give you feedback before your presentation.
- There should be a **clear connection** between the scenario and themes or problems identified in the reading you have been assigned.
- The scenario should be **drawn from your experience** in a school setting. *It should not be hypothetical.* The experience does not have to have taken place during your time in STEP, but could be from prior teaching experience or something you witnessed during other work with children in schools.
- The scenario should be **described in specific detail**. We should know any relevant details about the context of the school and the identities of the children and the teacher. It can be tricky to define what is relevant, but do your best, and feel free to ask for help. **Use as little interpretation as possible**, and leave the interpretation to the group. In other words, the details of the event should be written with more verbs than adjectives. Rather than saying, "Sarah was exhausted when she came to school," say "Sarah put her head on the desk and went to sleep during the Do Now."

**Example Scenario 1:**

*It is the day of Back to School Night at your placement. You witness an exchange between two teachers, Teacher A and Teacher B. Teacher A, a middle class White man, teaches AP science while Teacher B, a middle class White woman, teaches a science course for English Language Learners (EL). The EL class is composed primarily of Spanish speakers, but also has students who speak Mandarin, Farsi, and Tagalog. Teacher A says, "You won't have any parents show up for your EL class."*

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Why do you think that Teacher A said this? What assumptions is he making about the students and their culture(s)?
2. How is Teacher A ignoring his own middle class White culture? What effect does this have on the incident?
3. How is culture being used as an excuse for the teacher's racism or lack of understanding? How does this incident "meld culture and socioeconomic status"? (Ladson-Billings, p. 108)
4. If parents don't in fact show up for Back To School Night, how could a teacher form relationships with students, their families and their communities? Base your answer on the Ladson-Billings reading and your experiences.

**Example Scenario 2:**

*Your CT tells the students that today they can choose new seats. The class has slightly more girls than boys.*

*She tells them: "You can pick your own seats, but make the right choice. If boys decide to sit with all boys and girls decide to sit with all girls, that is sexist. Why is that sexist?"*

*A boy raises his hand. "Because boys and girls are pretty much the same."*

*“Yes.” She affirms him for having the right answer. Is she being “neutral” or imposing her views?*

**Discussion Questions:**

1. “If you are not interested in proclaiming your choices, then you have to say that you are neutral. But if in being neutral, you are just hiding your choice because it seems possible to be neutral in the relationship between the oppressors and the oppressed, it’s absolutely impossible.” (103-104, Freire) Consider how this quote might connect to the scenario.
2. In this situation, does “neutrality [...] work in favor of the dominant”? (104, Freire)
3. Was this CT displaying a socially reproductive (conformist) model or transformative view of education? In what ways could you help teach using a transformative model of education?

2. **Group Reading Response** - Before each class, you are responsible for writing a brief response to the session’s readings. This will be a collective google drive doc that you will create with your group. You will share this response with the members of your small group and are encouraged to engage with your group members’ responses. We imagine that an interactive conversation will be more useful to all of us. Your course section will have a Team Drive that will contain a template for your group’s reading response. Essential and reading questions for each session will be in the Modules in Canvas.

You will be assigned a reading group with whom you will share written reflections for the course readings. The goal of these groups is to facilitate out-of-class discussion over time and to track the evolution of your thinking (in conversation with others). Additionally, these conversations will serve as fodder for in-class conversations. These reflections will live on a single group Google Doc.

Please reflect and respond before the start of class. To support this serving as a conversation, each group should establish and maintain a time to post/respond.

The expectation is that you reflect on anything in the readings that you found relevant, challenging, or interesting and to respond to things that others have written. These responses can be short or long--this is up to you--but we would like to capture your thinking in an artifact that is collectively constructed.

We will provide you with questions to consider for each of the readings, but you are not required to answer them.

3. **Culminating Assignment: Scenario Analysis Write Up (to be further explained on Day 3; to receive feedback, you will share this with another group on Monday, September 18; the final write-up will be due Friday, September 29).**

Goal: Students create a resource depository that can be used in their future classrooms to address issues salient to this class and apply the theory that we engaged with. Ideally, this depository will allow any educator at any grade level to better address the issue included in it.

Structure: Students will work in groups of five and pick one theme they want to explore (e.g. the work of smartness/ability in small groupwork, teacher-student interactions, etc.). As a group, you will write an overview of the issue. This should discuss what it means to apply the class frameworks to illuminate these issues in schooling practice. This overview will also explain why you chose it and what they hope someone would get from it. Each student will then contribute one of the following artifacts to the collection: an annotated article, lesson/unit plan or analysis of an existing lesson/unit plan, annotated bibliography, film (with instructions for use), presentation, an analysis of a common pedagogical practice, etc. These artifacts could be resources for use with students, with colleagues, with families of students, or any other community related to schools. They can also simply be a visualization of your thinking process as you practice using the “1,2,3” or other course frameworks to re-think the taken for granted dynamics in everyday teaching practice. You might ask yourself how a seemingly simple lesson on photosynthesis or sentence structure can be re-worked to position students --and their abilities-- against one another (or not). Or, you might ask yourself \_\_\_\_\_.

**Please do whatever you think is most meaningful as you practice *using* the tools we’ve encountered to analyze and re-shape your everyday practice.** Our aim is to begin to move into McDermott’s “Three,” or at least begin to *unlearn* the deficit and difference stands we often take for granted. Doing this in collaboration with your colleagues is essential. We all “slide” into deficit and difference frameworks. We need to help each other notice *when* we slide and work together to figure out how to re-imagine our practices, our schools, and our society.

After each group turns in their final, we will share all the projects with the entire class. We hope this provides a wide array of useful tools for all of us.

**\*A note on adjustments (for all assignments)** – We want to leave room for adjustments, particularly ones suggested by you. We can do this in class and/or in our informal coffee meetings that are a great place to say what has to be said.

## Schedule of Readings

**All readings can be found on [Canvas](#) except for the two links provided on Day 4 and the book *The Bluest Eye* which you will need to purchase or borrow in order to read for Days 3, 4, and 5:**

Session & Date	Readings	Assignments & Due Dates
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<p><b>1</b> Monday 8/21</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Goodwin, Charles. (1994). Professional Vision.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tatum, Beverly. (1997). Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? Chapter 1: Defining Racism: Can We Talk?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Start Group Reading Response (1st entry completed by start of class Thursday, 8/24. Copy Template for Group Reading Response (<a href="http://tinyurl.com/GroupReadingResponse">http://tinyurl.com/GroupReadingResponse</a>) into your group's own shared folder into your section's Team Drive). To copy, go to File and the Make a Copy...</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Scenario sign-ups (8/21)</li> </ul>
<p><b>2</b> Thursday 8/24</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> McDermott, Ray. (1997). Achieving School Failure 1972-1997.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Three Analytical Lenses of Schooling-STEP Chart</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Olsen, Tillie. (1961). I Stand Here Ironing.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3</b> Monday 8/28</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tyack, David. (1993). Constructing Difference: Historical Reflections on Schooling and Social Diversity.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dewey, (1899). School and Society. Chapter 1: The School and Social Progress.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Morrison, Toni. (1970). The Bluest Eye. Foreword; Afterword; Autumn.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>4</b> Thursday 8/31</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Morrison, Toni. (1970). The Bluest Eye. Winter.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Excerpts from: Deutsch, M. (1963) The Disadvantaged Child and the Learning Process; Mills, C. (2008) Reproduction and transformation of inequalities in schooling; Lareau, A. (2011) Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Steinberg, Stephen. (2011). Poor Reason.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> McDermott, Ray. (2017). Beyond the Culture of Poverty, Again.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>5</b> Thursday 9/7</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Morrison, Toni. (1970). The Bluest Eye. Spring &amp; Summer.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> hooks, bell. (1994). Chapter 5, Theory as Liberatory Practice.</li> </ul>	

<p>6 Monday 9/11</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> McIntosh, Peggy. (1988). <i>White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack</i>.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Frost, Amber. (2017). Baffler “The sad song of privilege”</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> hooks, bell. (1994). Chapter 6, <i>Essentialism and Experience</i></p>	
<p>7 Thursday 9/14</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Lee, Stacey. (1998). Chapter 6, <i>Reflecting again on the model minority</i> (Focus on first two pages and last page)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Patel, Leigh. (2012). Chapters 6 &amp; 12, <i>There’s Learning and Then There’s Schooling &amp; Rethinking Contact Zones</i>.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Spade, Dean. (2010). <i>Be Professional!</i></p>	
<p>8 Monday 9/18</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Horton &amp; Freire. (1990). <i>We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on Education and Social Change</i>. (Excerpts from Chapters 2 &amp; 3, “I couldn’t use all this book learning” (pp 38-55) &amp; “Is it possible to <i>just</i> teach biology?” (pp 102-108).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> hooks, bell. (1994). <i>Introduction and Chapter 1, Engaged Pedagogy</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Baldwin, James. (1963). <i>A Talk to Teachers</i>.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Culminating Assignment: Scenario Analysis Write Up.</b> Receive feedback, you will share this with another group on this day.</p>
<p>9 Thursday 9/21</p>	<p><i>No class meeting. Work on final and give feedback to your partner group.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Culminating Assignment: Scenario Analysis Write Up.</b> The final write-up is due Friday, September 29</p>

**SESSION ONE: Monday, August 21**

1. Goodwin (1994) Professional Vision
2. Tatum (1997) Defining Racism. Can We Talk?

**Essential Questions:**

- What kinds of problems will people teaching in US schools run into and reproduce?
- How are we conditioned to see students? What are the alternatives? (How might we see them? How might we be in community with them?)
- *Goodwin Questions:* What is the professional vision that acquires teachers? How is it sustained? What would it take to change it?
- *Tatum Questions:* What is the smog? How does it function? What is required to combat it?

## **Learning Objectives:**

### **Goodwin**

- Students identify and articulate the ways a professional vision for teaching is created in STEP and beyond.
- Students reflect on how the professional vision of teaching has impacted them as students and as pre-service educators.
- Students reflect on what would be necessary to change the professional vision of schooling/teaching.

### **Tatum**

- Students reflect on the ways in which smog impacts them as students, pre-service teachers, and people.
- Students reflect on the ways in which they are enacting the smog as students, pre-service teachers, and people.
- Students begin to think of ways of combating the smog, both individually and in collaboration.
- Describe one experience that you've had as a pre-service teacher with the smog that Tatum describes.
- Construct ways that someone in that situation could: identify the smog; push against the smog; and create an alternative to the smog.

The Goodwin paper is a strange entry for an education course, but in some way central. This course is not about your opinions. There is a way of speaking that says we do not care less about your opinions than about what you do. Goodwin has mined a level of description that reveals the constraints people put on each other as members of professions, constraints that can organize your behavior and make mincemeat of your opinions. We can use Goodwin to make explicit the constraints put on new members of the teaching professions.

The concept of professional vision unites the various topics covered throughout the course. Professional vision "... consists of organized ways of seeing and understanding events that are answerable to the distinctive interests of a particular social group" (p. 606). The professional vision of educators shapes interactions with students, families, colleagues, community members and other stakeholders in the educational system. It is our hope that through making the dominant professional vision of education explicit, we can learn to out-think it.

Tatum is perfectly aware that one cannot be a racist by oneself (and similarly, and sadly, one cannot be a non-racist by oneself). It is not about one's opinion, nor even about one's pain. Tatum is great at moving beyond the definition of racism as individual prejudice. Racism is more like a smog, or a virus. It moves about and sits in individual minds, of course, but cleaning out the minds will not change the more fundamental patterns of race tied to money, tied to real estate, tied to education, tied to the vocal cords (the best predictor of school failure), tied to access to bail bonds, tied to the use of tutoring services, tied to the distribution of gyms, coffee houses, libraries, shopping centers, and, on the other side, the absence of garbage pick-up, medical facilities, ambulance service (the best predictor of murder rates),

and the presence of toxic waste dumps. It is all about us (each in our own way, and out of our way), and often can't be seen in its consequences until it is too late. Racism, whether we embrace it—and many do—or try to hide it (again for the many do), struggle to escape it, or sign-on directly to do away with it, takes constant diligence and recalibration with ever shifting, and ever shifty, social environments and political alignments.

## **SESSION TWO: Thursday, August 24**

- 1. McDermott (1997) Achieving School Failure 1972-1997**
- 2. Three Analytical Lenses of Schooling (Chart)**
- 3. Olsen (1961) I Stand Here Ironing**

### **Essential Questions:**

- What are the dominant ways of thinking about schooling (i.e. deficit and difference lenses)?
- How do the various stands (deficit, difference, political) influence teacher practice, and how do they relate to the structure of schooling and society writ large?
- What are ways that we think it's *them* and not *us* (ie students, not teachers; other teachers, not us)? What is the impact of looking at *them* apart from *us*?

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Main Takeaway: Even if we *want* to work against inequality, if we don't *fully* engage a political stand (with all its underlying components), we will continue to think and act in ways that reproduce the inequities we want to challenge.

### **McDermott**

- Analyze how Ray addresses how the “smog” affected his own thinking, and use our analyze the “smog” we can find in our own thinking.
- Begin to recognize that the taken-for-granted stances/“professional visions” (“deficit,” “difference”) as cultural constructions that are *not* inevitable and that there is a potential to move to an alternative stance (ie. “political”).
- Begin to name, unpack, and give examples for each of the three “stances” or types of “professional visions” for educators, particularly the two most taken-for-granted stances (give examples from our own experiences as students and teachers).

### **Three Analytical Lenses of Schooling Chart (“The 1,2,3”)**

- Begin to distinguish the underlying components of the *three analytical lenses* (e.g. theory of learning, purpose of schooling, *unit of analysis*, etc.) [*unit of analysis* - the focus of the 'what' or 'who' that is being analyzed (i.e. individuals, groups, interactions between groups, society, a society that makes groups. As Ray McDermott (1997) notes, we are shifting our unit of analysis (or focus) from “children and their characteristics to culturally designated characteristics and their children” (p. 114).]

### Olsen

- Analyze (1) *how* “smartness”/ “dumbness” and “supportiveness”/“unsupportiveness” are being “made” (2) *how* these categories are attached to the daughter and the mother.
- Recognize how we, as readers, are part of that “making” and how our professional vision affects this process.
- Recognize how normative interventions rely on a deficit or difference lens that generates pity. Recognize that pity does nothing other than make *them* feel inadequate and make *us* feel good.

### Three Analytical Lenses (The “1,2,3”):

You will hopefully leave this class with three places to stand in relation to most educational struggles. With three ways of thinking at your disposal, you should be able to analyze and transform the influence of received categories on your activities as teachers not just in classrooms, but in faculty meetings, policy discussions, and teacher gossip rounds. As teachers, you will get a daily education on how to think about what is wrong with kids. On a good day, you will find ways of excusing them for their problems. These are the first two places to stand, and we hope to develop, with your help, a third place that allows us to rethink the first two.

The first instinct is to blame the kids for everything, sympathetically, of course, but that they wear the problems of their upbringing makes them difficult to deal with. This stand is rampant in schools.

The second instinct is to blame society, which is a more enlightened approach, but not of much help. It is not too welcome in teacher rooms, and there is a reason why. At the very least, it is hard to find “society”, and worse, talking about it usually leaks back into blaming those with the fewest resources.

The third vantage point (in no way instinctual) transforms the first two by putting US—teachers, educational researchers, policy pontificators, funding agencies, hiring agencies: helpers and hurters of all kinds—back into the picture. The unit of analysis in the study of children, and in any engagement with social problems, is not just the people in trouble, but the people who are in various ways misunderstanding and often prospering on the troubles. We are all involved, not because we want to be, and not because we understand what we are doing, but because of the way things are organized.

The three vantage points don't rule each other out, but they give everyone involved a few ways of looking at and confronting the problems in both their most visible and most hidden layers. Figuring out how to use the three places to stand is the job that faces us. We start with the assumption that we all love kids, that school is a great place to get them many tools they need in life, and that the things that get in the way can be challenged and removed. The rewards for doing this kind of work are colossal, but it ain't never easy.

More on easy and hard. Everything we are giving you to read is in some ways hard. This is not because we are trying to be annoying. Nor is it because we are show-off academics—okay, okay, we are often heavily bookish, but we are not just show-off academics. There is more at stake. You have entered a difficult field. Teaching is a tough job, and armed with nothing more than American common sense, you

will not outrun the forces that are keeping our kids and their teachers in such difficult situations. So we are giving you some “hard” stuff to read, not Hegel, Marx, Derrida, Foucault hard, but hard in the sense, in the hope, you will have some new resources while you are working on the practical problems of managing and teaching children. That’s our excuse. The children are in infinitely better shape than schools sometimes make them appear, but we have to think hard and move fast if we are to deliver them the world they deserve.

*We lie, as Emerson said, in the lap of an immense intelligence. But that intelligence is dormant and its communications are broken, inarticulate and faint until it possesses the local community as its medium.*

- John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (1929)

### **SESSION THREE: Monday, August 28**

- 1. Morrison (1970) Afterword and Autumn**
- 2. Tyack (1993) Constructing Difference: Historical Reflections on Schooling and Social Diversity**
- 3. Dewey (1899) Chapter 1, *School & Social Progress***

#### **Essential Questions:**

- For what is school? For what is school not? What are the broader non-school forces that shaped and continue to shape for what school is and is not?
- For who is school? For who is school not? And what is the process by which these “whos” are defined?

#### **Learning Objectives:**

- Students describe the professional vision that Dewey proscribes for schools.
- Students use their experiences - as students and as TCs - to explain how they read the text, e.g. to define what they understand as Tyack’s professional vision.
- Make explicit linkages between the work Morrison engages in with *The Bluest Eye* and the work of schools.

There sure is plenty of diversity in the world, and we sure find a surprising number of ways to cut it up conceptually and institutionally. In the US, we divide by race, gender, sexual orientation, class (always operative, but not always articulated), and often, without even noticing the problems we cause, cognitive power (or just cognitive speed). In each case, the popular effort is to describe, and blame, the differences on nature, taken one person at a time, right down to their genes. Other cultures do it differently enough to alert us to the arbitrariness of our own ways of proceeding: height, fertility, strength, memory demand, spiritual tendencies, and supposed beauty have all taken their place as a focus for socialization and sorting in various places and various times. With so much variation to work with, how do we so consistently reproduce the same social structure over and over. Notice the words here: how do we do it. We are all involved.

Dewey’s *School & Society*: Here it is. In the U.S., if you are not doing Dewey's version in education, Dewey is the thing you are not doing; nothing else quite counts like that, not Piaget, not Vygotsky, not

Skinner. With that influence comes the strange circumstances of Dewey's educational vision: that few teachers have ever gotten the chance to carry his formulations to completion, and, despite all the talk, almost no one reads him, not even many of those who cite him in educational research. It is essential that you read him.

#### **SESSION FOUR: Thursday, August 31**

- 1. Morrison (1970) Winter**
- 2. Excerpts from Deutsch (1963), Mills (2008), & Lareau (2011)**
- 3. Steinberg (2011) Poor Reason**
- 4. McDermott (2017)**

#### **Essential Questions:**

- How does the culture-of-poverty ideology -- and its isolated focus on “ugliness”(not “beauty”) and “failure” (not “success”) -- benefit “us” and not “them”?
- What does it mean to pity? What work does pity do in schools and in society? Who does it benefit? What lies beyond pity?
- Fifty years ago, a culture of poverty took center stage as a theory of school failure. Poverty, it was decided (and backed by much research) can interfere with human development. Children raised in poverty, it was thought, would be short of stimulation, direction, role models, vocabulary, delay of gratification, and motivation, and they would hit school not just behind, but maybe unable. Arguments about the culture of poverty dominated education policy for a decades. Linguists, anthropologists, renegade psychologists raised objections and produced better research. By 1980, the term was gone. Some of us thought it was over until recently. The culture of poverty is now back. These two papers are bookends for the debate: one from 1963, the others from 2008-2011. We will grasp their details and look for alternatives.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

- Identify how dichotomies are enacted in schooling and in society writ large. Identify the consequences of focusing on on the negative implications (not the benefits) that are organized around/by those dichotomies.
- Why are cultural explanations for inequality so appealing and lasting? What do they allow people to do and *not* do?
- Describe the culture of poverty ideology and explain its implications and consequences. Be able to identify --and challenge-- culture of poverty ideology in historical and contemporary thought (including our own).
- Turn into activity/LO: When, if ever, is it okay to attempt to change a child? Is it ever okay to change the cultural patterns that emerge and exist in a classroom? If so, under what conditions? If not, why not?

#### **SESSION FIVE: Thursday, September 7**

- 1. Toni Morrison (1970) Spring & Summer**

## **2. hooks (1994) Chapter 5, Theory as Liberatory Practice**

Sure is hard to imagine how to teach to and/or around all the difficulties Morrison explores. Are they problems or opportunities to think and rethink? Whose problems are they? Did Morrison get it right? Whatever might “right” mean? How many people are involved in our being where we are today?

### **SESSION SIX: Monday, September 11**

- 1. McIntosh, Peggy. (1988). White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack**
- 2. Frost, Amber (2017) Baffler “The sad song of privilege” (considering some other possibilities here - short straightforward critiques of privilege discourse)**
- 3. Hooks (1994) Chapter 6, Essentialism and Experience**

#### **Essential questions:**

What are the differences between rights and privileges?

What is useful about a privilege discourse in and out of schools?

What is limiting about a privilege discourse in and out of schools?

What is useful and limiting about speaking from one’s experience in the context of teaching and learning? How might this be different for teachers than for students?

#### **Learning objectives:**

Students link the Geography Baseball activity to structures of privilege and advantage and how schools are instrumental in sustaining and challenging these structures.

Students interrogate the usefulness and limits of privilege discourse in and out of schools.

Students consider the possibilities and limitations suggested by hooks as a possible alternative to privilege discourse.

**Need new Ray descriptive text.**

### **SESSION SEVEN: Thursday, September 14**

- 1. Lee, Stacey. (1998). Chapter 6, Reflecting again on the model minority (Focus on first two pages and last page)**
- 2. Patel, Leigh. (2012). Chapters 6 & 12, There’s Learning and Then There’s Schooling & Rethinking Contact Zones.**
- 3. Spade, Dean. (2010). Be Professional!**

How deep does the competitive urge go? How much tuition are you willing to pay to get an advantage? What are its downsides? For the kids? For you? Can we teach without it? Are there cultures that do without it? In schools? On what grounds? With what consequences? Is all competition dangerous? Can you stop doing it? If not, who is in charge? Take me to the manager, please.

Is your teacher preparation program making you into a passive recipient of a prescribed professional knowledge? Or are you being asked to actively produce and critically reflect? Giroux frames the

conditions that have threatened teacher's abilities to be transformative intellectuals. Giroux also pushes for a way to disrupt these threats. How can your own pedagogy become more political and your politics become more pedagogical? Giroux claims that teachers are responsible in taking on the role of shaping the purposes and conditions of schooling. How do you see the purpose of schooling? What are the conditions that you will create? How will your students, school, and society fit into your work?

**SESSION EIGHT: Monday, September 18**

**1. Horton & Freire. (1990). We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on Education and Social Change. (Excerpts).**

- a. "I couldn't use all this book learning" (pp 38-55) - Ch. 2
- b. "Is it possible to *just* teach biology?" (pp 102-108) - Ch. 3

**2. Hooks, bell. (1994). Introduction and Chapter 1, Engaged Pedagogy**

**3. Baldwin. (1963). A Talk to Teachers.**

Today we get to ask how Horton and Freire would handle the problems described by Deutsch, Wilson, and Morrison. Why did they have to work so hard at doing what would seem to just common sense? Why did both of them serve jail terms for their beliefs? Their version of common sense is going to be terribly difficult to operate on – it will be uncommon – in the public schools of California. What are our alternatives?

Spade shares an important lens and personal account on what it might mean to be a transformative intellectual. As a white, queer, transgender person who grew up in poverty and is now a legal academic, Spade stands at the intersection of lots of kinds of systemic advantage and disadvantage, and helps us to think about what it means to be in a position of power where one is often simultaneously disempowered. What does it mean to take on a "professional" identity when it might erase part of who you are? What are the responsibilities and costs of being a marginalized person in a powerful institution? How does that play out on our bodies and in our interactions with others?