



Oregon Educator Equity Summit Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality in Education

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Session Goals

- ← Examine the intersections of race, gender, and class through the lens of Critical Race Theory.
- ← Explore how race, gender and SES intersect at the micro level of individual experiences while reflecting interlocking systems of privilege and oppression
- ← Critique the impacts of race, gender, and class in our schools and communities

Guiding Belief

We need to be in relationship with each other and listen to each other to develop empathy for our colleagues who have different life experiences

Who am I?

John Lenssen

White

Male

Working Class

Heterosexual

Cisgender

Able Bodied (currently)

Elder

Who am I?

Dr. Marvin Lynn

- ▶ African American
- ▶ Male
- ▶ Leader
- ▶ Scholar
- ▶ Teacher
- ▶ Critical Race Theorist
- ▶ Working Class Background
- ▶ Married
- ▶ Father

Who am I?

Dr. Gayle Thieman

- ← white, female, cis-gendered middle class, **teacher educator**
- ← who comes from...
- ← who, loves teaching....
- ← who benefits from....
- ← who used to....
- ← who initially took....

Personal writing:
*What is your
racialized identity?*

WHO IS IN THE ROOM?

- ← Introduce yourself to someone new to you at the table.
- ← Share first name and something you wrote

What is Critical Race Theory?

Rooted in Critical Legal Studies

- ← Marxist legal scholars challenged the idea that law is neutral and value-free and immune to social, political, and economic influences
- ← Argued law reflects and legitimizes the dominant social order
- ← Focused on a collectivist orientation and did not focus sufficiently on race

Critical Race Theory

- ← Emerged in response to CLS failure to address issues of racism faced by people of color
- ← Rejects traditional civil rights discourse that excluded fundamental challenges to the status quo, that legitimized endemic myth of American meritocracy, and promoted “color-blindness”
- ← Key theorists: Derrick Bell, Geneva Crenshaw, Gary Peller, Neil Gotanda

Derrick Bell's "Racial Realism" and "Interest Convergence"

Racism is an integral, permanent and indestructible part of American society

- ← Confronts the liberal idea that racism is an aberrant belief of white, bigoted, lower class people

Interest convergence theory

- ← Desire of people of color to achieve "racial equality" will only be accommodated when it converges with whites
 - ← Propaganda advantage of Brown decision during the Cold War and economic advantage of desegregation for South's economy

Racial Realism

- ← Black rights are vulnerable when powerful white elites subvert these rights to support their own political & economic gains
- ← Yet Blacks must continue to fight against racism as a manifestation of their humanity which continues to survive

Cheryl Harris' "Whiteness as Property"

"Whiteness is valued as a property right in a society structured on racial caste"

- ← Interaction between race & property maintained racial & economic (& political) subordination of Blacks and Native Americans and Asian immigrants (1900's) and now immigrants from Central/South American, Middle East (Southwest Asia) and Africa.
- ← Chattal slavery in colonial times was based on race (while not all Africans were slaves, all slaves were "not white").
- ← Whiteness became associated with personhood and white privilege and with a property right that could not be shared with Blacks because they were by definition not-white
- ← Whiteness was also premised on "white supremacy" rather than mere difference

Tate on Race and Education

Intellectual inferiority paradigm:

Slavery was justified on the grounds that Africans were biologically and genetically inferior to whites, uneducable & unfit for anything other than domestic and field work.

Justified Dred Scott, Plessy v Ferguson, Jim Crow laws, & resistance to forced integration of white schools

Educational research on the “achievement gap” uses IQ, GPA, standardized test scores to explain why many students of color are not meeting academic standards when compared to white (often male) middle class students

Conceptual whiteness (school achievement & intelligence) vs conceptual blackness (gangs, welfare recipients & underclass) (Ladson-Billings)

“current instructional strategies presume that African American students are deficient & instructional approaches typically involve some aspect of remediation.”

Impact of Property Rights on Education

- ← Differences in property values/taxes determine educational outcomes
- ← More affluent communities with higher property values pay more taxes and get better schools for their children (Kozol, *Savage Inequalities*, 1991)
- ← Curriculum is a form of “intellectual property” and the availability of enriching curriculum = opportunity to learn (Anyon, 1980. *Social class and the hidden curriculum of work*)
- ← Institutional and structural racism cause poverty and impoverished schools and educational outcomes
- ← Oregon data: more funding and higher per pupil spending for white/upper/middle class schools (Riverdale, \$11,785) vs racially, ethnically, linguistically and culturally diverse districts (Parkrose, \$6,362 & Reynolds, \$6,640).
- ← Even in PPS (\$8,806) some schools provide additional electives teachers, resources & co-curricular programs due to parent/community fundraising

Audience Interaction

Where do you see these ideas in your school or community?

What are some ideas that you agree or disagree with?

- ← Audience Participation
- ← Raise hand to share
 - ← John & Gayle will bring microphone
- ← Marvin responds to audience question or comment

Intersectionality of Race & Gender: Kimberle Crenshaw

- ← Double marginalization
- ← Civil rights focused on experiences of Black men and feminist movement focused on experiences of white women
- ← Scholarship on gender privileges males and scholarship on race privileges whites
- ← Even when gender/race are considered, the focus is on white women (Peggy McIntosh: *Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*, 1989)

Intersectionality of Race, Gender, Class, Culture

- ▶ Violence against women often shaped by race and class
- ▶ Women of color are invisible & intersection of race, gender and class is underexplored
- ▶ Many women of color are burdened by poverty, parenting, lack of job skills—compounded by violence
- ▶ Multiple consequences for women of color, immigrants, economically poor women, women who face cultural prohibitions, language barriers, fear of deportation
- ▶ Often victimized by the agencies that should be helping them

The Urgency of Intersectionality: Say Her Name!

← https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality/discussion

Personal writing:
*How does your
gender impact your
racialized identity?*

Audience Interaction

Share something you
wrote with each other

Race and Profits: U.S. History

- ▶ Starting with the Constitution and then the first naturalization act in 1790, “White became the reference point for citizenship
 - ▶ A person’s relationship to “whiteness” determined her or his levels of privilege
 - ▶ Reinforced the use of race as a justification for enslaving groups of people (African), marginalizing & enclosing groups (Native nations) & dispossessing & deporting others (Mexican Americans, Asian-Pacific Islanders).
 - ▶ Reinforces the use of race to depress wages, segment the labor force & undermine worker solidarity
- Grassroots
Policy Project

Intersectionality of Race and Social Class

Racism in the US was intentional and constructed to exploit for economic benefits

Commodification of not-white humans:

- ← 3/5 compromise in US Constitution
- ← Jefferson—who sired 5 children by his slave mistress: Viewed such children “as more profit than the crop of the best laboring man”
- ← Franz Fanon wrote: “Anti-Black racism is not natural but is rooted in the economic imperatives of capitalism.”

Socio-Political Context:

Many poor white people do not see their interests aligned with people of color.

“Whites rally on the basis of racial pride and patriotism to accept their often lowly lot in life and vent their frustration by opposing any serious advancement of blacks.....Black people are the magical faces at the bottom of society’s well. Even the poorest whites, those who must live their lives only a few levels above, gain their self-esteem by gazing down on us.” Derrick Bell

Poverty, Class, and Race

Some white people assume all people of color share the same experience in response to conditions of social class.

Some white people assume that people of color share their same social class experiences (color blindness)

Some white people believe that if we address poverty, we will mostly eliminate racism

Audience Interaction

Discussion about Race and Poverty

- ← When is talking about poverty a detour away from talking about racism?
- ← Why is it meaningful to talk about poverty and class?
- ← What questions do we ask in order to deeply explore the intersection of race and class?

Culturally Responsive Teaching & the Brain. Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students: Zaretta Hammond (2015)

- ← Students need to believe they can learn and be successful in school
- ← Students need environments that are stimulating and a classroom community that encourages them to be curious
- ← Creating an intellectual environment is at the core of culturally responsive teaching
- ← Acknowledge implicit bias and structural racialization that reinforce a system of inequality
- ← Inequality doesn't need to look like Jim Crow; it takes the form of seemingly benign institutional practices that reduce and limit opportunities for people of color, poor people, and immigrants.

Closing

“Intersectionality draws attention to invisibilities that exist in feminism, in anti-racism, in class politics, so, obviously it takes a lot of work to consistently **challenge ourselves** to be attentive to aspects of power that we don’t ourselves experience.”

--Kimberle Williams Crenshaw

How will we challenge ourselves and each other to disrupt and dismantle the intersectional structures of oppression?