

Reading Reflection #5

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These three texts presented a lot of useful information. I found the definitions and clarifications especially useful, because seeing each term alongside one another helped determine the similarities and differences between the seemingly interchangeable words. For example, because they usually coincide with one another, the distinction between power and privilege was not as clear to me prior to reading the article (Open Source). I feel that, in my experience, these terms and the cycle of oppression are things that you pick up over time and are never explicitly taught or explained. I think that leaves open space for confusion and misunderstanding, which is not the best conditions for such important social issues.

My question is, "When should children be informed about these big topics?" I think it is worth explicitly explaining the workings of systemic oppression in school, but at what age level are the complex, interconnected ideas incorporated into the system recognizable to children? Personally, I did not have a conscious idea of these issues until I was much older and learned about social justice in my classes, and even then, they were not taught in such a clear interconnected nature. I think seeing all of the diagram with each an explanation of each term involved puts it all into focus.

Similarly, Nittle's article about stereotype clarified the difference between stereotype and definition for me and helped me recognize that some of the kids I work with at CPY may be generalizing their information about Asia (2016). I've noticed that more than one student slips and calls whatever Japanese thing we're working on "Chinese." I think this is because most of their interactions with Asian culture outside of CPY are related to China, so they may oversimplify and end up generalizing all Asian things to be related to "China." By expanding their experiences with Asian culture beyond Chinese (and even Japanese), then perhaps they can figure out their oversimplified view of "Asia" can become more complex.

I've actually had a similar experience with the negative "smart Asian" stereotype example given in the text (Nittle, 2016). My best friend is of Japanese and Vietnamese descent and she has always received good grades. However, sometimes other classmates would joke about how as a "smart Asian" her high scores were no surprise. In reality, she worked very hard to get good grades and was pushed by her parents to work hard in many different disciplines. The stereotype that school is "easy" for "smart Asians" is laughably false; each person is an individual and some put forth more effort than others.

I cannot think of a time when I myself have been affected directly by stereotypes, beyond a simple "You're tall, so why don't you play basketball?" To which, my answer was always "I don't like running."

In the final article about marginalized students, I immediately thought back to all of the pair or team activities I've completed throughout my time in school. More often than not, I was one of the last people to join a team. At the time, I never got the feeling of being deliberately spurned by my classmates; instead, I always believed the cause was my shyness and subsequent limited social interaction. After reading this article, I wonder if any of my teachers were ever exasperated and thought that I deliberately chose not to select a partner (Silverman, 1997).

At our service learning site, we have lessened the opportunity for marginalized students to become excluded in team-making exercises. Now that we have a classroom, we just tell students that are near one another to turn their desks; choosing teams is unnecessary. We've also moved some people around the classroom and made them switch seats with someone else in order to split up especially close students or potential distractions. Hopefully, through this method students have a fewer opportunities to become marginalized in our lessons.

Nittle, N. K. (2016, Jun 30). *What is the meaning of stereotype?* Retrieved from <http://racerelements.about.com/od/understandingrac1/a/WhatsaStereotype.htm>

Open Source Leadership Strategies. (n.d.) *Dynamic system of power, privilege, and oppression* [PDF document]. Retrieved from <http://opensourceleadership.com/documents/DO%20Definitions.pdf>

Silverman, S. (1997). Are marginalized students included in your lessons? [Excerpt]. *JOPERD*, 68. Retrieved from <https://www.questia.com/article/1G1-19580107/are-marginalized-students-included-in-your-lessons>

Notes:

Generalization: anything remotely asian is Chinese

Most encounters with Chinese, caused oversimplification (Nittle, 2016).

Similar to Asian stereotype in text, friend who was good in school didn't come easy (Nittle, 2016).

Stereotypes I belong to: white, female, tall, young adult

Avoid having students choose teams means no marginalized (Silverman, 1997).

I was always one of the last students to pair up/make a group in class, but I don't remember it being for cruel reasons, just that I didn't socialize so I didn't really know people (Silverman, 1997).

What should we do to teach kids about privilege and oppression? I know that until I had contact with lots of different types of people, I pretty much followed my parents example and never thought much about privilege beyond "staying up late is a *privilege* so it can be taken away" (Open Source).