

TEACHING
for a Culturally Diverse
and Racially Just World



edited by

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CASCADE Books • Eugene, Oregon

TEACHING FOR A CULTURALLY DIVERSE AND RACIALLY JUST WORLD

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Cascade Books
An Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers
199 W. 8th Ave., Suite 3
Eugene, OR 97401

www.wipfandstock.com

ISBN 13: 978-1-62032-110-2

Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Teaching for a culturally diverse and racially just world / edited by Eleazar S. Fernandez.

xiv + 266 p. ; 23 cm. Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 13: 978-1-62032-110-2

1. Theology—Study and teaching. 2. Clergy—Training of. 3. Multicultural education. I. Fernandez, Eleazar S. II. Title.

BV4020 T45 2014

Manufactured in the U.S.A.

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Teaching Disruptively

Pedagogical Strategies to Teach Cultural Diversity and Race

BOYUNG LEE

FROM A SPECIFIC TEACHING CONTEXT

WHERE RELIGION MEETS THE world! Click the webpage of the Graduate Theological Union, where I serve as a core doctoral faculty member, and the above tagline immediately catches one's attention. My school, Pacific School of Religion, is a member of the Graduate Theological Union, which is the largest theological consortium in North America. Commonly known as the GTU, its reputation for diversity is reflected in its composition of five mainline Protestant seminaries, three separate Catholic schools affiliated with different religious orders, and eleven academic centers inclusive of Greek Orthodox, Buddhist, Islamic, and Jewish studies. This diversity is also reflected in my classroom, where it is not uncommon to have students from various religious affiliations and denominations. For example, one year my Introduction to Christian Education class had students from approximately twenty different religious affiliations: most major mainline denominations, several different evangelical non-denominational churches, various New Thought and emerging churches, diverse branches of Paganism, different Catholic orders and dioceses, and one Buddhist tradition.

Although the students come from such diverse religious and denominational backgrounds, the majority of them come from white middle-class contexts. Almost all of them identify their worldviews as liberal or radical, coupled with a professed commitment to social justice work. However, from my Asian American point of view, the students' approaches to social justice, especially around the issue of race, are White American centered. Students vocalize a willingness to invite others to their privileged center, but the inviters always control the forum. In this context I constantly wrestle with two major tasks: 1) helping students to see the pitfalls of their antiracist gestures based on white privilege; and 2) educating them to become agents for a culturally diverse and racially just world.

Classes in which I pursue these two tasks can be considered disruptive at times because conflicts often erupt which may require my intervention. They also may be disruptive considering that I design my classes to intentionally disrupt students' worldviews. Furthermore, interactions in my classes may not flow smoothly or they may be methodologically resisted. Yet I have learned, as have other educators who teach from an antiracist and social justice perspective, that resistance, confusion, and disruption are necessary reactions to social justice pedagogy.¹ In the following sections, I would like to share some of the practical pedagogical principles and strategies I employ in my teaching to disrupt.

PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES FOR DISRUPTIVE TEACHING

Robert Kegan, a constructive developmental psychologist and educator, suggests that through an ongoing (evolutionary in Kegan's term) interaction with others and with our physical/cognitive/cultural environments, human beings develop an authentic sense of who they are and construct their truth accordingly.² Kegan suggests a three-way meaning-making process: Confirmation, Contradiction and Continuity.³ "Confirmation" occurs when a particular environment corresponds and supports peoples' already existing meaning-making systems. When new experiences, events, and opinions conflict with these existing worldviews, people are challenged to transform their current meaning-making system. Kegan calls this "contradiction." When people face contradictory events and contexts, they either emotion-

1. hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, 39.

2. Kegan, *The Evolving Self*.

3. Ibid., 113-32.

ally isolate themselves to maintain their existing framework, a process which Kegan deems unhealthy, or they incorporate new meaning through conjoining both "old" and "new" realities. Kegan labels this process of incorporation "continuity." People have a more mature sense of who they are once they achieve this incorporation, which is often called "transformation."

This three-fold dynamic provides significant pedagogical insights for theological education for a culturally diverse and racially just world. Antiracist pedagogy, or more broadly social justice pedagogy, aims at transformation of the person—the agent working to build a just world. Bearing that in mind, antiracist educators hope that students will live a just life and move beyond mere knowledge acquisition concerning social justice issues. I have learned from my own experiences that an antiracist, or social justice, pedagogy that transforms people often requires Kegan's 3C processes: Confirmation, Contradition and Continuity. I have developed these three categories into the following eleven pedagogical principles and practices.

CONTINUITY

In Kegan's dynamics of continuity, the stage of transformation, students integrate their old and new worldviews and cultivate a new meaning-making system. In a theological class designed to build a culturally diverse and racially just world, students, personally and pastorally, commit to building a culturally diverse and racially just world and to living antiracist lives. For such transformation, I suggest the following three principles.

Principle 1: Teach Race as an Integral Part of Your Class Subject

In the syllabi of many of my colleagues who work toward racial justice, I have observed that racism and other social justice issues are only included as separate units. Although having a unit or two is much better than nothing at all, such an approach gives the implicit lesson to students that race and social justice issues are not central to theology. They are subjects that students can study, that is, if they want to. Many faculty members from the dominant culture who operate out of tokenism misuse this approach. If a similar approach is taken by racial and ethnic minority faculty members, those students, who resist to engage race itself, often misunderstand as if professors are imposing their own agenda on students.

As many contemporary theologians such as liberation, contextual, feminist, and postcolonial theologians have proven, "all theologies are

contextual.”⁴ Theologies as contextual disciplines invite people to be compassionate Christians and work for justice. The Bible, Christian doctrines, and Christian practices are products of their own contexts, and therefore, critically examining their culturally and racially biased contexts is a just and appropriate way of teaching them. Having discrete units on race and social justice issues would be effective only when those subjects are addressed as an integral part of the class throughout the semester. Whenever I argue for this first principle, some of my colleagues complain that there are not enough textbooks in their theological disciplines that deal with race matters. For people like my colleagues, I suggest the following two pedagogical principles.

Principle 2: Expand Your Boundaries of Textbooks⁵

It is only a recent phenomenon that racial ethnic minority theologians’ published works are readily available. However, situations vary depending on theological disciplines. For example, in the field of religious education, except for a handful of excellent books by African American colleagues, there are not many religious education books that reference worldviews other than those of white middle-class heterosexuals. This is not because there are no non-white religious educators who work out of their own racial and cultural contexts, but, rather, there is a lack of awareness of that reality in some religious education venues, particularly in market-driven publishing worlds.

As there are so few education textbooks written about non-white religious settings, my task as a teacher is to complement, pragmatically, traditional textbooks’ templates. In my Introduction to Christian Education course, for example, I emphasize critical analysis of students’ own social-cultural locations and assumptions. Students are asked to produce reading reflections, short papers, research papers, curriculum design, and other assignments that elicit critical analyses of students’ own culture and ministry contexts. Without knowing one’s own social-cultural assumptions and worldviews, one can easily (mis)appropriate others’ cultures and experiences.

Concurrently throughout the semester, students also work in small groups on shared projects that focus on learning and teaching a religious tradition other than their own. Foci have included Greek Orthodox, African

4. De La Torre and Floyd-Thomas, eds., *Beyond the Pale*, xxiii.

5. This principle is an excerpt from my own article, “Broadening the Boundary of ‘Textbooks’ for Intercultural Communication in Religious Education.”

American, Asian American, Hispanic, and Queer approaches to Christian religious education. In other words, through small group work students are expected to learn about the religious education of an *other*; they are to think out loud about some tradition whose rich and long-lived wisdom is not widely available in printed form in the North American religious education field. After studying the traditions and practices of religious education of a different cultural group for a semester through participatory observation (including conversations with community members and reviewing available literature), each group presents what they have learned to the class.

However, since the class challenges students to engage race and anti-racism as an integral part of the class throughout the semester, it is unsurprising that there is struggle with or resistance to this methodology. Genuinely learning about and from the *other* requires my students to become aware of their own biases and assumptions, which can be a humbling experience. Notwithstanding this, every year I witness group presentations that include “coming out” stories, including students’ realizations of their own privileges and racism, intentional and unintentional ignorance of other traditions, and students’ awareness of their resistance to genuine conversations with their neighbors. Frequently, students list the small group work as the best learning experience of the class in their course evaluation. If my students have to learn about a particular cultural group’s approach to religious education only through a few available books, articles, and my lectures, they could easily become the privileged beneficiaries of theological tokenism.

I do not intend to say that my students are completely transformed by my class and their small group work within a semester. However, they at least learn that there are great traditions with which they need to be in conversation and from which they can learn. More importantly, I hope that they learn the critical necessity of anti-racism work for their ministry and how to pursue it. Critical analysis of one’s own contexts and assumptions, and learning about and from others, are only some of the ways to expand the boundaries of our traditional concept of textbooks. Finding appropriate ways to expand your “textbooks” will require a thorough needs assessment of your students and local resources in your area, and I will address this subject in *Principle 5*.

Principle 3: Pay Attention to Your Implicit Curriculum

Recently I visited an Asian theological school that has only one woman on its faculty. Unlike my expectation that the woman faculty would be the most loved and respected teacher by students, as she might practice feminist

pedagogy in a male dominant Asian theological school, students secretly complained to me that in fact she was the most patriarchal and authoritarian teacher. Some students even said that if being feminist means becoming such an authoritarian teacher, they do not want to be feminist. There must be justifiable reasons for her reputation. Whether her characterization is true or not, her students' evaluations on her pedagogy challenge us to think of our own pedagogical practices: Whether our explicit and implicit curricula resonate with each other.

In his book *Educational Imagination*, Elliott W. Eisner, a noted curriculum theorist, introduces broadened concepts of curriculum and offers a comprehensive definition of curriculum. Discussing the subject of curriculum in public educational contexts, Eisner says that each school offers students three different curricula: the explicit curriculum is the one that is the actual content, consciously and intentionally presented as the teachings of the school; the implicit curriculum is the one that, through the school's environment, includes the way teachers teach and interact with students; and the null curriculum are those ideas and subjects in educational programs that are withheld from students.⁶ By leaving out options and alternatives, the school narrows students' perspectives and the range of their thoughts and action. Thus the explicit curriculum, which is often regarded as the entire curriculum, is only one facet of teaching. In fact, Eisner points out that the implicit and the null curricula might have more influence over students than does the explicit curriculum.⁷

Beneath the complaint of the students about their only woman professor is a complaint signifying the discrepancy between her explicit and implicit curriculum. She may be an excellent scholar of feminist theology, however, in her pedagogical practices, she seems to contradict feminist pedagogical principles: facilitating democratic and liberating classroom process, respecting students' experiences and stories as much as textbooks, generating knowledge through a communal process, etc.⁸ As Eisner states, no matter how liberating our explicit curriculum—the content of our teaching—is, if our implicit curriculum—the way we teach—is not liberating, our teaching for justice is not as effective as hoped.

Then what are the good antiracist pedagogical practices that theological educators need to embody so that students learn not only from our explicit teachings, but also from the ways we teach? First we need to understand the nature of antiracist and social justice pedagogy. Antiracist and

6. Eisner, *The Educational Imagination*, 378.

7. Ibid.

8. Shrewsbury, "What is Feminist Pedagogy?," 6.

social justice pedagogy tries to build an egalitarian society in which no one is discriminated against on the basis of race and any other hierarchical and discriminatory categories. Next, the classroom should also be egalitarian. In the classroom, the teacher is not only an expert of knowledge who teaches, but also a learner who has the humility to learn from students, who bring with them rich wisdom and different life experiences. Paulo Freire lists the following characteristics of non-egalitarian classrooms,⁹ and challenges us to reflect on our own teaching practices:

- a) the teacher teaches and the students are taught;
- b) the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;
- c) the teacher thinks and the students are thought about;
- d) the teacher talks and the students listen—meekly;
- e) the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;
- f) the teacher chooses and enforces his/her choice, and the students comply;
- g) the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;
- h) the teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;
- i) the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority that she or he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students; and
- j) the teacher is the Subject of the learning process while the students are mere objects.

Freire names the above pedagogical characteristics as “banking education,” which considers humans as adaptable and manageable beings. Teachers who use the banking education model treat students as if they are the passive recipients of knowledge deposited by teachers. Such knowledge often has nothing to do with the pressing issues and situations that students wrestle with in their lives and communities. He warns, “The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world.”¹⁰ In other words, no matter how hard we work to bring antiracist and social justice commitments to our teaching, if our pedagogy looks more like the above descriptions of a non-egalitarian

9. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 73.

10. Ibid.

class, we are basically teaching our students not to be antiracists and not to take social justice commitments seriously; this is the (mis)power of implicit curriculum.

Principle 4: Create a Physical Environment that Embodies Antiracist and Justice Pedagogy

Every spring I teach Introduction to Christian Education as a required course for the Master of Divinity degree. The school registrar assigns a sizeable classroom capable of holding thirty to forty students. The room typically has forty-plus desks and chairs lined up facing a white board with a tall podium in front of it. Before each class my teaching assistants and I spend a chunk of time rearranging the room, i.e., arranging the chairs and desks into a big circle and removing the podium from the room. I do this tedious work every week to embody some of my pedagogical assumptions, namely: 1) the professor is not the only teacher from whom class members receive new information for I also am looking for new insights from students; 2) students are practice teachers with one another and with me; and 3) more precisely, we not only study the subject matter through written texts, but also through "living texts" such as students' wisdom, insights, life experiences, cultural backgrounds, and critical analysis. Thus, I practically highlight the importance of social justice and democratic pedagogy in that students' own reflections, reading, speaking, and writing about their ministerial contexts are integral to our pursuits.

Let us imagine for a moment that after I share such assumptions, I do not embody them in our learning environment. Although I present myself as a non-authoritarian teacher who respects students' opinions, imagine if students are not allowed to speak in the class; that there are no conversation opportunities for students. My students would think that the social justice pedagogy I promote is just talk. Students may be encouraged to participate in class discussions and activities, but if the physical environment of the classroom hinders it, the social justice pedagogy is less effective. Students will not trust what I say about antiracism and social justice because I do not practice them in my own teaching. When goals, pedagogy, and physical environment are compatible with one another, students better understand social justice issues so that good ideas and good experiences, theory and praxis, congeal.

CONFIRMATION

Kegan's dynamic of confirmation suggests that it is critical for educators to meet their students where they are and to acknowledge their current meaning-making system. This means that in antiracist and social justice classrooms, it is important to be sensitive to and patient with people's dis-ease and resistance to the topics of race and antiracism work. If educators rush to contradiction, emphasizing deconstruction of their racist framework of mind without affirmation and analysis, many students will perceive the educational event itself as criticism of their own being and culture. To support the process of confirmation, I suggest the following principles.

Principle 5: Do Your Needs Assessment

Kegan's dynamic of confirmation is a principle that is affirmed by most adult education scholars.¹¹ For example, Jane Vella, a prominent adult education scholar and activist, provides twelve principles for adult learning. Among those principles, she lists needs assessment as the first principle.¹² However, unlike common perceptions that needs assessment is knowing what our students want to know, she defines it as "participation of the learners in naming what is to be learned."¹³

Assessing students' needs is often confused with assessing what they want. Needs assessment can include what students want to learn, but what they want is not necessarily the same as what they need to learn. Often, in antiracist classrooms, we are confronted by students who do not want to engage the race issue at all. Some confrontations occur because of the dis-ease that the subject matter creates, and others because some students do not want to give up their privilege and comfortable status quo. Still others acknowledge its importance, but do not consider antiracist work as relevant for their contexts. For these students, antiracism and social justice work is not what they want to learn, but from a teacher's perspective, it is what they really need to learn. Therefore figuring out effective and appropriate ways of teaching the subject is crucial for the success of antiracism and social justice pedagogies. This process of discernment is what Vella defines as needs assessment.

11. Gupta et al., *A Practical Guide to Needs Assessment*, 13.

12. Vella, *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach*. Vella's twelve principles are: Needs assessment; Safety; Sound relationship; Sequence; Praxis; Respect for learners as decision makers; Learning with ideas, feelings, and actions; Immediacy; Clear roles and role development; Teamwork; Engagement; and Accountability.

13. *Ibid.*, 4.

According to Vella, needs assessment is specifically listening to the voices of both teachers and learners: "adult learners must take responsibility to explain their context; the teacher must take responsibility to contact learners in every way possible, see them at work if possible, and be clear about what she can offer them."¹⁴ From the teachers' perspectives, this means that teachers listen deeply to students' stories and teach from where they are. In this sense, it is understandable why Vella defines needs assessment as the "participation of the learners in naming what is to be learned."

Needs assessment as deep listening is also the key pedagogical method of Paulo Freire. Freire, when he was a beginner teacher, tried to teach people how to read using traditional literacy methods, i.e., equipping people with the skill of literacy in a non-reflective, non-conscientizing way such as making them memorize alphabets; but he was not successful.¹⁵ Through his failure, Freire realized that learning to read and write in a way that was separated from people's reality would not work. He was convinced that learning "must lead to a critical comprehension of reality."¹⁶ His new literacy program was based on conscientization and on making a connection between learners' situations and the subject of learning. With this new program, he was able to teach 300 illiterate sugarcane farm workers to read in forty-five days.

Freire's literacy education program consists of four phases.¹⁷ The first phase is a deep listening period—a needs assessment time. This was the phase before the official start of the literacy education program, during which Freire and his team spent extensive periods of time in the village where their learners lived. Participating in informal conversations with residents, observing their cultures, and listening to their life stories, the team identified the vocabularies of the communities: the words and themes that the people were most emotionally attached to and repeatedly used. Later those words and themes were presented in symbolic ways, e.g., pictures, to those villagers so that they could read their own realities by analyzing the elements of the scenes. Typically each scene portrayed conflicts found within the community for people to recognize, analyze, and attempt to resolve as a group. The group was then asked why things were that way, and that naturally led them to critically analyze their realities in the larger social contexts. Only in the last phase were the learners presented discovery cards, the learning cards that contained the researched vocabularies from the first phase.

14. Ibid., 5.

15. Gadoti, *Reading Paulo Freire*, 7.

16. Freire, *The Politics of Education*, 24.

17. Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness*, 37–51.

The above Freirian approach to literacy education demonstrates the importance and methods of needs assessment. Spending time with our students through formal and informal contacts, talking with them in a school cafeteria, learning about their life circumstances, identifying their fluency in antiracism and social justice work, assessing their learning styles, listening to their pressing issues and concerns, worshiping and praying with them, and so on are all possible ways of assessing their needs. Through these contacts, we can identify why certain students are resistant to antiracist pedagogy and what will be the most appropriate ways and intensities to teach them. However, the reality of North American theological faculty life, especially for racial and ethnic minority professors, makes it difficult for us to spend as much time as we would like with our students. Therefore, I suggest that needs assessment be incorporated as a part of the class. Moreover, even if we do the initial needs assessment through formal and informal contacts with our students, it is important for us to assess our students' needs on a regular basis during the course. The ongoing needs assessment allows teachers to adjust their curriculum according to the changing situations of the class.

As incorporated ways to assess students' needs, I suggest the following methods adopted from Jane Vella.¹⁸ All of them should be done at the beginning of the semester.

- Shared Survey: In the beginning of the semester when the teacher has a full list of the registered students in the class, via email the teacher asks a set of three or four questions that are later forwarded to the entire class. In a class that deals with race and social justice issues, you can ask students to describe 1) their involvement in antiracism work; 2) their hopes for learning after reading the syllabus; and 3) a recent situation where they designed or taught issues related to antiracism.
- Learning Biography: In the early part of the semester invite your students to reflect on their best learning experiences in antiracist and social justice work, particularly experiences that helped them to move in a new direction.
- Vision Building: Invite your students to describe what their lives will look like when they have learned antiracism and social justice work in the class. Vella emphasizes that, at this point, it is important for teachers to share how they are engaging their commitment in their own lives.

18. Vella, *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach*, 247-49.

Principle 6: Assess Needs and Create a Safe Learning Community through a Liturgical Rhythm

Occasionally, I am visited by students who claim that they do not feel safe in my or another colleague's class and, therefore, they cannot learn. Whenever I hear such cries for help, I hear two different things. Some students mean that they do not feel physically or psychologically safe due to the presence of a fellow student in the class, due to past traumatic memories triggered by something in the class, or due to the authoritarian teacher. Other students mean that the class is academically too challenging for them and thus they feel left behind and unsafe. Their cries or complaints appear to be two very different things, however, Vella says that they are closely related to each other.¹⁹ The principle of safety enables the teacher to create an inviting setting for learners. People are not only willing to learn but are eager to learn when they feel safe. Although safety does not reduce or take away difficulties and challenges involved in learning, it supports learners' efforts to stay.²⁰ In other words, safety and creation of a learning community are in a reciprocal relationship. Vella particularly emphasizes the importance of creating a safe learning community if the learning experience has transformation as a part of its intentionality; i.e., race and social justice issues.²¹

There are many ways to create a safe learning community. Firstly, I strongly emphasize paying attention to the implicit curriculum of your class and especially your teaching style as described above in *Principle 3*. Secondly, I suggest devotional rituals led by the professor and students. In a class that integrates antiracism and social justice issues, two very difficult subjects, it is critical for teachers to set a tone that does not blame certain groups for every wrongdoing or describe others only as victims. Even if there is some truth to such claims, dichotomized blaming does not help students to have authentic and open conversations. Opening the class with a devotion can help to set the tone. Moreover, unlike other typical graduate schools, theological schools have many second or third career students who come to us after giving up much better paid jobs, and some of them even sell their homes for their educational expenses. Although they are not seeking their professor's affirmation, when it happens, their motivation for learning is increased. As Vella says, the feeling of safety emanates from the trust that students have in their teachers and colleagues, and thus in the learning

19. Ibid., 71–84.

20. Ibid., 8.

21. Ibid., 4.

process.²² Building trust without affirming their journey, which sometimes involves personal and familiar sacrifices, is not easy, yet I personally find that providing such affirmation in a worshiping context is powerful.

Typically, I lead the first devotion of the class, in which I share stories from my personal journey as a theologian and teacher that are related to the subject matter of the class. Since race and social justice issues are integrated into every class I teach, my sharing is specifically about my journey as a postcolonial feminist religious educator. During the first devotion, I also invite students to name, briefly, their experiences and goals in the class by asking: "What is your one-word image of religious education that you experienced?" "What is your one-word goal that you want to achieve after you take the class?" These are needs assessment questions that invite students to name their own learning, as Freire and Vella emphasized. Student sharing is recorded and I try to frequently refer back to the comments throughout the semester (Vella's Principles # 4: Sequence and Reinforcement). In a devotional context, the class also creates a class covenant including principles such as keeping confidentiality, respecting introverts and ESL students, acknowledging humans' physical needs, etc. Obviously, the goal of creating the covenant is to help the class to create a safe learning community.

Subsequent opening devotions are led by an individual or group of students. Devotion leadership, which should take no more than ten minutes, is a course requirement. Students can be creative in terms of the format and style of their devotion. The only two instructions that I provide are 1) the devotion should reflect students' own contexts—racial, cultural, social, and religious; and 2) their devotion should make a connection to the subject of the day that requires students to have read and critically reflected in advance on course materials for the day. Through their devotional rituals, I assess their past and current experiences that influence their learning and their level of understanding of that week's readings and subject matter.

Principle 7: Multiple Intelligences are Kith and Kin to Antiracist and Social Justice Pedagogy

Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences²³ is no longer new for theological educators. Many of us make intentional efforts to utilize different intelligences in our classes. Notwithstanding that, I would like to reiterate

22. Ibid., 9.

23. Gardner, *Frames of Mind*. His nine intelligences are linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, and existential intelligences.

their importance in antiracist and social justice pedagogy, not just because using them is a good pedagogical practice, but because it is a matter of justice. Among nine intelligences that Gardner proposes, *linguistic* intelligence and *logical-mathematical* intelligence have dominated the traditional pedagogy of western societies.²⁴ The problem here is that the standards for excellent linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences are closely tied to race and class in Western society and its education. For example, the language people use in everyday conversations both reflects and shapes the assumptions of a certain social group, i.e., white middle and upper class heterosexual male.²⁵

According to Basil Bernstein, a prominent British linguist and sociologist of education, to be successful in a class-based society like the U.K. or the U.S. means that one is able to use what Bernstein calls the restricted or elaborated language code.²⁶ As an educator, he was interested in finding reasons for the relatively poor performance of working-class students in language-based subjects compared to their counterparts from middle and upper-middle classes. Among many reasons, he concluded that, in working-class families, people use mostly restricted language code, but at school elaborated code is taught as the norm, a communication style to which working-class people lack access. In other words, through education, western societies have promoted the ideology of a particular group as the objective norm, and thus have been able to keep the status quo. Therefore, in antiracist and social justice pedagogy, it is inevitable for teachers to intentionally use different intelligences.

Principle 8: Help Students to Learn Through Praxis

Racism, antiracism, and social justice are not subjects that one can learn through mastering knowledge. Subject fluency requires each participant's commitment, involvement and ongoing efforts toward the transformation of the society. Therefore, teaching a class that integrates antiracism and social justice in classroom contexts alone has its limits. There needs to be a way for students to engage in antiracist and social justice work or projects, and I specifically recommend small group projects.

24 Campbell, "Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom," *In Context*, 12.

25 Littlejohn and Foss, *Theories of Human Communication*, 178.

26. Bernstein, *Class, Codes and Control*. Elaborated code is a communication style that is complete and full of detail. Restricted code is shorter and condensed, and requires background information and prior knowledge.

One key characteristic for almost every racial and ethnic community in North America is the sense of community.²⁷ Traditionally, in these communities, learning and teaching were done in communal contexts. For example, George DeVos, who has compared American and Japanese science classroom processes, reports specific cultural differences of individualistic and communal education.²⁸ In an American class, the teacher gives assignments and elicits divergent ideas and proposals, but does not try to arrive at a conclusion or consensus. There are implicit understandings and expectations that individuals may have diverse thoughts about what is observed. In a Japanese classroom the situation is almost reversed: the class starts with children's various views and most of the class time is taken up with students' discussing or changing their position. The teacher gradually focuses upon the major issues involved in understanding the subject, asking questions until the students form a consensus about the subject or about the meaning of what they have observed. In sum, even in a science class, American students learn that the central goal of their education is the development of individual autonomy in thoughts and actions, but Japanese students learn the centrality of community with common ideas. In individualistic American classrooms, an educated individual gains knowledge as private property and in communal Japanese classrooms knowledge is gained as the community's.²⁹ Therefore, beyond the fact that humans are communal beings, we as teachers need to teach our subjects, particularly race and social justice, in a way that respects racial and ethnic community's communal culture. We need to help our students learn how knowledge can and should be generated through a communal process.

Through engaging a small group praxis project, our students can learn ways to implement race and social justice issues in their own pastoral contexts concurrently. Instead of solely learning theories and praxis in a classroom setting, or learning theories in class and later practicing what they learn in their own contexts, students engaged in a small group project can immediately apply what they learn in their presentation to their classmates.

CONTRADICTION

Kegan's dynamic of contradiction suggests that educators need to create moments for students to critically reflect on their current meaning-making systems. In antiracist and social justice education, challenging students to

27. Hui and Trandis, "Individualism-Collectivism," 225-48.

28. DeVos, "Dimensions of the Self," 149-50.

29. Watt, *Individualism and Educational Theory*, 138.

revisit ideological foundations of their current views of race is critical. For this I propose the following two principles; one is on the institutional level and the other is on the faculty teaching practice level.

Principle 9: Ask "Why Questions" Regarding Your School's and Your Own Curricula

Antiracist and social justice education in theological schools cannot be achieved by one concerned faculty member's teaching. Without changing the entire institution's ways of operating and curriculum assumptions, our work is only partially done. There are three major schools of thought in the field of curriculum studies: traditionalist, conceptual-empiricists or revisionist, and re-conceptualists.³⁰

Traditionalism and conceptual-empiricism are dominant approaches to current education. These approaches endorse that education and knowledge are value-free and objective. Traditionalists believe that the purpose of education is to deliver good knowledge to the coming generations, and hence once students master certain level of knowledge, the goal is achieved. In the traditionalist approach to curriculum design, there is no room for students' experiences and ideas. Educational institutions and experts decide everything. The conceptual-empiricists or revisionists question how to deliver that knowledge appropriately to students. They integrate the research of psychology and other disciplines to determine how certain age groups of students learn better. Utilizing developmental psychology, they organize certain activities to help students to learn according to their age capacity. However, students' experiences still do not find a home here. The purpose of considering other disciplines is to produce generalized results for all, and thus, educators can predict the effects of education.³¹

Unlike these two schools, re-conceptualists believe that education often reflects the social structure and ideologies of the dominant groups, and thus they ask "why questions" in each stage of curriculum development. They believe that education that does not ask (whether intentionally or unintentionally), "Who is being benefited and who is being left out in our current system?" becomes the main tool of status quo maintenance. I believe that it is crucial for marginalized communities to ask "why questions" as well as "what and how questions" of our educational system. Among these three schools, it is obvious that antiracist and social justice pedagogy is in sync with the re-conceptualists.

30. Giroux, *Curriculum and Instruction*.

31. *Ibid.*, 14.

So, on an institutional level, how can theological educators ask the “why questions” in our curriculum? Pacific School of Religion, where I teach, requires every faculty who teaches required courses to submit their syllabus to the entire faculty for discussion and approval. The school’s stated mission is “serving God by equipping historic and emerging faith communities for ministries of compassion and justice in a changing world.”³² One of the key commitments of the school in achieving this purpose is through advancing racial justice. For this to happen, the school voluntarily requested to be audited for institutional racism, and the students, the staff, and the faculty have been engaging in antiracism work for a long time. As a part of their antiracist work, the faculty agreed that our individual courses should also embody the school’s commitments, which resulted in this decision for syllabus review. When the faculty reviews each other’s syllabus, we particularly pay attention to how antiracism work is done in the class and whether the scholarship of racial and ethnic theologians is respected, particularly in the choice of textbooks and other reading materials. In regard to this practice, some colleagues from other theological schools wonder if this is a violation of academic freedom. It may be, but the faculty of PSR believes that advancing racial justice work cannot be done on an individual level, and we all need each other as checks and balances for the communal work. This type of practice is only possible when deep trust exists among the faculty. Therefore, each theological school will need to figure out together the best practices for antiracism work in their school’s context.

Principle 10: Practice Problem-Posing Teaching Methods

As a concrete teaching method for antiracist and social justice pedagogy, I find Paulo Freire’s problem-posing method used in his literacy education program extremely insightful. As briefly described in *Principle 5*, in Brazilian literacy education, Freire used picture cards that portrayed the reality of the learners; particularly conflicts in the community. Then, learners were asked to read the reality by asking “why questions.” Through this process, the learners were able to analyze their reality in connection to the larger systematic issues in their society. This process of conscientization eventually led people to be the agents of the change that they wanted to see.

Based on the needs of the students we assess, antiracist teachers need to identify a medium through which we can help students read the reality of racism in which they themselves consciously and unconsciously participate.

32. The direction statement of Pacific School of Religion. <http://www.psr.edu/direction-statement>.

Being mindful of utilizing multiple intelligences will help us to find a creative medium. That medium can also be lecture. Many people seem to misunderstand that if they are committed to non-banking education, they should not lecture any more. However, as long as your lecture engages students' realities, Freire states that it can be a good problem-posing method.

We have to recognize that not all kinds of lecturing is banking education. You can still be very critical while lecturing . . . The question is not banking lectures or no lectures, because traditional teachers will make reality opaque whether they lecture or lead discussions. A liberating teacher will illuminate reality even if he or she lectures. The question is the content and dynamism of the lecture, the approach to the object to be known. Does it critically re-orient students to society? Does it animate their critical thinking or not?³³

The goal of antiracist pedagogy is not to persuade our students through our opinions and thoughts, but, rather, to transform reality through listening and being influenced by others, and changing ourselves. Both our students and we can be agents of transformation for each other through genuinely listening to each other and reflecting and processing with each other.

Principle 11: Think about Evaluation before You Teach and Use Focus Groups to Qualitatively Evaluate Your Class

When we think about evaluation, we typically consider it as the last thing that happens in teaching or something that we do after we finish teaching. However, in antiracist and social justice pedagogy, I suggest that we think of it even before we teach. Evaluation should be thought of alongside needs assessment. Based on our needs assessment, we set and adjust our goals of teaching. Our needs assessment provides a picture of where our students are, what they need to know, and how. Next, we should think about how to assess their learning and transformation. The shared survey, learning biography, and vision building statement that were introduced in *Principle 5* can be redistributed to each student. Students then can be asked to provide some sense of how they would evaluate their own learnings based on the statements they created in the beginning of the class.

In antiracist and social justice pedagogy, our evaluation should also consider the different needs of our diverse student populations. What typical white middle-class students need is probably not the same as what our

33. Shor and Freire, *A Pedagogy for Liberation*, 40.

racial/ethnic students need. For this, I suggest using focus groups.³⁴ If possible and in order to get a balanced evaluation, having three different groups will be ideal: a white student group, a racial/ethnic student group, and a mixed one. Using open questions from the needs assessment, a group of about three to eight students, depending on the size of the class, can meet for about an hour. To create an honest conversational environment, it might be better if a TA or a student facilitates the group. If possible, videotaping the conversations for a later review by the professor would be ideal.

Another method that I find effective is using Survey Monkey to send a few open-ended questions to every student in the class. Because students can choose to be anonymous, some students may feel that they can be truly honest about themselves, their own learning experiences, their classmates, and the professor. Including questions about the class's implicit and null curricula will provide a helpful resource for the professor to use to reflect on his or her teaching practices and to revise the class for the future. The accumulated Survey Monkey evaluations will illuminate certain student patterns which in turn will provide us with insights for (re)designing our courses.

In evaluating our courses, I also strongly advocate for teacher's self-evaluations. Some of the topics that we need to critically reflect on are: whether our explicit and implicit curricula are resonating; whether we intentionally left out certain subjects and students; how we dealt with resisting students; what creative teaching methods utilizing multiple intelligences were used; and whether our own relationship with our TAs embody egalitarian leadership. As Paulo Freire says, we are not only teachers, but also learners³⁵ who need to be transformed by antiracist and social justice pedagogy. Without critical self-reflections, at some point our growth as teachers may cease.

NOT SO DISRUPTIVE TEACHING FOR TEACHING DISRUPTIVELY?

I titled my chapter, "Teaching Disruptively." Teaching for a culturally diverse and racially just world is disruptive in nature because it challenges the status quo. However, the disruptive teaching methods that I have described are not so disruptive. They are only disruptive in the sense that they are faithful to the original meaning of education in a world where the original meaning is often lost or dismissed. The etymology of the English word *education*

34. For detailed guidelines for using focus groups for evaluations, see Krueger and Casey, *Focus Groups*.

35. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 68.

teaches us that education is to lead out or to draw out.³⁶ Education is to help people find a truth that is already within them. It is not just a teacher transmitting knowledge to the young, but, rather, it is helping learners to be the subject of their own learning, and thus to be transformative agents in the world. If every teacher is faithful to the original meaning of "education," then no matter what we teach, our education will disrupt the world that is so complacent with the status quo.

In this chapter, I have allotted more pages to the Confirmation section than Continuity and Contradiction. Disruptive teaching methods start from deeply knowing our students. In my own teaching practices I have experienced that once I do a thorough needs assessment that leads to establishing a safe learning community, about 60 percent of my teaching is done. From my needs assessment I get insights for appropriate teaching methods, content and evaluation. Through my initial and ongoing assessments, I am provided opportunities to establish genuine relationships with my students. As I conclude this chapter, I would like to reiterate the importance and centrality of Confirmation for all teachers. Without knowing our students we cannot help them to be the agents of transformation for a culturally diverse and racially just world. May we both—teachers and students—become partners for mutual transformation for the reign of God on earth: *"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."*

36. Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 5. *E-ducare* (to draw out); *E-ducere* (to lead out).