

The Importance of Multicultural Sensitivity in an educational setting

The paper I have written is based upon my perspective of the education system and the causes and effects of the relentless inequality in our country and world. I have lived my whole life in a small city in Massachusetts where white people make up only 14% percent of the population. I have seen the education system ignore their struggling children to downplay the major issue. I have also seen what people can become when their freedom is ripped from their hands, and what the constant discrimination and profiling can do to a person's morals and perspective of our world. The level of confusion and anxiety their children must endure is the starting point of the cycle that most racially/ethnically diverse people are unable to break free of. Some argue that these people have poor decision-making skills, or that they are inherently bad people. Yet, these arguments come from those who don't look at the facts, only the results of their own wrongdoing. The fact is, we are critically harming a large portion of our population because of the continued biased discrimination, and selfishness that is promoted in our capitalist system. The result; we have created an enormous socioeconomic gap that is racially segregated that inevitably leads to crime that serves as the only way to feed your family, or put clothes on your back. This issue is caused by closed-mindedness and misinformation, and it trickles all the way down to early educators profiling against the children of color in their classrooms starting the cycle with a new generation of children. My paper is a policy framework for an educational organization aimed at the teachers and administration. Its intention is to inform them from an open-minded perspective, with a goal to persuade the audience into taking action against the multicultural insensitivity. The reader would consist of anyone entering the educational field, as well as the administration and faculty staff who work in the same organizational culture as the students. The policy framework is meant to spark discussion on the issue at hand, adding more voices creates a stronger sense of urgency to reform the educational system. By entering a perspective into the discussion that is based on serving the entire human race by helping the disadvantaged can hopefully change the attitude and mindset of the people who don't understand the complexity of the issue.

The main goal of a teacher, mentor, or educational role model is to help the students strengthen their understanding of what the world is and expand on the student's preexisting knowledge. This is meant to be accomplished by opening the student's mind to something new and describing its importance. When working with your peers there is the potential to learn and inform as well. The educational setting is about growth, to take what we know, and take the next step with every new piece of information. What you add to the discussion is important, your opinion and belief system behind it can help others continue growing their understanding of what it means to be human. Although, organizational cultures aren't that seamless in reality, opposing perspectives and different backgrounds can also make these discussions much more difficult to navigate which disrupts the educational discourse. These opposing perspectives are very often created from racial tension. In order to combat the barriers that block the conversational path, there needs to be a collective understanding of the unbiased viewpoints in the organizational culture.

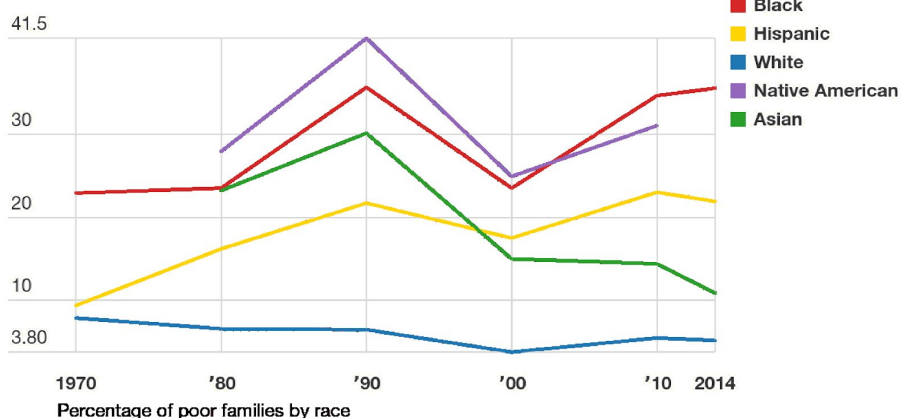
To break down the education system's flaws, we have to look at the bigger picture. The discrimination and profiling of African, Middle-Eastern, Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, and Hispanic people is not a specific problem to schools and universities, although it is the introduction to the racial and ethnic insensitivity that plagues our world.

Big picture facts:

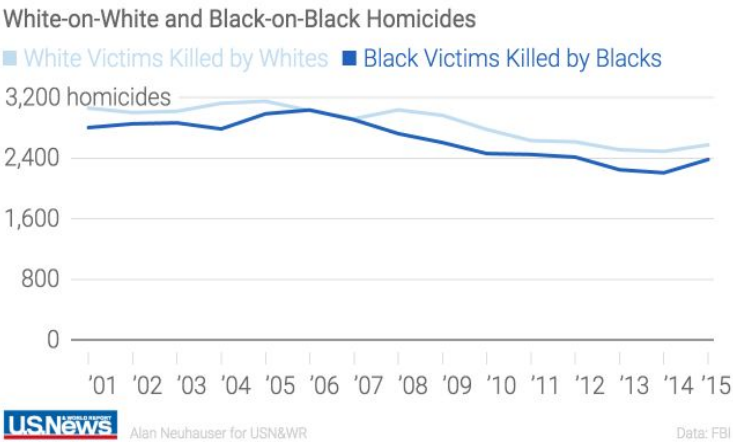


The non-white population is exceeding the white population in the United States. We are living in a dated system that was built to favor white people. 39 percent of African-American adolescents and 33 percent of Latino adolescents are living in poverty, which is more than double the 14 percent poverty rate for White children. The race-driven system is significantly damaging far more communities than it is supporting, and there is no positive outcome from this.

Families in poverty



The families-in-poverty chart shows how White people are drastically in a much better socioeconomic status than all other races. Poverty inevitably leads to petty crime, which eventually matures to violent crimes and crime organizations. The phrase "black on black crime" is often used to diminish these facts, and the opposers state that black people are



inherently more violent. This is disproven by analyzing the crimes committed against the same race, and is visualized in the homicide chart to the left. Between the years of 2001 and 2015, same-race homicide rates for White people and Black people follow the same curve with Whites having a slightly higher number of homicides. The charts prove to us that this system is unfair and unjust. It doesn't make ethical or logical sense to continue a way of living like this.

Negative factors of the inequality in educational settings:

The privileged position doesn't have to be a negative one, although it is much too often used as a negative tool to continue separating the socioeconomic classes. Ignorance plays a large role in the creation of a privileged racist mindset, which strengthens their ideology that they're in the right with their actions. Generational wealth began hundreds of years ago when racism was even more prevalent and direct. The redlining and segregation throughout cities and schools was blamed on the poverty and crime that was only a product of their own racist discrimination. Our society has matured and diversity programs have been implemented in many schools, but now segregation happens much more quietly through the power of privatization.

Private schools, boarding schools, and private universities claim that they're "colorblind" in the selection of incoming students. This selection method is not a solution, but rather a way to remove themselves from the conversation. The term "colorblind" insinuates that the color of a person's skin doesn't matter, or isn't seen. Which is false, since the human brain constantly makes unconscious biased decisions based on a person's appearance. It also carries the inference that the colorblind schools don't see racism as an issue, and that the minority and racially diverse communities are not facing any disadvantages in our culture.

Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Students by Location and Sector, 2018–19

Location/Sector		White	Hispanic	Black	Asian	Other
New York City	Public District Schools	16.1%	40.9%	22.3%	18.0%	2.7%
	Private Schools	66.9%	12.6%	10.2%	5.7%	4.5%
	Public Charter Schools	4.3%	39.0%	51.7%	2.7%	2.3%
Rest of New York State	Public District Schools	62.1%	18.5%	10.2%	5.5%	3.7%
	Private Schools	76.1%	7.0%	7.7%	5.2%	4.0%
	Public Charter Schools	13.7%	21.7%	57.8%	2.9%	3.9%
State Total—All Sectors		46.6%	25.0%	15.8%	9.2%	3.4%

These conversations should start taking place as soon as children start making observations on physical traits. Misinformation is typically passed down from family members, friends, or just by watching and listening to the child's role models. The formative years of an adolescent's life is where their moral code and ideologies begin to form, the spread of biased misinformation creates a significant negative effect on the child and to the people around them. The imbalance undoubtedly affects a child's opportunities for a successful life. It makes it especially harder to achieve the same education, and can heavily affect their physical and psychological health as well. Setting our global population of children up with the proper resources will benefit the entire human race and the future generations.

Taking action:

In the educational setting, it is our duty to provide the students, teachers and administration staff with a full understanding of the complexity of the racial injustice. In college, preservice teachers need to strengthen their multicultural awareness and sensitivity to adequately provide their students with the knowledge and resources they need to enter our society with a truthful understanding of the position our global culture is in. Unfortunately, our colleges and universities are lacking these fundamental lessons. Typically, multicultural awareness is brought up and discussed in schools, yet the actual action of making a change to the negative attitudes and beliefs are often not directly encouraged.

The article "Changing Preservice Teachers' Attitudes/Beliefs About Diversity" discusses this issue. The author, Author Garmon, conducts interviews with one of his student-teachers, Leslie P., where she opens up to her predominantly white upbringing and the misinformation that became part of her belief system.

"I remember a lot of negatives in the media. (Pause) Well, we lived about an hour north of Detroit, and I know that some things I learned in school and some things I heard that I associated with Detroit as being an almost entirely African American city, so therefore when I heard negative things about the crime and all those kind of things in Detroit, I just assumed, you know,...I just put two and two together and I thought, well, you know, the crime all stems from the African American people that are in Detroit"

Small towns are often home to large communities of white people, and it is very common for the majority percentage of a teaching staff to have the same homogeneous background that Leslie had. Without the proper education on varying cultures, these teachers are often complicit to hate crimes and profiling. Garmon listed intercultural experience, support groups, and educational experiences as the main factors in contributing to Leslie's change in attitude and belief towards cultures she was not a part of.

These factors mimic the results of the research in another study-based article "Changing Preservice Teachers' Attitudes/Beliefs About Diversity". In this paper, a group of preservice teachers participate in a cultural learning experience, where each preservice teacher was paired with a student that was

racially/ethnically diverse and spent ten hours outside of the classroom with them at birthday parties, the children's sporting events, family dinners, and whatever else the child was interested in. The resulting reflections from the preservice teachers correlate to the interviews with Leslie, where at first, their attitude was biased, but reformed into an open-minded belief system that learned to love the multicultural aspect of teaching.

The mindset that physical traits define who you are as a person is strong in the white community, as we enter a technological and scientific Age we must inform the uneducated on the facts of the issue. In order to create a healthy future for the human race, we must work toward a new culture that promotes multicultural sensitivity.

Implementing a strong focus on multicultural awareness into every level of education is necessary for our society to surpass the grip that racism has had on us, but there will still be a wide spectrum of opposing beliefs and perspectives. To create true justice in the education system and every other industry, we must start focusing our time and energy into positive actions based on helping others rather than ourselves; spreading love rather than hate.

“So I say to you, walk with the wind, brothers and sisters, and let the spirit of peace and the power of everlasting love be your guide.” - John Lewis

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