

Title

Ending our myopia? Deconstructing race and racial inequality within teaching thinking resources used in English secondary schools

Abstract

Teaching thinking programme resources are increasingly popular across England school spaces. Significant research, per Alexander (2009), Mercer et.al (2008) and Education Endowment Fund (2018) support positive academic progress and attainment outcomes that teaching thinking offer. Others promote whole school benefits of using teaching thinking resources which develop student potential by attainment through a “growth mindset” (Dweck, 2006).

Dominated by Western socio-psychology per Vygotsky (1978), Bakhtin (1981) and others, teaching thinking programmes offer outcomes to schools to enable students who will “learn how to think, reflectively, critically and creatively, and to employ these skills and techniques in the co-construction of a meaningful curriculum and associated activities” (Burden, et.al, 2006).

However, the origins of teaching thinking are rooted in postcolonial perspectives of non-Western scholars. These scholars, such as Fanon and others envisaged a dialogic pedagogy that encourages the epistemological curiosity of learners, recognizing through “*critical consciousness*” (Freire, 1972) participants will develop awareness to engage in “*dialogical action*”, such as asking questions about conditions and arguing for their rights.

Thus, considering the tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT), this paper interrogates broad assumptions and ethical contexts of representation of the African Caribbean diaspora within teaching thinking resources, and seeks demonstration of outcomes towards dialogic action. This includes, per Lacy (2007), Moore (2008:498) and others, offering stakeholders opportunities to construct “*cultural toolkits*” which mediate and challenge racism, while developing a critical consciousness seeking to dismantle the “*hostile environment*”.

Throughout, the following question is considered: How *can teaching thinking tackle the ‘wicked’ problems of racial inequality?*

Keywords

dialogue; critical race theory; critical consciousness; representation; teaching thinking.

Biography

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I have taught in secondary schools and pupil referral units in London, Buckinghamshire and Devon. From 2019, I will be a doctoral student at the University of Exeter Graduate School of Education. My research focuses on consciousness, teaching thinking and race within dialogic education. I have written for a number of different publications, including the essay “H.I.M” in the anthology “Boys Don’t Cry: Masculinity in Schools, published by Routledge (2019). I am the host of Rural Vibrations, a weekly talk show showcasing the experiences of the African diaspora in the rural South West of England on Imperial Voice Radio.

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