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**Part I**

Educational practice is changing rapidly in our society. It has changed drastically in the past due to immigration to the United States. Gollnick and Chinn state that the minority races, such as Hispanics, Asians, and African American children are increasing and are over half of the population in our elementary schools (pg. 2). Although these races are of equal number, if not more, they are treated differently and placed in different economic levels within our society that limits their ability to get the best education possible. It wasn’t until the 1920’s that schools even developed any type of curriculum that would cater to the students that were not Anglo (Gollnick, Chinn, pg. 5). It was also Anglos that wrote the curriculum, that was sure to put bias and misinterpretation for the people of different races. As stated by Peggy McIntosh, whites have certain privileges that people of color do not. She claims that it is hard not to think ethnocentrically, which is to view the world with the lens of participating race. Some of the problems blacks faced throughout history, and currently include not being able to rent in an affluent area, people attribute mistakes as illiteracy or ignorance, cops pull them over for no apparent reasons, educational items such as cards, dolls and post cards all include white figures instead of showing diversity, and if there is need for legal help, they often do not receive the best of care as needed (Peggy McIntosh). Because the curriculum was written ethnocentrically, there was lack of understanding of these white privileges, and therefore, the curriculum was still Anglo based with small considerations for other races. This proves to be difficult for black children, and the acceptance of their identity.

Even though we have written a curriculum that many wrongly view as equal, African American students are still expected to assimilate. “Assimilation policies to force children to adopt the dominant culture have been promoted in schools as the values of the dominant group are reflected in school rules” (Gollnick, Chinn, pg. 19). Most schools try and have the minority follow the same ideology as the majority, which would be whites. And historically, we have even segregated the blacks because we felt them impossible to integrate them into our schools because they were too dirty, stupid, or criminal. Brown V. Board of education was placed in order to get rid of Jim Crow laws that stated separate but equal was okay (pg. 50). However, once Brown V. Board of education passed, it was decided that separate but equal was inherently unequal; therefore, students slowly began integrating into white schools. It was still difficult for them to do so because the African American students were worried of mistreatment, unequal attention by teachers, bullying, or misunderstanding. They were not altogether wrong by saying these things, because some of the schools did not even follow the law and turned away students. The students that were accepted were not treated the same, and was expected to assimilate despite their differences in culture.

Some students decided to avoid the inevitable hostility by staying in their segregated schools. This often lead to second hand materials that were often years past on the information given. There are still schools today that encourage segregation because many people feel that more students will gain from the group being primarily their own because they will bypass racism, and be able to focus solely on education rather than bullying.

**Part II**

African Americans have long been wrongly prejudiced against. Tamar Lewin writes the current ideology of separation perfectly by stating how, even though the groups of whites and blacks were present at a party, the groups still segregated and made their own cliques in order to ultimately avoid each other (Tamar Lewin). Although we have tried to fix this problem, students still choose to be separate due to this historical representation of blacks and whites.

Historically, there had been slavery, which made black individuals less than human and used as property. Once Plessy v. Ferguson found “separate but equal” unconstitutional, the inequality was supposed to stop. However, there were still areas of attitude that had not changed due to historical context. For instance, racism is still a facet of human life, and unfortunately can be extremely harmful for individuals. Daniel Tatum claims that one of the reasons why there is still racism is the early exposure to misinterpretation of people different than us (Daniel Tatum). We are told about other races by white teachers and parents, which means that there is no true representation of the race different than ours; therefore, racism is still in place around the world due to ignorance. In 1959, schools closed in order to eliminate the possibility of desegragation (pg. 53). This shows just how severe the discrimination and racism was. Racism is when a dominant group doesn’t acknowledge the existing of “external impingements that make it much more difficult for people of color to shed their subordinate status” (Gollnick, Chinn, pg. 63). Even today, these members of society still have to deal with racism, prejudice, and hate crimes. Philip Mazzocco claims that people are completely unaware of the different lifestyles and “costs” of living as a black person in America (Philip Mazzocco). Often people do not believe there is much of a difference, and do not understand the limitations placed on these individuals. This fosters even more racism and discrimination because white people often justify the black race as lazy, stupid, or not trying hard enough to assimilate. However, there are many different factors that contribute to the hardship of the black race which includes lack of opportunity, misrepresentation, and racism. There are some laws trying to limit these discriminations; however, there will always be an existing stigma and misinterpretation of African American students.

Some of the laws protecting these individuals include Wright V. Council of Emporia and United States v. Scotland Neck City Board of Education which made sure that all schools allow integration and would not allow public schools to segregate. This helps students become more acclimated to the different races, and allows more of an understanding between the individuals. Another law would be affirmative action. This is when so many African Americans be admitted to colleges, accepted in jobs, teams, etc. This initially helped force the integration, and made it less fallable for the person in charge. These students were soon given opportunities they never had before. Some states ended affirmative action; however, the beginning of it allowed the two groups to mingle, and help more of an adaptation for them. The most important of all cases would be Brown V. Board. This was the case that allowed desegragation to happen in the first place and set pavement towards all of the other laws and actions. Without these laws, it is uncertain if schools would still be segregated, due to the fact some students prefer to be separate.

One thing that has been controversial was the use of busing. Segragated neighborhoods are quite common due to the socioeconomic differences between the two races which made it difficult to integrate the schools. Busing is when buses go to neighborhoods, pick up the different races, and put them in the school that was promoting integration. This law was placed after Bradley v. Richmond School Board, which made many cities participate in busing (School Busing). It still is used today, but less frequently, because many students do not like travelling too far for school, away from friends and family, with little recognizability to the city they are in. These students have not shown any improvement for these busing strategies because the main pitfalls of racism and discrimination still exist.

**Part III**

Schools are often ethnocentric. When we do celebrate other cultures, it often revolves around one day, like Martin Luther King Day, where we introduce the topic of diversity; however, we need more of a multicultural curriculum that would recognize diversity everyday and celebrate the differences (Gollnick, Chinn, pg. 380). If there were more days like this, throughout all grade levels, these students would be more exposed to the differences and diversity of the classroom. One of the main ways to “win” over racism is constant exposure so the student recognized there is less of a difference than a similarity. There is also often a hidden curriculum within schools. According to Gwen Sharp, there are often hidden curriculums within schools that reinforce social norms and expectations. For black students, there is always the fear of “acting white”. This is when students express their intelligence, and try hard in school. These students are in fear because they fear they are neglecting their racial identity (Gollnick, Chinn, pg. 62). These students are rewarded through their peers once they fail a test, or vandalize school because it is part of their schooling life that is a hidden requirement. If a student does “act white” they are often ostracized by other students of their race. Also, media often portrays African Americans as criminal, tough, strong, or funny. When these individuals do not match up with their stereotype, they have a sense of not belonging or understanding their own race. This often results in cultural dissonance, and can leave the student looking for a stronger identity. According to Tamika Thomson, black males often score much lower than their white counterparts due to this fear of acting white (Tamika Thomson). This can lead to less employment, and a stronger stereotyping.

Also, these students witness parents going through struggles of having blue-collar jobs, taking care of multiple kids, and having lack of support with the community around them. Neighborhoods often are less economically sound when they are populated by African Americans because of the lack of resources available to them. A study was done to show whether the location of these students impacted their achievement level (Jones, Irvin, Kibe) and what they found was not surprising. Urban areas including many other black students comprise of students that are less achieving. This can be attributed to the expectations of many of the teachers, the hidden curriculum, the tough image of the black members of society in movies, and the lack of reaching out to these students. These portrayals would be difficult for anyone to bypass; however, these students are already lacking some self-identity due to the forced assimilation and the necessity to not “act white”. There is a strong sense of responsibility to maintain a view of a race, which often limits their potential.

**Part IV**

To overcome these obstacles, we must really teach these students from a young age the differences and similarities of each group. WE must address inequity and power (Gollnick, Chinn, pg. 388) and allow the children to develop critical thinking. By addressing these problems from a young age, we will be explaining to children the injustices of racism, the lack of equity still forming, and the similarities between each group. The key is exposure, and once the students have become well acclimated with the other groups, and learn of their potential as students, there will be more accepting and understanding. Also, it is important for us teachers to not misinterpret the other race, and make sure we represent the group well. This can be done by research, or having someone come talk to the classroom. We must make sure the students feel safe, and make sure they understand that achieving academically is important for a child, but will help them succeed in the future.

My theory is that school climate will most definitely help people feel more comfortable in their surroundings. We must make all students feel welcome in school because it is a place of learning and growing. Also, by just attending school for a short period of time it is obvious whether that school appreciates and is positive about diversity (Gollnick, Chinn, pg. 391). We can apply a positive school climate by having the students participate in cooperative learning which is “a popular strategy for supporting learning communities” (pg. 391). We shouldn’t separate these students, but have them work together so that they better understand one another. The National Educational Association claims it is important to make more laws that help support these children because there is still a lack of legislation assistance for these students. We have laws that promote desegregation, and laws that help promote integration; however, we can use more laws against discrimination, prejudice, and misinterpretation because this is where our students are getting their information. Also, media should definitely limit the stereotypes of blacks because it adds to the misinterpretation of these people.

I personally have little experience with African Americans because I lived in an affluent Anglo neighborhood. However, I know that I would have benefit greatly if I had learned at a younger age the abilities and the obstacles these people go through. It is my job as a future teacher to enlighten students about our similarities, because they are vastly stronger than our differences!

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