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FOUN 3000- Tuesday at 5pm

30 September 2019

Exam 1 for FOUN 300 Question #1

Chapter one from *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice* is a great way to start the book. It discusses two important themes throughout the chapter. One theme is identity, and another is domination. I choose identity as an important theme because the chapter wants the reader to reflect on the question, “Who Am I?” Throughout the chapter it gives specific examples of what makes a person who they are and how we define our own identities. This is important to education because teachers need to realize that every child is unique and brings something different to the table. I will remember this in my classroom as well. Children have different ways that they learn, that they play and how they communicate. This is all a part of their identities! I want to be able to suit each child’s need and I will understand that each child is different. I also want to celebrate people’s identities in order to have an inclusive classroom. The other theme I found was domination. I choose this theme because it the book shows that members in the dominant group take their advantages for granted, and I found that important to point out. The book says, “...in the areas where a person is a member of the dominant or advantaged social group, the category is usually not mentioned. That element of their identity is so taken for granted by them that it goes without comment” (Tatum 7). We have discussed in class why this is so significant to education. We as a society are so selfish that we really only care about the well being of our self and our family, and we often turn a blind eye to those who are worse off than us. We have also seen how the dominant group labels subdominant groups. One example in

the book is how, “Blacks have historically been characterized as less intelligent than Whites” (Tatum 7). I will fight this stereotypical label in my classroom by expecting the same level of success from all my students, no matter their race. I will not single out a group of my students due to the color of their skin. I want all my future students to exceed. If all teachers truly thought like this, maybe we would become closer to breaking this awful label and cycle.

In Chapter four of *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice*, the two most important themes are social justice and oppression. I choose social justice because the book defines the term and how it relates to the school system very well. As defined by the book, “Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure” (Bell 21). This is very relevant to education. In class we have looked at how schools in the same district can have little resources, while some schools are overflowing with resources. In my classroom, I will try my best to make up for resources that we might not have in the classroom. I will also make sure that resources in the classroom are evenly distributed for all my students. The theme of oppression is also evident in this chapter. I choose this theme because it is important to be aware of the many types of oppression and how it continues in our country. Racism is not the only example of oppression. Some other examples of oppression are classism, sexism, ageism, and much more. This is important in education because oppression is fueling the achievement gap. This is the opposite of social justice, and it can happen on many levels, including individual or institutional. This can be a difficult subject to fix, and blaming others does not help the issue. However I would like to combat this in my own classroom by looking with a social justice lens. The more we move towards social justice, the more we move away from oppression. Again, I can do this is my

classroom by making sure each student has an equal playing field and hold each of my students to the same level of success.

In Chapter six of *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice*, there are two main themes. The first theme is socialization, and the second theme is accepting others' differences. I choose socialization as a main theme, because it is the major focus of this chapter. It is important to note how this cycle continues so that we may one day end the cycle. Socialization is behaving or acting in a manner that is "acceptable" to society. One example is gender roles. This would include things like "Boys don't cry" and "Boys play with trucks, not dolls." Sometimes these are things that your parent is telling you at a young age. This is important in education because we want to encourage children to be themselves. I will do this in my classroom by not using phrases like "Man up" or "Boys don't cry." I do not want to cause any child to be insecure about whom they are. The second theme I found in this chapter was accepting others' differences. I choose this theme because this is how we will change the cycle. If we accepted others for who they are, and not for whom we think they are supposed to be, then the world would be a very peaceful place. This is important in education because we want every child to feel represented. I can do this in my classroom by encouraging differences and having more inclusive posters and books. In the famous words of Rodney King, "Why can't we all just get along?"

In Chapter nine of *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice*, I found two main themes. The first theme I found was the idea of the American identity, and the second theme found was immigration. I choose the theme of the American identity because of the story that the author shares in this chapter. The author is American and has lived in the United States her whole life, while her grandparents lived in Japan. The cab driver asks her where she is from because her English is so good. This shows our misconception for what an "American" looks like. This is

relevant to education because there are people who have lineages from all around the world, but they were born and raised in America. This also goes back to being inclusive by representing all kinds of ethnicities and races in school. I will do this in my classroom by finding books that represent everyone. It is also important to note that America is a giant melting pot, and I will always remember watching the Schoolhouse Rock “The Great American Melting Pot” video in Elementary school. The second theme I found was immigration. I choose this theme because it is relevant a majority of the American population. Our lineage can now be traced back even further than before. This is relevant to education because it is important to appreciate all students’ backgrounds and represent them equally. I will use this in my classroom by encouraging students to share their lineage, maybe even through a show and tell. This way all students can appreciate others’ differences.

In Chapter eleven of *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice*, the two most important themes are the possessive investment in whiteness and race as a cultural construct. I choose the theme of the possessive investment in whiteness and because the chapter discusses this topic thoroughly on all levels of society. It is so deep in our federal government, that most of our policies today still put whites at an upper advantage. This is relevant to education because the school board and other federal laws affect school systems. I will use this in my classroom by trying to make my classroom a safe space and an equal playing field for all students. The second theme I found was race as a cultural construct. I choose this theme because it is very evident in the United States, as well as all around the world. Cultural construct is when a group has a shared understanding and practices. It doesn’t follow biology, but instead culture. The book says, “Studies of culture too far removed from studies of social structure leave us with inadequate explanations for understanding racism and inadequate remedies for combating it” (Lipsitz 78).

This is relevant to education because race affects our daily lives, whether it is obvious or not, and combating racism starts with raising an inclusive child. I will use this in my classroom by encouraging kids to play and work with everyone, and I will tell them if something is hurtful to another student and explain why. Race and racism are topics that teachers should not be too afraid to discuss in the classroom when appropriate.

In Chapter twenty-one of *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice*, I found two main themes. The first theme I found was color blindness, and the second theme found was what it means to be white. I choose the theme of color blindness because it is something that I think everyone needs to realize. This is when someone says, “I don’t see color.” Like we have talked about in class, being “color blind” doesn’t necessarily mean you don’t see color. It is basically telling the person that you have a preconceived judgment of them, but that you are going to use it against them. This is relevant to education because you will have kids of all races at your school. In my classroom, I will treat each child the same, no matter their race. The second theme I found was what it truly means to be white in the United States. I choose this theme because the author makes a lot of great points about what it means to be in the dominate race in America. This is relevant to education because most of our members on the Board of Education are white. What will they use their power for? The author says, “...a just white person means caring for the education of all children” (Arminio 126). I will use this in my classroom by caring about all my students’ educations. I want to watch each child grow in my classroom to become educated and just members of society. After all, they are our hope for the future.

Question #2

Multicultural education is an inclusive education. It includes information from perspectives of cultural backgrounds. Three important elements of Multicultural Education are cultural differences, social justice and one's attitude and respect. First, different cultures interacting are what create our need for multicultural education. In the *Multicultural Education* book it says, "Cultural identity is based on the interaction and influence of membership in groups based on ethnicity, race, religion, gender, sexually orientation, age, class, native language, geographic region, and exceptionalities" (26). America is a melting pot that consists of so many different cultures. Instead of focusing on the dominant culture, we should include perspectives from all cultures in our school system. We don't want any child to wonder why they aren't represented in school and feel like an outsider to society. Cultural pluralism is important because it promotes different cultures, rather than getting them to assimilate into the dominant culture's beliefs and values. Social justice is also a key element to Multicultural Education. Social justice is the goal in society. Social justice is different than individuality, because it is fair and just in the distribution of wealth and opportunities. One example would be having equal education no matter the demographics. A lot of people ignore this and turn a blind eye if their kids are in a good school system. We have seen many examples of this in class. An individual's attitude and respect is also a key element for Multicultural Education. We need to learn how to be a more inclusive society. This definitely starts with rising the next generation with Multicultural Education. If kids learn this at a young age, differences will be appreciated and not make one feel isolated. One needs to be open-minded in order to see all perspectives of something. This comes down to a person's attitude and respect. Clearly, these are all important elements to obtaining Multicultural Education.

Ethnicity and Race have affected America's public education in many ways. One example is segregation versus desegregation in public schools. A major case that declared that separate was not equal was *Brown v. Board of Education*. Later, courts called for desegregation in schools. Even though schools were starting to become desegregated, the problem still wasn't fixed. We are still left with exclusion and isolation. Another element that has affected public schools is stereotypes and prejudices. The book says, "Because the cultural background and experiences of teachers may be incongruous with the cultural experiences of students, miscommunication and misperceptions may interfere with learning" (51). In class, we have talked about teachers lowering expectations for African American students. Teachers instead should expect the same level of success from each of their students. Another element that has affected American public schools is immigration. The education level for immigrants varies. Immigrants who do not know English will have difficulties in school and standardized tests. The book also notes that, "Unauthorized children have a right to seek a public education under the U.S. Supreme Court decision *Plyer v. Doe*(1982)" (33). Clearly, a lot of elements factor into America's public school system.

There are many ways to make education multicultural. One way is to encourage students to be proud of their ethnicity and heritage. A teacher can do this in the classroom by doing an "Ancestry Show and Tell." Each student would bring something that relates to his or her heritage. Kids will appreciate and value other's differences as well as their similarities. This would let it be a positive reinforcement that having a different heritage from someone else is okay! Teachers can also create other assignments that celebrate this. Another way to make education multicultural is to value real-life experience rather than just learning from the textbook. Clearly, our textbooks have a distorted and one-sided view of our history. We can

overcome this by finding other sources from other points of view on the topics. There are just two ways to make education multicultural. Hopefully teachers will begin to look at this more closely in order to create a well-rounded Multicultural Education.

Works Cited

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