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Emdin's "For white folks who teach in the hood ... and the rest of y'all too: Reality pedagogy and urban education" (Book Review)

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Book Reviews



Emdin, C. (2016). *For white folks who teach in the hood ... and the rest of y'all too: Reality pedagogy and urban education*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press. 215 pp. \$23.95. ISBN 9780807006405

Emdin addresses this book to educators, parents, and other stakeholders in education who are deeply committed to a Eurocentric model of education. His opening remarks recount an experience where he addressed mainly white teachers who were distressed by their inability to reach their indigenous students. He notes that he had shared instructional strategies and websites to assist them in their efforts to connect with and share information effectively with their students – mainly to “pacify their concerns.” Yet he knew that the true problem lay in their lack of awareness or indifference to the divide that existed between them and their students regarding culture. With this knowledge as the basis, he refers to urban youth of color as the “neoindigenous” inhabitants of the inner city. He believes that traditional education has failed these young people, because it is not culturally relevant. Moreover, he purports that effective education for the urban setting would be analogous to what occurs in traditional Black churches, where there is continual give and take between the pastor and the people. He refers to this desired exchange as “Pentecostal Pedagogy.” Continuing to lay out the plan for this educational exchange through various concepts and key words, he believes that the preferred design is to give each student a sense of ownership over his or her education. The heart of the book seems to be returning the responsibility of learning to the student and empowering him or her to succeed through varied methods that encourage engagement.

This was an eye-opening book. As I read, I gained much respect for Emdin and his passion for inner city youth. I think that much of the book is applicable especially for those instructors who have found that the “hood” has been brought to their classroom. The idea of assigning responsibility and inspiring confidence should resonate with all educators. The balance of personal experience and research makes this book a worthy contribution to the field of education. There even seems to be merit for it beyond the classroom, particularly for those engaged in inner city ministries. His insider perspective affords credibility and makes this book a worthy contribution to academic libraries in the fields of education and ministry.

Reviewer

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