

“Creating a New Reality in Teaching and Learning for Underserved Students”

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The recent police killing of George Floyd brought discussions of systemic racism to the forefront. Colleges, universities, professional organizations, major companies of every description, and regular citizens have acknowledged the presence of systemic racism in the society and many have written letters to students, colleagues, and employees supporting those who protest inequities and making a commitment to equity and social justice. Educational practitioners, scholars, and researchers have joined this movement towards equity by engaging in introspection regarding systemic racism in teaching practices, teacher preparation, and educational research. Moving forward in creating a new reality for underserved adults and children requires action to change educational and societal outcomes.

Disparities in educational outcomes are apparent in data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2019) and the US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (2014). These data reveal disparities in academic performance, disproportionate placement in special education, and in the use of harsh discipline. Persistent underperformance contributes to students' frustration, school-based trauma, and behavior problems. The fact that academic performance among urban, low-income, African American, and Latinx students varies across teachers, schools, and school districts provides evidence that problems exist in teaching and school practices. Hollins (2015), *Culture in School Learning*, Chapter 7, presents a framework for understanding cultural diversity in the classroom that supports improving teaching practices, framing the curriculum, and improving learning outcomes for underserved students. This chapter provides evidence that teachers can develop deep knowledge of students through careful

observation and documentation of teaching practices and students' responses. The practice of observation and documentation facilitates understanding the relationship among culture, cognition, classroom instruction, and learning outcomes. Additionally, suggested learning experiences for teachers are included at the end of the chapter.

Hollins (2019), *Teaching to Transform Urban Schools and Communities*, Chapter 3 illustrates the application of deep knowledge of students in teaching practices and framing the curriculum. This chapter has four interrelated themes: (1) contextualizing child and adolescent growth and development, (2) framing curriculum for urban students, (3) providing equitable access to classroom learning, and (4) utilizing the community as context and text for learning. The interconnectedness of these four themes forms the core for *teaching from the center* as an approach to improving learning experiences and outcomes for underserved students.

References

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