

The Mind Trust as Whiteness

The Standards-Based Education (SBE) reform movement, which calls for clear, measurable Standards for all school students, actually enables whiteness.

The IPS Innovative schools the Mind Trust supports have to meet Indiana State Standards and have students' academic success and school rankings determined by the standardized testing concept--which is based on Eugenics (Loflin, 2013). This Standardization paradigm (i.e. The Matrix* of the US dominant culture) maintains "Whiteness" because the Standards are Eurocentric. If this assertion is questionable, we can ask: Are the Standards based on the cultures, languages, and epistemologies of Asians, Africans, or Australian and North/South American Aboriginals? The answer is no. Reflecting the Master Narrative (Jiménez, 2010), the Standards are Eurocentric

We must interrogate the possible link between Standardization and White dominance

Authentic forms of democracy which are based on the diversity of the pluralistic American population have been replaced by schools of choice and charters funded by some of the same conglomerates writing the Standards. These corporations and their subsidiary companies or divisions also write the very tests taken by all of our students. If citizens/taxpayers just unquestionably accept Standards, they also unquestionably accept White dominance, as the Standards are the voice of White dominance. By contrast, challenging the Standards calls into question White dominance by putting a target on an inequality that is very visible everywhere (Weilbacher, 2012).

To the extent the mission of the Mind Trust is "...to provide every Indianapolis student, regardless of income, access to a great, high-performing school" ("An overview," 2016) the relevant question is: by what guidelines are such schools deemed "great" and "high performing"? They are definitely not the Mind Trust's own criteria. If the Mind Trust is to be taken seriously, they must endorse those Standards of the IDOE, and consequently the national SBE movement.

Their focus on Standardization to determine "great"/high quality" has helped to make this White dominance virtually invisible to the Mind Trust staff and board. Because of the Mind Trust's own "whiteness-ness," they do not see endorsing Standardization/SBE is harmful. Until they do, the Mind Trust and Whiteness are one and the same.

Finally, the bottom line: The Mind Trust is stuck

The Mind Trust is stuck. The organization/board doesn't realize they are in a cul-de-sac of cultural/political obligations, a position which actually disproves its concern for *all* children. Due to its support of SBE, communities of color and poor whites can't look to the Mind Trust to foster an education for their liberation as described by Loflin (2017). The bottom line is the Mind Trust is not going to question/undermine the Corporate Whiteness Matrix by which it is financed.

Whiteness Defined

First, Whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. Second, it is a "standpoint," a place from which White people look at themselves, at others, and at society. Third, "Whiteness" refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked/invisible and unnamed (DiAngelo, 2011) particularly to members of the dominant white culture. In other words, Whiteness is so ubiquitous and subtle, like a fish in water, most white folks don't recognize Whiteness and its multiple "innovative" drawbacks and pitfalls which infect our common humanity and common good.

*Morpheus explains "The Matrix" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cqxwtEdxOCw>

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