

Deracializing the Language of School Administration and Classroom Instruction to Facilitate the Elimination of Sources of Student Otherization and Denial of Identity Parity to White Supremacy

By Kenneth S. Shain

As previously detailed in the Scenario Critique, a major problem confronting American educators seeking to close the achievement gap and effect a school improvement culture is the growing otherization of students in the classroom because of race along with the rise of white supremacy and its related social practice. These problems are deeply rooted in American history and any school improvement plan that does not set out to combat and defeat them in a decisive way will only result in their subsequent re-emergence and continuation. Moreover, the problem has been exacerbated over the years by an incorrect approach to identifying and fighting the underlying causes, focusing on policy decisions, laws and compliance procedures or on behavioral issues such as bullying, emotional issues, such as hate or social issues such as fairness. Because the structures around us, including those laws that govern all of the above were created in a racist society, every attempt to remediate the problem further reinforces the source of the problem by legitimizing the categories of discussion. This paper is an attempt to step out from inside the box (Schein) to diagnose the problem, outline the steps needed to overcome it and propose an action plan for complete eradication of the source of the problem for generations to come. Keep in mind that it took 25 years for the Republic of South Africa to abolish its infamous and inhumane racial classification system.

The Problem

A major failure of diversity and inclusion programs is that they do not anticipate the *otherization* that occurs as a result of classification. This is especially important in the classroom where it affects scholastic performance and the development of foundation skills needed later in life. The term *otherize* means to marginalize, psychologically and emotionally, a person in such a way so that they do not find identification with the whole. As a result, they may not share the aspirations of the group and may not identify with other members of the group. It is a consequence of a failed attempt to remediate the damage racism has caused our society by failing to acknowledge the central role the classification itself has contributed to the problem.

Part of the problem is that such diversity and inclusion programs are predicated on an incorrect notion of race (Cohen) and are hence misdirected, albeit developed with the best of intentions. Failures of such programs shift the failure back to the subject to preserve the classification despite the best of intentions. This is tragic and unfortunate as it then becomes a self-reifying feature of the failure concealing its poor design behind a further decline in performance standards and resubmitting the process to cycle (Evans).

This otherization follows a pattern that is repeated and replicated across the country, becoming a key reason for the widening of the achievement gap and declining reading and math scores among affected communities. Yet the cause of the problem and its solution are quite simple: We need to teach race and racism correctly and embrace in our classes the whole of humanity rather than legitimize the shards of its fragmented parts (Pollock).

This otherization is rooted in the mistaken notion that there are separate races and that people need to learn to respect each other's race. This belief is a cornerstone of the liberal state and the basis of all civil rights legislation. And there are forces dedicated to profiting off the differences and manufacturing diversity to suit its interests. Hence nearly all remediation efforts seek to reinforce this

classification and celebrate the differences as a source of pride rather than ameliorate them through working together.

To shatter this belief we must embrace the whole of humanity once again and see through and alongside the differences the things that hold us together and make us the same. The faithful among us call this brotherhood and sisterhood, yet it requires no fealty to a deity to observe and practice. We will begin this paper with a direct response to the call issued in the Scenario Critique:

What is to be done?

We need to identify and change all classifications from those based on race to those based on verifiable physical descriptions such as color, language differences, ethnicity or place of origin to linguistically eliminate race as constituting the other and affect cognition of each individual's part of the whole (Whorf).

Scaling the Problem

To scale, the solution has to be initiated at the District level and cascade down through the schools to the classrooms. But, to maximize acceptance, minimize resistance and standardize existence, the effort has to include members of every constituency at various stages of the process.

For instance, the Minneapolis School District includes

District

35,674 students

83 Schools: largest 1,925 students

10 High Schools, 18 Middle Schools, 41 K-5, 14 specialized and alternative

Classroom

Avg: 20-30 students

Community

The community served by the public school system is a culturally diverse community. Bulk figures of color, ethnic or language groups, referred to the district as “races” include:

White	35.4%
Black	35.3%
Latino	14.4%
Asian	5.0%
Mixed	3.8%
Indigenous	3.0%
Pacific	0.1%

In this chart, Black includes ADOS, Somali, Ethiopian, Liberian, Nigerian and Caribbean immigrant communities. Latino includes long-term colonial settlers, intermarried indigenous residents as well as recent immigrants. Mixed is recorded and cited as “Mixed Race” in actual District Statistics, further illustrating the point needing attention. Please also note that for educators, language and ethnic differentiation would be far more helpful than these heterogenous racially-derived categories.

Further characteristics of the district include:

No/Low Cost Meals	20,246
ELL	7,301
SPED	6,054

Step 1: Vision Articulation and Mission Sharing

The goal of this program is to eliminate all references to race as a matter of fact throughout the school system, and replace the terminology with more accurate and appropriate language. It is also to eliminate any and all texts or curriculum that treat race as a scientific fact. It will be accompanied with new standards for teacher hiring and conduct in the classroom. The program is expected to take 2 years

to complete and another full school year to observe and assess. Conduct and completion of most tasks *en passant* can be concurrent.

Team Recruitment, Building & Training

The program will be initiated by a District Task Force that will seek to identify and recruit administrators, teachers and support staff that feel passionate about this project and want to contribute to the campaign (Peterson & Deal). This also means gaining support from the Superintendent and lining up support on the School Board, gaining the trust and cooperation, and perhaps leadership, of teacher union leaders and members and building a wide circle of participants from the community in active and advisory roles over time. Overall, this is a leadership search for people who can reproduce themselves at every level (Harris & Jones).

The team will also employ a series of tightly nested feedback loops within which to determine charged meanings and derive needed course adjustments in building an emotional ecology that will permit maximum long-term results in the execution of the plan. These will be assessed at each step to assure organizational harmony of participants (Demerath).

Inventory Existing Resources

It is also important to take stock of existing resources available to the project. Labor power, facilities, time and materiel need to cost out and factored into planning to assure continued funding and support for all phases of operation. Such material projection need to span two full years of research, study and engagement and another school year for observation and assessment (Sarason).

Identifying Sources of Opposition

An early team task will be the identification of opposition. Potential sources of opposition include racists, people who have a vested interest in division or conflict, people whose jobs might be lost or people that have continued classification requirements on their agenda.

Step 2: District Survey of All Internal Classifications, Documents, Curriculum, Texts, Hiring Standards and On-Boarding Routines

Identifying Classifications to Change

The district needs to purge all classifications which utilize race as a defining characteristic. This includes both internal statistical information as well as reports issued to the public that bear such phrases.

It also includes all forms used to collect information such as registration, academic, transportation, meal plans or extracurricular activities. For example:

- Plural Forms of Race – eg. “races” or references to the plural eg. “multi-racial”
- Phrases that Reinforce Race such as “Racial Pride,” “Racial Justice,” “Regardless of Race,” “All Races,” “Equality Between Races,” “Racial Equality.”

Such phrases need not be pejorative to be racist; their mere use as a classification is racist whether or not it involves a hierarchy of constituents.

For instance, here is an example of the statistical composition of teachers in the Minneapolis School System as reported by the School District:

Staff demographics	
White American	83.47%
Two or More Races	8.15%
Hispanic or Latino American	3.98%
Asian American	2.66%
Native American or Alaska Native	0.79%
Unknown race	0.68%
Black or African American	0.14%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.14%

(MPS Public School Quick Facts 08/19)

Note the conflation of color with language and ethnicity. Especially striking are the “Two or More Races” and the “Unknown race” labels. Also notice the heterogeneity of presentation; 1 black, 1 white, 1 language-based and the rest place-based. This will change.

And here’s a data collection form used by the US Census Bureau:

58. Are you Hispanic, Latino/a or Spanish origin? (One or more categories may be selected)

☐ 1 No, not of Hispanic, Latino/a or Spanish origin

☐ 2 Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano/a

☐ 3 Yes, Puerto Rican

☐ 4 Yes, Cuban

☐ 5 Yes, another Hispanic, Latino/a or Spanish origin

59. What is your race? (One or more categories may be selected)

☐ 01 White

☐ 02 Black or African American

☐ 03 American Indian or Alaska Native

☐ 04 Asian Indian

☐ 05 Chinese

☐ 06 Filipino

☐ 07 Japanese

☐ 08 Korean

☐ 09 Vietnamese

☐ 10 Other Asian

☐ 11 Native Hawaiian

☐ 12 Guamanian or Chamorro

☐ 13 Samoan

☐ 14 Other Pacific Islander

OMB 0938-0701

Please note the multiple races conflated with nationalities, offered as choices. Though the scope of this project does not include the federal government, this is an example of the inertial influence on the project.

Identifying Curriculum to Eliminate

All texts that include racist ideas that appear to be presented as scientifically determined must be purged. All texts that teach a version of history that occludes the racialization process embedded in our history also has to be removed. This shall also include racist literature and music which shall only be preserved for reference purposes but shall no longer be included in curriculum.

For example, here is a passage from poplar author, Dr. Rachel Allyn, who wrote in her column, Ask Dr. Rachel, “Identity Doesn’t Fit In a Box:”

“To clarify, physical anthropology and biology define race as ‘categories of human beings based on average differences in physical traits that are transmitted by the genes not by blood’...”

Downtown Journal, May 31 – June 13, 2018.

Any text like this, and any text supporting it, is unacceptable.

Developing New Hiring Standards

The district will revise its hiring guidelines to qualify racial beliefs as hiring precondition. Teacher candidates who believe in the theory of race shall not be hired. (Evans)

Creating New On-Boarding Routines

It is the contention of this author that every classroom teacher should be able to look their student in the eye and see a little brother or sister. A suitable qualification assessment will need to be developed to ascertain whether any given candidate has this attribute or ability. Cultural competence must be matched by human compassion as a foundation quality.

Purge Old Terminology and Replace with New Terminology

Here is an example of the search and replace team's mission, based on an Amendment successfully made on a NEA resolution at its 2018 Annual Meeting:

Before Amendment:

Given NEA's policy of fighting racism, and the current state of racial affairs within this great nation, it is imperative that NEA actively...describe and deconstruct the systemic proliferation of a White supremacy culture and its constituent elements of White privilege and institutional racism, **in order to create equitable outcomes for people of all races**. Additionally, the NEA will encourage its affiliates to do the same.

After Amendment:

Given NEA's policy of fighting racism, and the current state of racial affairs within this great nation, it is imperative that NEA actively...describe and deconstruct the systemic proliferation of a White supremacy culture and its constituent elements of White privilege and institutional racism, **in order to create equitable outcomes for people of all colors, languages, and ethnic backgrounds**. Additionally, the NEA will encourage its affiliates to do the same.

As you can see from the example above, the substitution of "all races" with "all colors, languages and ethnic backgrounds," had no negative impact on the intent or the resolution. It was seconded by the original motions maker and passed, but not without a floor fight by people trying to trivialize the issue by including skin tone and texture.

Identifying New Curriculum

It is essential that all science books in the classroom be free from any racialistic language, ideologies or perspective presented as a matter of science. It is also mandatory that all history books that obscure or occlude the race-based mechanism that permitted genocide and slavery be excluded from the classroom. Furthermore all literature and music of a racist character shall not be for anything other than research purposes. Hence all acquisitions will be thoroughly review for such undesirable attributes.

Providing Continuing Professional Development Education

It is imperative that the District develop and implement a Professional Development Antiracist Education program as soon as possible for existing educators. “Defusing the Race Bomb: Our Role as Educators” (Shain) is a good place to start and an example, especially adapted for this Plan, is attached.

Leveraging Participant Enthusiasm

It is important to complete the process of engaging educators, students and parents in the implementation process and provide them key stakes in the success of its outcome. (Khalifa, Gooden, Davis) During this phase it is important that the District Task Force introduce the program to each neighborhood association throughout the district so that parent may get a first-hand look at the programmatic changes being made. Regular communications will be made via newsletter and email to all district stakeholders.

Education Support Professionals (ESPs) and paraprofessional are key to this process because unlike most teachers at this juncture, they live in the neighborhood they serve and are carriers of information to their respective communities. In this way, they will become major agencies of returning antiracist culture to the neighborhood as we prepare to celebrate universal Brotherhood and Sisterhood

Identify Potential Agencies of Division – Manifestations of Racism

There are several additional areas that need to be addressed that are outside of the District’s direct control. They include racist popular culture, including commercial music, videos, games, lifestyles and fashions that depend on or reinforce racism notions in all communities. These need to be excluded and marginalized necessitating engagement by parents, coaches and clergy in the administration of the program. One approach might be to create a social networking platform to connect all nodes in the process and an access point for students that can be marketed as being leverageable to a better life.

Promoted racist memes and tropes will also have to be put under quarantine and the district will take steps to filter these out of all incoming communications.

Step 4: District Rollout

The District Rollout will mark the completion of the preparatory tasks. In this phase, the district will bring together the community around it and celebrate the re-creation of the schools as “race-free zones” of cultural competency, mutual respect and inclusive harmony. Members of our community celebrate our common heritage as human beings and share our differences with each other in a spirit of togetherness. This will be a marketing and public relations opportunity that can bring increased attention upon the progress of the program and showcase the emerging leaders showing the way.

Target date for the rollout will be on National Night Out in August when neighborhoods across the nation celebrate their togetherness. On this night, each school in its community will become the site of a neighborhood barbecue and social event hosted by the district and each school to bring the community together and galvanize it around the project’s principles.

Step 5: School and Classroom Rollout for Observation and Assessment

The School and Classroom Rollout will commence on the first day of school following the District Celebration and commence for the rest of the school year for observation and assessment.

Observation

Standards for classroom presence and approach include:

- Stress Concept of One Race of Many Colors, Languages, Customs.
- Celebrate the Sameness of All Before Celebrating Differences.
- Learn to See Color Without the Baggage of Race

- Learn and Practice Restorative Process.

Teachers are encouraged to love what they do and show it. It is important to project enthusiasm in building a positive school culture (Erickson).

Teachers will also disengage from “surrogate parenting” of their students. Many students consider it offensive and condescending.

Teachers will also pledge to be their students’ ally, without reciprocity. Since this is not about identity, there is no quid pro quo intersectional alliance required, expected or permitted.

Most importantly, teachers will not revel in their own otherness nor encourage students to revel in theirs. We must remember at all times that we are together and there is only one race, the Human Race, and we are all members. By denying the categorical imperatives of white supremacy, we deny its intellectual rigor, shattering it finally in law and practice, and banishing it to history. Ultimately, the goal is to stress that it is the racists who are against the human race and they are the outliers on the margins.

Assessment

Our observations and assessments will focus on year over year changes in these variables: Academic performance, subject proficiency, attendance, teacher absences, intervention reductions and suspensions. Metric calibration for tracking following years’ progress will be determined at that time.

After all, race is the first lie that we are all taught. Schools must become the truth tellers of the age. How can we measure the impact of the truth?

*We See Color, We Don't See Race
We Say Color, We Don't Say Race
We Are Humans, Of Many Colors
With Many Tongues, From Every Place
We Are Species, The Human Race*

OLPD 5364 Cultural Dimensions in Educational Leadership			Action Plan		15-Dec-19
Goal: Deracializing the Language of School Administration and Classroom Instruction to Facilitate the Elimination of Sources of Student Otherization and Denial of Identity Parity to White Supremacy					
Action Steps <i>What will be Done?</i>	Responsibilities <i>Who will Do It?</i>	Timeline <i>By When? (Date/Month)</i>	Resources <i>A. Resources Available B. Resources Needed (financial, human, political & other)</i>	Potential Barriers <i>A. What Individuals or Organizations Might Resist? B. How?</i>	Communications Plan <i>Who is Involved? What Methods? How Often?</i>
Step 1: Vision Articulation and Mission Sharing District-wide recruitment, team building & training.	District Task Force	May - Dec 2020	A. Labor Power, Facilities B. Board Consensus, District Commitment, Union Support	A. Racists, Taxpayers against Ed. B. Refusing to cooperate, withholding funds, pressure Board	District staff, school admins and teachers meet several times per week until team is in place. Gain Board support. Full time through summer.
Step 2: District Survey of all internal documents, texts & curriculum. All racialized instances marked. Appropriate curricula identified	District Clerical Staff, Admins, Teachers, Union staff	Jan - Aug 2021	A. Labor Power, Facilities, Time B. Access, More Time, Interns	A. Racists, Inertialists Disgruntled Employees B. Sabotage efforts	District Clerical Staff directed by District Task Force. Full time.
Step 3: Execute Transition Plan Search & replace documents, order appropriate texts, offer Professional Development and engage community.	District staff, Teachers, Parents	Sept 2021 - May 2022	A. Labor Power, Facilities B. Budget for Curriculum Acq.	A. Racists, Legislators B. Scandalize school Board, force withholding of funds	District Task Force issues weekly Bulletin on progress of transition to all stakeholders in education system. Positive change is heavily marketed.
Step 4: District Rollout Celebration Community Block Parties	Admin, Teachers, Families	Jun - Aug 2022	A. Labor Power B. Textbooks, Transition Guides, Marketing budget for P/R, Promotional Posters, Media Coverage	A. Racists, Political Opponents B. Sabotage, Provocations	Campaign Culminates at National Night Out events all over town bonding Schools w/Communities
Step 5: School and Classroom Rollout for Observation & Assessment	Principals, Teachers, ESP/Paras, Parents	Aug 2022 - Jun 2023	A. Everything B. Success!	A. Weather, Party poopers B: Rain! Or whining.	Admins, Teachers, ESPs/Paras, Parents

Notes:

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