
Half empty vs. half full: Rethinking “privilege” in CTEEC

Dr. Seungho Moon
Oklahoma State University
Seungho.moon@okstate.edu

2014 CTEEC

CHOICE



Half Empty vs. Half Full

How do teachers think about race issues in OK?

“I was not there, so how am I to blame?”

(White teacher, discussion on the Tulsa Race Riots in 1921)

“I agree that there is discrimination and it is more often directed to minorities but people in poverty face the same things no matter what their color is.”

(White teacher from a poor, rural area in OK)

On-going questions as a teacher educator

How do rethink the compartmented understanding of race, gender, class, and more?

What does “privilege” mean to students of color/poverty, if any?

Politics of Recognition

“The problem is not merely how to include more people within existing norms, but to consider how existing norms allocate recognition differentially.”

—Butler, 2009, p. 6

Butler, J. (2009). *Frames of war: When is life grievable?* Brooklyn, NY: Verso.

Shifting questions in equity issues I

Dona: Not all White people have privilege...that's not true because as a woman, I have encountered prejudice on more than one occasion . . . you learn to pick up and walk on and go.

Instructor: Sexism exists everywhere. In that sense, people are trying to make [the] voice of female students heard. But Butler proposes a different version of questions: "Why do we value men's knowledge more important than that of women?" She invites us to ask about the conditions of recognition rather than highlighting more inclusion of different voice[s]."

Shifting questions in equity issues II

So up until this point, I had always been in the minority. My personal framework [as a person of color enabled me to] feel strongly about who is right and who is wrong when evaluating the Tulsa incidents because I can identify with the people of Greenwood. I am less able to identify with either group in the Congo conflict because I feel no direct connection to the people and my usual framework of race cannot be applied. Here is where I had my epiphany and the final light bulb came on for me.

(reflection from Patrick, a black student)

Shifting questions in equity issues III

I challenged myself more this semester by trying to not make it just about Native Americans because I begin to consider other marginalized groups, particularly gender. It helped me to understand some of the privileges I benefit from as well. For instance I understand that I have the privilege of being heterosexual and being able to check the box of my gender and being recognized for it. Also, I take for granted that I have always had the opportunity to marry.

(reflection from Angel, a Native American student)

Discussion

What does “privilege” mean to students?

In what ways does the analysis of power help students review their privilege and responsibility?

How can students and educators still fight against social injustice in our society?

Q & A

<http://education.okstate.edu/smooon>