

The Colour of Social Studies: A Post-Social Studies Reality Check

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Summary by Jenn Christie

- *Presocial studies*: front end social studies. From the standpoint of content and instructional methods. What is important, what isn't, how will it be taught, and how will it be assessed?
- *Postsocial studies*: how the colour of social studies plays out in real life, after people have studied social studies.
- Reactions to the word *race* in Social Studies (SS) is tangible
- Race matters: "Without an understanding of the race-based structural inequalities of the past, the present context of race in this country is more difficult for many citizens to understand" (p. 137)
- The current SS curriculum is a *feel-good* and possibly *politically correct* curriculum. It is not, however, a curriculum that can combat the race question in intellectual ways
- Native students often pay a hidden tax to stay in their classes due to anti-Native sentiments (example: a white student told a Native student that they knew exactly what the treaties were for and thought they were damaging to white society – he worked on the assumption that the treaties were a form of preferential treatment towards the Natives that gave them economic wealth).
 - Demonstrates that our current SS curriculum teaches students the Eurocentric view on history. Not a holistic view
- Native students end up having to speak for all other Native communities just because they too are Native
- The "social studies "feel good," "heroes and holidays" curriculum perpetuates white privilege and reifies the status quo" (p. 142).
- Many people are ignorant about Native culture, community, etc.
- "Teachers who do not know the race relations history of the past will have a difficult time turning the present tide of Native teen drop-outs." (p. 144)
- Many Native students want the current curriculum to change:
 - Desire to learn about the different communities, not just a blanket statement of "Native"
 - "The curriculum doesn't tell the truth. It passes on false information. People shouldn't have to wait till college to learn about Indians. People should be able to learn about Indians in K through 12 in a more accurate way!!" – Mother of four from Port Gamble (p. 148)
- The SS curriculum needs to be rethought to teach Native history constructively.
 - Example: comparison between a Native community and a settler community
- "By considering the Native examples of lived experience and voices, a small window on the post-social studies realities might offer a fresh approach to thinking about race and the social studies curriculum." (p. 150)
- Rains would like the following to be included in the *presocial studies* processes:
 - The consequences of contact/ racial inequalities
 - The consequences of decisions made historically around race
 - More than just the names of individuals great and small
 - Beyond consequences, the we address who benefited, and who did not, from such consequences
 - How social movements were formed, why, by who, and what happened