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GURC Abstract

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Racial Injustice in Writing Instruction

In Spring 2018, I took “The Teaching of Writing” and during that course, we discussed student identity in regards to the way students experience writing instruction. For my research, I choose to focus on racial identities with students and educators. From personal experience, I didn’t feel as if my writing, as a white female, was under the same scrutiny as the minority classmates I had. There were certain assumptions that educators had pertaining to their students’ writings because of their race. I began to research why exactly this was and how to establish racial equality in writing instruction. In my research, I have found that white privilege and subliminal racism are being left unchecked and unaddressed in the instruction of writing. The main claim in my research is that the current practiced writing pedagogies, the ‘Anti-racist’ and the ‘Diversity’ approach are not effective in eliminating educational racism. I am pushing back on the way the education system handles the ideologies educators have regarding their own and their students’ racial identities. These disregarded racial identities are promoting an exclusive environment in writing instruction, thus creating an othering effect that results in students’ devaluting their personal voice and not pursuing writing further. Writing pedagogies have to strive to combat the institutionalized racism that’s present within the writing classroom. An educator must acknowledge their own racial identity and any internal racism they may have in order to actively fight for racial equality for their students. The approach that I’ve adapted to aid the systematic injustice is a multidimensional pedagogy that continuously evolves to accommodate students’ racial identity. It allows room for change and allows students to receive a personalized education with writing and in return cultivate students who not only value their voice but their racial identity.