Blind Vision: Unlearning Racism in Teacher Education

Marilyn Cochran-Smith


In this article, Marilyn Cochran-Smith uses narrative to reflect on her experience of “unlearning” racism as a teacher educator. According to Cochran-Smith, unlearning racism involves interrogating the racist assumptions that are deeply embedded in the courses and curricula that we teach, owning our often unknowing complicity in maintaining existing systems of privilege and oppression, and grappling with our own failures to produce the kinds of changes we advocate. In her narrative, Cochran-Smith describes a moment in time when issues of race and racism were brought into sharp relief for her. She does not offer explicit directions for unlearning racism. Rather, she illuminates some of the complex questions we need to wrestle with in teacher education. At the same time, she demonstrates the usefulness of narrative as a way to organize and understand experience and as an alternative to the expository stance of traditional academic discourse.

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