

Antiracism in teaching isn't just amplifying voices that have historically been silenced by white supremacy, or reevaluating curriculum through our equity lens so we can see colonization for the crime that it is, not the heroic victories that we were taught as children. It is reevaluating all of public education. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are a backwards map based on college readiness/corporate readiness/capitalism readiness. If students can successfully master the standards grade by grade, they will be ready for college and ready for capitalism (the true measure of success in corporate America).

Capitalism and America go hand in hand and that is what public education continues to strive towards and that is why public education has always been and continues to be founded in racism and white supremacy. We stole the lands of the indigenous people, we murdered them, we profited off of the land that they cared for for generations. We kidnapped, murdered and enslaved the people of Africa in the name of capitalism. Then we lied and for generations, taught our children about the heroic efforts of the colonizers. Now we are willing to tell half-truths. We are willing to explore trivial things like the dominant narrative, multiple perspectives, and land acknowledgements but are we willing to give indigenous people their land back? We are willing to admit to the horrific crimes of slavery, but are we willing to pay reparations? We are willing to reevaluate curriculum, but are we willing to restructure our systems of capitalism and racism as they relate to public education and what we value in our schools and our societies?

The path is singularly paved. School success is measured in test scores. It is seen in college readiness. There is no praise for speaking two languages, for tending to an ailing grandmother, for living in and living for community, for practicing the ancient ways of sustainability (fishing, farming, gathering). There is no measure for kindness, community mindedness and social justice. There is only one track. Capitalism. Proficiency based grading, state testing, Common Core State Standards and the summative and formative assessments that are either passed or failed which will indicate college readiness/life readiness/corporate readiness according to our schools.

Until we can look deeply at what public education stands for and has stood for, curricular shifts are a mere band-aid on the egregious actions and representations of America's past and present. We are walking down the same path of inequities and marginalization that we always have. We can give lip service to curricular changes (a vital first step) but there is much, much more work to be done.

As a white bodied person of Hawaiian decent I was taught in school that white bodied people had power/wisdom and that Hawaiians did not deserve/have the capacity for sovereignty. We were lucky that America stole us at gunpoint. This wasn't spoken out loud it was breathed into everything around me, it whispered through the sugarcane, it lived in the books we were read, the shows we watched, the toys we bought. My great-uncle who was forced to march during

school lunch if he spoke his native language. My father who was taught about the glories of the Big Five sugarcane plantation owners instead of the sustainable farmers and fishers who were his people. My local friends, family and neighbors, all of us barely scraping by, but sharing everything we had. I was propelled through classes that taught me that leaving Hawai'i, going to college and living a white bodied life was the right way, the only way. Fortunately in this generation, my daughters' generation, Hawaiian immersion schools are thriving throughout Hawai'i. Hawaiians are advocating for water rights, land rights, fishing rights, conservation rights. In a place where tourism has nearly destroyed the land, the people of the land are rising up through education for the keiki.

As a teacher here in Southern Oregon I see the ripple of what we value in schools (CCSS, tests, college, capitalism) and the impact that has on our communities and I wonder, is changing the curriculum enough? Is speaking the truths of our history really true if we are simply and silently recreating that same story for our children and our children's children. Capitalism over environmental stewardship. Capitalism built on racism. Capitalism.

With hope and commitment for change,
Tia Lehua McLean

*This letter represents my own personal perspective.