

arship that informed it because they felt it didn't adequately address the role of race and racism and relied too heavily on incremental change. CRT was introduced to education in the 1990s to address similar dissatisfaction with research in education that scholars believed did not fully account for race and racism. Moreover, scholars felt that multicultural education had become co-opted and no longer had the potential to adequately address inequities in education writ large.

Q: There are a lot of misconceptions out there about CRT. In a few sentences, please tell us what critical race theory IS NOT.

A: It is not about training people to "be" anti-racist. It is not a static or pre-packaged curriculum that is sold to K-12 schools or even universities. It is not focused on making White people feel guilty. It is not Black, Asian, Latinx or Indigenous Supremacy. It is not Culturally Relevant Pedagogy.

Q: What does critical race theory add to our thinking?

A: Critical Race Theory helps us think more carefully about how our policies and practices create barriers that prevent equitable participation and success in the educational enterprise.

Q: To what extent, if any, is critical race theory currently taught in K-12 schools? (e.g., What grade levels or subjects? What elements of CRT?)

A: It is not taught in K-12 schools as a curriculum of any sort formally. If teachers have had courses where their instructor used a CRT text, they may have a broader understanding of race, racism, and inequity than a teacher who has not. In that way, CRT may inform the teacher's pedagogy and curriculum.

Q: How should CRT be used or taught in K-12 schools? When taught or employed well, what are the benefits of teaching/employing CRT in K-12 schools? Are there any drawbacks?

A: CRT is a theoretical framework, like feminist theory or other theories on how to make sense of the world. It could be taught as one of many theories that attempt to explain inequities. I think the benefit is that students will have a more expansive perspective on world history and contemporary issues. I don't know of any drawbacks other than the ones we are seeing now: a profound ignorance about academic discourses.

Q: In a few words, tell us about the current political controversy over CRT. In your view, what can we learn from it and why is it occurring now?

A: I think we are seeing the lengths to which the powerful will go to suppress information and ideas. As CRT scholars, many of us predicted that after Obama's election, this nation was going to experience an extended period of racial backlash. Thus, while many of us were pleased to see the first Black president elected, we were also concerned about the extent, the substance, and tone of the backlash. We are seeing all of that now. It began to unfold immediately after Obama was elected, but it began to accelerate with the election of Trump. I don't know if January 6, 2021 was the nadir, but I hope that it was. This backlash and the resulting legislation are logical outcomes of how racism manifests in the United States. Public educa-

tion is always the stage on which the most racist policies are tested. We saw that with the post-Katrina education reforms, and we're seeing it now with the anti-CRT laws.

Q: How do you suggest teachers respond in states where legislatures are attempting to prevent schools from teaching CRT? That is, while we understand that your response here isn't providing legal advice, what would you suggest as a scholar of education?

A: I think that teachers should band together and file class action lawsuits against their state legislatures if they encounter any backlash from teaching objective, historical information. I think they should present a range of perspectives on literature, politics, science, and any other subject matter that they teach.

Q: Are there steps that others – particularly students – might take to address the current attempts by some policymakers to prevent schools from teaching CRT?

A: I think students and teachers should work in solidarity to resist fascist attempts to limit knowledge and ideas. I would hope that they will organize together and go to their state legislators' offices as groups of concerned citizens rather than as individuals.

NEPC Resources on Critical Theory and Pedagogy

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