



Critical Race Theory in Higher Education: 20 Years of Theoretical and Research Innovations

McCoy, Dorian L.; and Rodricks, Dirk J.
Wiley, 2015

Book Review

Tags: anti-racism | critical race theory | racism

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Critical Race Theory in Higher Education: 20 Years of Theoretical and Research Innovations is an in-depth description and analysis of critical race theory. The book addresses contemporary issues facing our society in general and higher education specifically. Dorian L. McCoy, a professor at the University of Tennessee and Dirk J. Rodricks, a doctoral student at the University of Toronto collaborated on the book. It is part of the *Higher Education Report* periodical series.

It is interesting that this book was launched during some disturbing times involving race in the United States. The book addresses critical race theory at the time when the slogan "Black Lives Matter" becomes the rallying cry against injustice and the attacks on black lives by the criminal justice system and police specifically. Although the book addresses this issue, it is not what propelled the authors to write it.

The authors define critical race theory (CRT) as:

"A form of oppositional scholarship that centers race and racism while challenging the Eurocentric values established as the accepted norm in the United States; is used to examine the unequal and unjust distribution of power and resources politically, economically, racially, and socially; a movement of scholars committed to challenging and disrupting racism and other forms of oppression; composed of the following key tenets: the permanence of racism, experiential knowledge, interest convergence theory, intersectionality, whiteness of property, the critique of liberalism, and commitment to social justice." (91)

Throughout the book the authors take their definition of critical race theory and present research on each aspect of it. This not only serves to educate students in higher education, but

also to enlighten those who are part of the hiring process.

As one who has served on search committees at institutions of higher education, I find the research in this book to be very stimulating. The documented disproportionate number of professors of color teaching in institutions of higher education makes this research very helpful for search committees in these institutions. Astute people will use this information to further promote equality and even the playing ground in institutions of higher education.

Critical Race Theory in Higher Education serves as an educational tool for administrators, board of trustee members, and faculty in higher education, especially for the ways by which it encourages deeper reflection on the subject.

The weakness from this reviewer's viewpoint is that the book becomes somewhat overwhelming with so many references. This sometimes causes the flow of reading to be cumbersome particularly when reading some technical terms. That said, McCoy and Rodricks have put together a large corpus of research on critical race theory that could be helpful to faculty teaching in North American contexts. The book is very timely as it explores a very important subject to address in our present time of heightened awareness of multiculturalism and pluralism. Overall this book is a valuable resource for all who have an interest in higher education.

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