The (In)Efficient Curriculum: An Overview of How Canadian Education Has Historically (Un)Welcomed Black Refugee Students

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Abstract:
For at least a century, educators have sought to define what education should look like, its purposes, content and approach, and how it could be delivered in the most efficient way. However, when looking at some of the most pre-eminent approaches in the history of curriculum studies, it is possible to observe how each of those "efficient" methods have not been able to welcome the uniqueness of Black refugee students. Despite claims of "diversity celebration", when educators do not challenge and resist White structures and assumptions, even the most "efficient" curriculum falls short of being responsive to the Other, serving, rather, as another disguise to racism, which has long structured Canadian education. I argue that rather than an efficient ready-made set of rules, education must be conceptualized as an act of unconditional openness to the unknown Other, however uncomfortable and "inefficient" that may sound.

Keywords: Black refugee students; anti-Black racism; colonization; curriculum studies

Le curriculum (in)efficace : un aperçu de la manière dont l’Éducation canadienne a toujours (dé)servi les élèves réfugiés noirs

Résumé :
Depuis au moins un siècle, les éducateurs ont cherché à définir à quoi devrait ressembler l'éducation, ses objectifs, son contenu et son approche, et comment elle pourrait être dispensée de la manière la plus efficace. Cependant, en examinant certaines des approches les plus prééminentes de l'histoire des programmes d'études, il est possible d'observer comment chacune de ces méthodes « efficaces » n'a pas été en mesure d'accueillir véritablement le caractère unique des étudiants réfugiés noirs. Malgré les affirmations de « célébration de la diversité », lorsque les éducateurs ne remettent pas en question et ne résistent pas aux structures et hypothèses Blanches, même le programme le plus efficace ne répond pas à l'Autre, mais sert plutôt de déguisement au racisme qui a longtemps structuré l'éducation canadienne. Je soutiens qu'au lieu d'un ensemble de règles toutes faites et efficaces, l'éducation doit être conceptualisée comme un acte d'ouverture inconditionnelle à l'Autre inconnu, aussi inconfortable et « inefficace » que cela puisse paraître.

Mots clés : étudiants réfugiés noirs; racisme anti-Noir; colonialisme; programme d'études

Since the beginning, or, at least, what might be considered the beginning, of the field of curriculum studies (Flinders & Thornton, 2017), educators have sought to define what education should look like, as well as its purposes, content and approach. Although much of such work developed in the United States, its influence on Canadian curriculum development is unquestionable (cf. Lemisko & Clausen, 2006; Smith, 2003). Curriculum, as Apple (2014) argues, is more than the content to be taught, it is, rather, "a symbolic, material, and human environment that is *ongoingly reconstructed"* (p. 151, my emphasis). On a superficial level, this constant reconstruction of curriculum can be attributed to the fact that what often appears to work well for a particular group of students might demonstrate to be inadequate or insufficient for another. Thus, especially when it comes to the way in which the curriculum must respond to "diverse learners", a plethora of theories and approaches has emerged throughout the years, providing ideas that are still present in the field. On a deeper level, however, the curriculum (here encompassing objectives, subject matter, methods, activities, materials and organization of education) will never be the same across different places, times or people because education is far from being a neutral delivery of content to a body of students; it is rather "a psychic event for the teacher" (Britzman, 1998, p. 134). Each educator's worldviews, knowledge and experiences will inevitably shape the way in which they receive and respond to students.

Nonetheless, there is one fundamental similarity among the multiple curriculum approaches in the history of curriculum studies. Philosophical and psychoanalytical theories point to the fact that there is within each of us a natural resistance to the Other[1] because otherness (i.e., alterity) interrupts the self and causes discomfort (Britzman, 1998; Derrida, 2000a, 2000b; Freud, 1915-1917/2012, 1923/2018). However, at least since the modern European Enlightenment, the category of "Other" has been particularly attributed to Blacks, who have been perceived and treated as less than human in order to fulfill and sustain White (settler) colonizers' wishes and privileges (Mbembe, 2017; Walcott & Abdillahi, 2019). As a consequence, Maynard (2017) observes that Canadian education has been extremely shaped by anti-Blackness, segregation, hostility and the demonization of Black children, whereas White students enjoy the privileges they inherited as a White settler society. Maynard outlines how Black children have been denied their state of purity and innocence, rather becoming associated with danger and inferiority while "not seeing themselves reflected and celebrated in the curriculum" (p. 216), an issue that is further problematized when considering intersectional identities such as those of Black refugees.

The term refugee can be briefly understood as "a person who is forced to flee from persecution and who is located outside of their home country" (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2010,

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[1] Following Emmanuel Levinas (1972) and Jacques Derrida (Derrida, 2000a, 2000b, 2007), I use the capital "O" to refer to the absolute, infinitely unknown other.

p. x). Intersectionality, which can be briefly defined as "the examination of race, sex, national origin, and sexual orientations and how their combination plays out in various settings" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 58), plays a major role in the lives of Black refugees, who have the potential to be oppressed not only for their race but also for their hybrid national, linguistic, religious and political identity. In addition to the multiple disadvantages that they face in mainstream society, Crenshaw (1989) claims that intersectional groups are either not represented or misrepresented by other minority groups' movements, such as the existing educational interventions to support refugee students or by the existing movements against anti-Black racism. In order for educators to listen to and ethically respond to the voices of this complex, heterogeneous group in a way that enables them to be active subjects with agency (Ruitenberg, 2011), they cannot simply be placed in one category and/or the other.

It might be argued that there has been some improvement in terms of openness in the curriculum in the last decades, such as modifications that emerged with the advent of multiculturalism, and others, which will be explored in the next sections. It may also be observed that even what can be perceived as "welcoming to diversity" may potentially be simply a disguise to a still normative and hierarchical approach to the Other who is not as White or as Canadian. Despite the government political openness to refugees, the increasing presence of refugees in the country (Statistics Canada, 2017), and the common claims of being supportive to "cultural diversity", the idea of welcoming students in a way that they can be active subjects with agency (Ruitenberg, 2011) cannot be dissociated from the self-Other relation that takes place in the classroom. After all, the curriculum "is neither only a cultural or political instrument divorced from the concrete practices of teaching" (Todd, 2003, p. 39). Black refugees are not simply "culturally" diverse and, as will be observed, the ubiquitous culturalization of race is in fact anchored on historical and systemic racism and White supremacy, which remains pervasive in the country.

Interestingly enough, despite the frequent reconceptualization of curriculum (see Flinders & Thornton, 2017; Pinar, 2017), it is remarkable how there is a paucity of curriculum developments focused on the particularities of Black refugees in Canada. Notions of efficiency, measurement, productivity and success, for instance, have long permeated education, remaining strong until today under the influence of neoliberalism (Apple, 2006; Walcott & Abdillahi, 2019). However, when Whiteness and racism are not addressed and resisted by educators (both individually and as a collectivity), every attempt to provide an efficient education will take place without unsettling dominant structures of power. This not only reinforces Whiteness but also falls short of welcoming Black refugees' knowledge and experience in the classroom. Black refugees' uniqueness calls for a unique response, one that cannot be shaped by Whiteness, and one which appears to be largely ignored in the history of curriculum studies.

This paper, thus, provides an overview of some of the pre-eminent moments and approaches in the history of the curriculum field, arguing that, by themselves, each moment has not been able to welcome the uniqueness of Black refugee students. Conversely, I demonstrate how those multiple (apparent) reconceptualizations served as different disguises to the historical pervasiveness of anti-

Black racism in the country that have long structured Canadian education (Maynard, 2017; Stewart, 2011; Tecle & James, 2014; Walcott & Abdillahi, 2019). I argue that it is of utmost importance to challenge the "uncritical and disturbing acceptance of the dominant ways of thinking about discrimination" (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 150) that shape mainstream education, and which hinders Black refugee students' flourishing, especially in the K-12 setting. I conclude by arguing that rather than an efficient, fixed set of rules that claims to "celebrate diversity", but does so without challenging its own (White) structures, education must be conceptualized as an unconditional act of openness to the unknown Other, a genuine ongoing (re)construction, however "inefficient" that may be.

A Progressive Beginning?

Education certainly did not begin in the 20th century. In fact, Dewey (1938) began one of his masterpieces by pointing out that progressive education arose in response to traditional education. Centuries before, a major treatise on education had been published by Rousseau (1762/1979), who in turn referred to those who had taught thousands of years before him. The emergence of the field of curriculum studies in North America, however, may be dated to around 1918, when Franklin Bobbitt published *The Curriculum* (Flinders & Thornton, 2017; Kliebard, 1968). Bobbitt's ideas are centred in notions of performance and efficiency, that is, maximum output with the minimum cost. Although Bobbitt (1918/2017) argued that education must "grow only out of participation in the living experiences of men . . . in connection with actual life-situations" (p. 11), education would take place with "training" and following scientific procedures. Using technical jargon, Bobbitt ended up dismissing the interests of children because he believed the aim of education should be to train students for the existing social and economic order. Consequently, by being an act of "developing abilities to do the things well that make up the affairs of adult life; and to be in all respects what adults should be" (p. 13), education not only did not challenge dominant ideologies but also failed to be responsive to the uniqueness of each student.

While the extent to which Bobbitt was actually the first to conceptualize the curriculum is debatable, John Dewey was most likely the pioneer in calling attention to the fact that not every scholastic experience is educative. For genuine education to take place, he argued, it must be connected to students' lives (Dewey, 1902, 1938, 1964). Dewey's work grounded the concept of democratic education and the need of a spontaneous curriculum that is responsive to the life experience of each student. He also observed how uncomfortable this can be for teachers, whose natural instinct is to dread the uncertain or unknown, and thus seek conformity. Dewey's conceptualization of democracy has remained ubiquitous in the academy, but is not without criticism. When it comes to teaching the non-mainstream student, Dewey's postulates share some of the limitations that would remain in the curriculum field throughout the 20th century. Besides the commonly perceived challenge of putting Dewey's theoretical discourse into practice (e.g., Lemisko & Clausen, 2006, p. 1111), Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández (2013) argue that most of Dewey's long-standing ideas "are premised on an assimilationist project that viewed non-White groups as having the potential of moving toward civilization" (p. 76). In addition to that, Dewey (1964) believed that

the teacher must fully know the students, "their needs, experiences, degrees of skill and knowledge" (p. 154) in order to be able to connect education to the students. However, when trying to know the Other, this predictability and determinism not only nullifies the goal of welcoming the unknown (Derrida, 2000a, 2000b, 2007), but is an act of violence against the Other's uniqueness. It is an attempt to reduce the Other to that which the self can understand and thus appropriate (Derrida, 2000a; Fagan, 2013; Todd, 2003).

Likely influenced by Dewey, Jane Addams (1908/2017) pointed out the discrepancy immigrant children can find between their homes and their new school, a discrepancy which may have contributed to the development of what anthropologists later coined the cultural discontinuity hypothesis (Ogbu, 1982). Addams (1908/2017) argued that despite the benefits that education can bring to the immigrant child, a one-size-fits-all curriculum disengages students and creates disharmony between them and their community. Addams sought to develop a curriculum that would "give to each child the beginnings of a culture so wide and deep and universal that he can interpret his own parents and countryman by a standard which is worldwide and not provincial" (p. 56). While it is certainly important to bridge the gap between students' home experiences and the school (Grumet, 1989), the limitations of Addams' proposed approach must also be taken into consideration. The idea of a curriculum that is universal (which for Addams meant speaking to every culture), while at the same time rejecting a standardized education brings with it two contradictions. First, it searches what it also tries to eliminate—for what is universal but an imposition of a one-model-fits-all? Second, it is contradictory because it uses its own hegemonic perspectives to determine and dictate what is meaningful to all students, hence nullifying the culture of the Other—for what is culture if not meanings and values shared by a specific group?

The underpinnings of Addams' (1908/2017) work, however, are not unique in the history of curriculum, strongly re-emerging with the advent of multiculturalism in the late 20th century. Moreover, it is important to be attentive to how even an approach that in the first moment may be portrayed as a welcoming attempt can hide a discourse that is essentializing (e.g., "we send young people to Europe to see Italy, but we do not utilize Italy when it lies about the schoolhouse"; p. 57), or managerial (e.g., "it is the business of the school . . . our industry has become so international"; p. 56), or colonizing ("the immigrant colonies"; p. 57). Just as with Bobbitt and Dewey, in Addams's work, the teacher is still the channel that intermediates and dictates what the best education should look like without firstly deconstructing its (White) assumptions and (White) ideologies. Moreover, if ever mentioned, race appears under the disguise of "culture", "nationality" or "ethnicity", notwithstanding race long being a watershed in how students are perceived.

An Attempt to Reform

The period between 1930 and 1960 is commonly perceived as a moment of reform in the field of curriculum studies (Flinders & Thornton, 2017). One of the most prominent names associated with that movement is that of Ralph Tyler with his classic *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction,* published in 1949. Advocating for the importance of a philosophy of education, Tyler (1949/2017)

posed important questions such as the following: What are the educational purposes of the school? What educational experiences can be provided in order to achieve those purposes? How should the program be organized and how should it be evaluated?

Indeed, the "Tyler rationale" encouraged educators to connect theory to practice when developing the curriculum. In criticizing existing educational programs, Tyler (1949/2017) disapproved of studies that see education as "a process of changing the behavior in people" (p. 75) because these would suggest that once the desirable standards defined by institutions are traced, students' needs become clearer and thus more easily met. These kinds of views, he argued, fail to consider individuals as organisms who are in constant development, not finished beings. Tyler also argued against studies that present education through "the cult of 'presentism'" (p. 77), trying to determine the issues students will face when they become adults—when, in fact, the problems children will face in the future are to a great extent unpredictable. Additionally, Tyler criticized how specialized subjects had been (and which, arguably, continue to be), asking, for example, "What can your subject contribute to the education of young people who are not going to be specialists in your field?" (Tyler, 1949/2017, p. 78).

However, many scholars have observed how the Tyler rationale followed Bobbitt's postulates in many ways, focusing on a curriculum that guarantees control over the means and ends while attempting to achieve those through the most efficient way. Criticizing the progressive era of curriculum studies, Fallace and Fantozzi (2017) argue that the pervasive notion of "*social efficiency* was complex and heterogenous from the beginning" (p. 89, italics in the original), being mostly used "by elites as a way to expand and rationalize their authority" (p. 84), and which remained with the "objective-driven outcomes approach of alleged social efficiency advocate Ralph Tyler" (p. 92). While Dewey used the term efficiency with caution (i.e., education must contribute to society but not to the detriment of the individual's interests and experience), Bobbitt and Tyler imbued the concept with a preparation for the future workforce while leaving the child behind (pun intended). Rather than being responsive to the uniqueness of the Other, Whiteness was thus not only unchallenged but also reinforced.

The excessive focus on measurable goals (which can be clearly seen in Popham's famous work in the late 1960s; see Popham, 1972/2017) contributed to a major increase in the usage of standardized tests, which remain present in education today (Flinders & Thornton, 2017). Although Eisner (1983/2017) criticized Tyler for placing "great importance on the specificity of objectives" (p. 130), and although Pinar (2017) censured both Tyler and Bobbitt for not challenging the assumptions of schools and society, education reform empowered White educators to find ways to connect to White students, but without rethinking power and the politics of knowledge itself. Thus, without questioning Whiteness and how it shapes educators' practices, the curriculum would only maintain the marginalization of the already marginalized students, such as Black refugees.

In the Pursuit of Change

A movement to reconceptualization of curriculum emerged in the late 1970s (Pinar, 2017), with educators and curriculum theorists who started to demonstrate greater awareness of issues of power and standardization, and to provide all students with more choice to decide their educational path "in emancipatory ways" (p. 172). However, because there is no neutrality in education, the curriculum serves the interests of individuals in power (Apple, 1978, p. 18), and so "what counts as legitimate knowledge is the result of complex power relations and struggles among identifiable class, race, gender, and religious groups" (Apple, 2014, p. 47). Since the early years of the reconceptualization movement, Apple (1978) recognized that education is a political act shaped by three main forces: the school as an institution, the knowledge forms and the educators themselves. Therefore, Apple (1978) emphasized the importance of asking questions such as "Whose knowledge is it? Who selected it? Why is it organized and taught in this way, to this particular group?" (p. 16). Apple and King (1977) argued that the school curriculum is structured with the purpose of social control, so, even though social control is not problematic in itself (p. 344), "the structuring of knowledge and symbol in our educational institutions is intimately related to the principles of social and cultural control in a society" (Apple, 1978, p. 11). These scholars thus support the argument that if dominant—that is, White—assumptions and ideologies are not challenged and resisted, the curriculum, however efficient it may be, will end up reinforcing and maintaining racist practices to the benefit of that dominant White perspective. One of the most renowned educators of the reconceptualist era, Paulo Freire strongly argued across his works that the curriculum has to be developed in dialogue with the student. Even though most of his work was focused on adult literacy, Freire's contributions to education as a whole are indisputable. Many parallels between what Freire criticized and what Dewey's philosophy earlier pointed to can be observed, which corroborates how the curriculum remained, throughout the decades, an attempt to incorporate marginalized students into a pre-defined and rigid structure. As Freire (1970/2017) argued, segregated students "cannot overcome their dependency by 'incorporation' into the very structure responsible for their dependency" (p. 181). In other words, Freire emphasized that students who are simply existing for the benefit of others, deprived of speaking and of transforming the environment, are actually marginalized insiders. That is, they "are not marginal to the structure, but oppressed men within it" (p. 181). On a similar vein, Black refugee students may be physically present in the classroom, as all the others, but by being deprived of their voice, their uniqueness, they become oppressed in that same structure that claims to be an empowering opportunity for them; for "to exist, humanly, is to *name* the world, to change it" (Freire, 1968/2018, p. 88, italics in the original).

With his work, Freire (1968/2018) provided an important critique of the White savior myth that has long pervaded Canadian education. Refugee children may arrive in Canada as a consequence of wars, famine, detention and other horrible circumstances in their home countries (Stewart, 2011), however, "any attempt to 'soften' the power of the oppressor in deference to the weakness of the oppressed almost always manifests itself in the form of false generosity" (Freire, 1968/2018, p. 44). While accepting refugee students may be portrayed as a gesture of human rights, if the initiative

starts with the oppressor, it will most likely serve their own egoistic interests, thus becoming a dehumanizing act (Freire, 1968/2018). Freire emphasized that students must not be simply treated as unfortunate people (p. 54) and that liberation takes place not through "pseudo-participation, but committed involvement" (p. 69). Consequently, emancipatory education is not about mere integration of students, but transforming the structure so that students "can become 'beings for themselves'" (p. 74).

Notwithstanding the pivotal insights that Freire brought to the curriculum field, some limitations of his work must be considered, as they continue to pose obstacles to an education that can truly welcome Black refugee students. Freire (1968/2018) correctly argued that rather than existing as objects or containers to be banked with knowledge, the oppressed must become the subject of education and "intervene critically in the situation which surrounds them" (p. 67). At the same time, Freire recognized that "the oppressor knows full well that this intervention would not be to his interest" (p. 52). Still, Freire placed greater responsibility on the oppressed, who "must confront reality critically" (p. 52), see the vulnerability of the oppressor (p. 64), and thus take the first step towards their own liberation. Arguably, the status quo is comfortable for White teachers, who are able to control the situation, enjoy their privileges and navigate through a system that works to their benefit. The oppressed students, on the other hand, arrive in a system where a prescribed education inhibits oppressed learners' expression (p. 47), where they internalize a sense of self-depreciation that the oppressors have of them (p. 63), which then can lead them to accept their exploitation (p. 64). Moreover, placing the responsibility on the oppressed is often linked to a false idea that Whites are not complicit in their dominance, as if they had received their privileges by birth and simply remained like that as mere "passive victims of socialization" (hooks, 2015, p. 14). Therefore, expecting the oppressed to fight against the pervasiveness of racism without first naming and deconstructing educators' Whiteness and ingrained beliefs of White supremacy will not magically transform classrooms into truly welcoming spaces for Black refugee students.

Additionally, it is important to note that conscientization, which is key in Freire's (1968/2018) work, does not necessarily lead to action (Kumashiro, 2000). Although Kumashiro speaks particularly about the conscientization of students, it seems that the same pertains to the consciousness-raising of teachers. On the one hand, as aforementioned, students may not wish to take action or speak up because of the oppression they have long faced, because of lack of trust and because of the hopelessness that they will ever be effectively heard. On the other hand, even teachers who become aware of students' oppression will not necessarily be led to transformative action. The encounter with the Other disrupts the self, and the most natural tendency is that teachers, feeling the vulnerability of their power and control, will hold on firmly to their self-affirmation (Todd, 2003).

In a review of Black curriculum orientations, Watkins (2017) has explored how Black experience in the United States can be more authentically represented in education. Although Watkins' work is focused on Afrocentric education for Black children born in North America, his observations are nonetheless pertinent to the present discussion. The invisibility of Black voices can be clearly noticed in the Canadian curriculum, where the more-than-200 years of slavery in the country most often go

unspoken (Maynard, 2017). Watkins (2017) has observed that, as a result of colonialism and segregation, two main frameworks have guided Black education. In the first one, the educational adaptation model, race differentiation is seen as something normal; thus, different races should be offered different education. This model, Watkins has noted, was fundamental to the Jim Crow laws and yielded to the second framework: the cultural-educational deprivation model. Through this framework, Blacks are seen as pathological and culturally deficient, and the ones who have to adapt to White ways of being. Thus, all six curriculum orientations that Watkins observed to have stemmed from these two frameworks (i.e., functionalism, accommodationism, liberal education orientations, Black nationalist outlook, Afrocentric curriculum and social reconstructionism) point to how White supremacy and the consequent marginalization of Black students are the forces that have historically shaped their education and led to the "continued subservience of African Americans" (p. 230)—an orientation strongly present in Canadian public schools as well, where "the presence of Black children and youth remains unwelcome and undesirable" (Maynard, 2017, p. 217).

An Issue That Remains

More than 100 years have elapsed since the ground-breaking publications of the curriculum studies field began to emerge in North America. Technology has entered the classroom, furnishing it with interactive screens and virtual experiences; subjects have become more specialized and one may find different standardized tests for the variety of skills that students are required to develop. However, when it comes to how the curriculum has evolved to welcome the individual Other, such as the Black refugee student, education does not seem to have been so efficient. Many other approaches have emerged since the last years of the 20th century, each with its own strengths, but they either fail to name the real issue of education (racism) or give the issue a different label (e.g., culture, ethnicity, language), which leaves mainstream knowledge centralized.

An ethics of care, as proposed by Noddings (1984), for example, does not suffice because its emphasis "is not on the subject but on the *relation* between subject and other" (Ruitenberg, 2016, p. 11, italics in the original)—a relation that is ultimately egoistic (Todd, 2003). In addition, there is a major risk that this framework serves to reinforce the White savior myth, a condescending relation with the Other who is perceived as less fortunate, less advanced, and lacking attributes to be as (White Canadian as) an educator may be, which, in turn, "implies that the Other is the problem" (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 30; cf. Heron, 2007). However, one should not hastily jump into the common approach of inclusion either, which is often simply another term for "tolerance" rather than an unconditional responsibility for the Other (Levinas, 1972, 1982). To tolerate the Other implies hierarchy, power of one over the Other, and hence is not a synonym for welcoming the Other's uniqueness in its wholeness (Fagan, 2013). Inclusion is also not enough because it brings with it the idea that diversity must be incorporated or overcome, as a fort pedagogy (Donald, 2012) in which "outsiders must be either incorporated—brought inside to become like the insiders—or excluded in order for progress and development to take place in the necessary ways" (p. 101).

On a similar vein, multicultural education strongly emerged as a panacea for celebrating "cultural diversity" and the promotion of equity pedagogy (Banks, 1993). Culturalization of racism (which is thus understood only as an individually performed offensive act) becomes the rationale that drives multiculturalism, an approach that claims that by exposing students to a culturally diverse curriculum (which usually means not more than a couple of folkloric days throughout the year) would generate the awareness that is needed to achieve equitable education (James, 2009). Certainly, multiculturalism had its value when it began as, for the first time, (some) aspects of (some) minority students' cultures could appear in the curriculum in a way that was not derogatory (Leonardo, 2009; Wilson, 2016). However, as Wilson illustrates, food, music and clothes are just the tip of the iceberg, not all that shapes one's being. When these aspects become the synonym for culture (and race) and all that is addressed in education, White structures remain unchallenged and the power stays with those who already have it and who can navigate the educational system with their privileges: looking, thinking and behaving White (DiAngelo, 2018; Gorski, 2019; hooks, 2015; James, 2009; Kumashiro, 2000; Leonardo, 2009). Integration does not challenge White structures (hooks, 2015).

Acknowledging the limitations of the multiculturalist (as well as the critical legal studies) approach, critical race theory was developed, emphasizing that what had been done so far was not enough: White supremacy had not been addressed nor challenged. Critical race theory understands that racism is not only pervasive in education (and society as a whole) but has also become normalized (Ladson-Billings, 1998, 1999). In other words, critical race theory "sees the official school curriculum as a culturally specific artifact designed to maintain a White supremacist master script" (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 18), privileging those who possess Whiteness while segregating those who do not.

Surely the rebuke to a race-neutral or colour-blind perspective was very much needed, as these false ideas also remain ingrained in Canadian society (James, 2009). Nonetheless, as Ladson-Billings (1998) herself argues, just exposing White supremacy and racism in education is not enough either. Any curriculum design that becomes just another hedonistic pedagogy for the (White) educator, who wants to claim not to be racist but who does not engage in the discomfort that is necessary for an unsettling education, leaves the Other on the fringes. Additionally, acknowledging the ubiquity of systemic oppression runs the risk of implying "that oppression has the same general effect on people" (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 38), which is another way of essentializing students, even if with "good intentions". Black refugee students, although far from being a homogenous group, are not simply culturally diverse nor should their uniqueness be expected to shape the classroom where their voices and experiences have been pre-determined for them by Whites. The result of such pedagogy is that "White scholars are celebrated for their performances of critical reflexivity, but little else changes, and the cumulative effect is that White experience of the world resumes its place as the rightful and natural perspective" (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013, p. 83), and Black refugee students remain as they have long been in the classroom: unwelcome.

Conclusion: Welcoming an "Inefficient" Curriculum

In this paper, I outlined how the historical pursuit of the most efficient curriculum has fallen short of questioning and resisting underlying (White) assumptions and power structures. While many other approaches to curriculum could have been explored, the bottom line is that if White supremacy remains the foundation of education, the unspoken racism that has long served to undermine and segregate minoritized knowledge and experiences in the classroom will not be magically solved just by increasing the number of enrolled refugees, holding a Black History Month or even acknowledging the existence of racism. While these are surely important and necessary components of an anti-oppressive education, they are not enough to truly welcome Black refugee students in the classroom.

A welcoming curriculum is not one that gives the educator an efficient list of "dos" and "don'ts" or an add-and-stir of cultural differences. Genuine welcoming education will only take place when teachers become decentralized and uphold their unconditional responsibility to each student's uniqueness. Welcoming Black refugees will not happen merely by opening the doors of the classroom for them. Neither will it happen by trying to follow a deterministic and standardized curriculum because "our institutions were designed to reproduce racial inequality and they do so with efficiency" (DiAngelo, 2018, p. 153). Rather, a truly welcoming education requires the unconditional openness to the unknown. It requires engagement with the discomfort of losing control over means and ends. It requires interrupting Whiteness. It requires tactfulness to give space for the student to be an active subject with agency. It requires time. It requires vulnerability. It requires uncertainty. It requires that which has no universal practice: the inefficiency of a genuine welcoming.

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