

CALL FOR BOOK CHAPTER PROPOSALS

The Other Elephant: White Liberalism and the Persistence of Racism in Schools

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Please send queries, questions, and proposals to whiteliberalism@edchange.org.

A significant portion of racism in schools and education systems is connected to the ideas, actions, and influences of people and institutions outwardly hostile to any sort of serious response to racism, whether interpersonally, institutionally, or societally. There are schools, districts, and universities where leaders and others simply refuse to address racial disparities and injustices in any serious way or address them only in ways that further demonize or alienate communities of color.

In this book we intend to focus on “the other elephant in the room”: the emotional, social, material, and spiritual damage often done by *white people who see themselves as racial justice advocates* and by *white-dominated educational institutions that might even claim a racial justice commitment*.

In our experiences, part of what makes common “racial equity” efforts so ineffective at eradicating racism is that they too often reflect common elements of white liberalism. These elements include (1) mistaking celebrations of diversity for racial justice progress, (2) equating peace—*the absence of tension* as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., described it in his Letter from Birmingham Jail—with justice, (3) relying on good intentions rather than good actions, (4) slowing racial justice progress by insisting on “baby steps” and “developmental processes” that protect white people from having to grapple seriously with racism, (5) adhering to a savior mentality or some other ideology that positions white people as the “fixers” or “saviors” of students and families of color, (6) misconstruing equity as equal numbers or representation rather than the elimination of inequity and oppression, (7) superficially expressing a desire for diversity but rarely engaging in meaningful practices that substantially incorporate the voices and desires of racially marginalized communities, (8) refusing to acknowledge the expertise or authority of people of color, even on matters of racial equity, (9) white educators manipulating the narratives of people of color in order to position themselves as “well-intentioned” or “innocent,” and (10) engaging in “toxic positivity,” insisting that conversations about racism are too “negative” and we should focus on the “positive.”

What We’re Looking For

We seek chapter authors who will draw on existing theoretical frameworks such as critical race theory, critical whiteness studies, culturally sustaining pedagogies, and equity literacy to explore how white liberalism operates in deleterious ways in schools, how to recognize and confront it, and how to move schools from white liberalism to a transformative vision for racial justice. We also anticipate contributors drawing on existing and familiar concepts such as white fragility, racial battle fatigue, white emotionality, white privilege, and interest convergence where helpful.

We especially are looking for chapters that combine narrative aspects with theoretical grounding and that bridge critical analysis to visions for moving forward. We see our audience as people working in schools, so we seek chapters written with that audience in mind.

With the above general framing in mind, the purpose of this book is to cover:

- (1) the ways white liberal educators and institutions—those imagining themselves as committed to racial justice, at least to some extent—play key roles in the perpetuation of racism and whiteness in education,
- (2) how whiteness and racism in education repress educators of color, sometimes pressuring them to internalize racism and adopt a white liberal approach to equity—conditions meant to control educators of color and make them appear less threatening to white educators, students, and families,
- (3) how common educational programs and initiatives often are filtered through a white liberal mentality that masks racism when implemented in place of serious racial justice commitments (e.g., diversity and inclusion, grit, restorative practices, trauma-informed practices, SEL, mindfulness, ACES, cultural competence, anti-bullying, Kindness Matters, No Place for Hate) or that are implemented in ways that undermine their antiracist intentions (e.g., culturally responsive teaching, multicultural education), and
- (4) how white educators, and all educators, can reject—and are rejecting—the white liberal frame to adopt more authentically justice-oriented approaches to antiracism in schools.

We anticipate chapters being 4,000-6,000 words long. We encourage the use of narrative, case scenarios, and other elements that help readers engage with and apply the ideas in each chapter. Finally, we expect that each chapter will provide a vision for what a more serious, transformative vision for racial justice in schools ought to look like.

Instructions

Send your chapter idea/proposal (400 words or fewer) by **July 15, 2020** to us at whiteliberalism@edchange.org. Please use these headings:

- **General Description of Chapter** (which should include both the aspect of white liberalism you're covering and how you're bridging readers to a deeper racial justice approach)
- **Unique Elements** (which should describe how you will engage readers through narrative, case scenarios, thought exercises, or other elements)
- **Theoretical Frame** (which should include what concepts or theories you intend to use to frame your chapter)

Additionally:

- Please label the file “last-name_first-name_proposed-chapter-title”
- When emailing your idea, please use the subject line “White Liberalism Chapter Proposal”

Timeline

July 15, 2020	Chapter ideas due. We will respond by August 15, 2020.
January 15, 2021	Chapter drafts due. We will respond with feedback by February 15, 2021.
April 1, 2021	Final chapters due.