



For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood... and the Rest of Y'all Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education

By Christopher Emdin

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A New York Times Best Seller

Featured in: MotherJones.com, *Education Week*, *Weekend All Things Considered* with Michel Martin, *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*, PBS NewsHour.com, *Slate*, *The Washington Post*, *Scholastic Administrator Magazine*, *Essence Magazine*, *Salon*, *ColorLines*, *Ebony.com*, *Huffington Post Education*

Merging real stories with theory, research, and practice, a prominent scholar offers a new approach to teaching and learning for every stakeholder in urban education.

Drawing on his own experience of feeling undervalued and invisible in classrooms as a young man of color, and merging his experiences with more than a decade of teaching and researching in urban America, award-winning educator Christopher Emdin offers a new lens on an approach to teaching and learning in urban schools. He begins by taking to task the perception of urban youth of color as unteachable, and he challenges educators to embrace and respect each student's culture and to reimagine the classroom as a site where roles are reversed and students become the experts in their own learning.

Putting forth his theory of reality pedagogy, Emdin provides practical tools to unleash the brilliance and eagerness of youth and educators alike - both of whom have been typecast and stymied by outdated modes of thinking about urban education. With this fresh and engaging new pedagogical vision, Emdin demonstrates the importance of creating a family structure and building communities within the classroom, using culturally relevant strategies like hip-hop music and call-and-response, and connecting the experiences of urban youth to indigenous populations globally. Merging real stories with theory, research, and practice, Emdin demonstrates how by implementing the "Seven C's" of reality pedagogy in their own classrooms, urban youth of color benefit from truly transformative education.

Lively, accessible, and revelatory, *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood...and the Rest of Y'all Too* is the much-needed antidote to traditional top-down pedagogy and promises to radically reframe the landscape of urban education for the better.

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Editorial Review

Review

"The most important work of pedagogy I've read in ten years...Dr. Emdin's humane, and more importantly, effective practices, filled me with great hope and excitement to keep engaging with the community in which I teach."

—John Warner, *Inside Higher Ed*

"*For White Folks* ultimately teaches the unlearned lesson that a hip-hop people's critical perspective must matter in order for authentic teaching and learning to take place, but more importantly the book offers a bigger case for colleges to make room for other hip-hop scholars."

—Dr. Andre Perry, *The Hechinger Report*

"Dr. Chris Emdin...inspired me to become fearless while teaching for social justice. His commitment to young people showed me that integrity, humility and hope are three of the greatest principles a person can possess."

—Bryan Mooney, contributor PBS *NewsHour's* Education Lounge

"As the cries to recognize the relevance of Black lives in this country grow louder...Emdin's advice about how to more effectively serve students (people) of color is a reminder that recognizing their humanity is a critical first step."

—*Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*

"Emdin's *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood...and the Rest of Y'all Too* is a brilliant, blistering, and bracing call to arms for those who teach and learn in urban America. Pivoting effortlessly from street vernacular to sophisticated theory without losing the common touch—or the lovely language and lucid thought—Emdin reminds us that the children and young people who throng our urban schools are worthy of every attempt to sharpen their minds and prepare them for a satisfying life far beyond the classroom. If you're looking for the revolutionary meaning, and imaginative transformation, of teaching for the real America, you're holding it in your hands! Christopher Emdin is Jonathan Kozol with swagger!"

—Michael Eric Dyson, author of *The Black Presidency: Barack Obama and the Politics of Race in America*

"Emdin's *For White Folks* is essential reading for all adults who work with black and brown young people...Filled with exceptional intellectual sophistication and necessary wisdom for the future of education."

—Imani Perry, author of *Prophets of the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip-Hop*

"From hip-hop to high theory, the journey Emdin takes us on is at once critical and compassionate, analytical and actionable. Through rich stories and well-developed frameworks, *For White Folks* offers a compelling and accessible road map for anyone (not just white folks!) teaching twenty-first-century urban youth. It also confirms Emdin's reputation as one of the most important education scholars of our generation."

—Marc Lamont Hill, author of *Beats, Rhymes, and Classroom Life: Hip-Hop Pedagogy and the Politics of Identity* and Distinguished Professor of Africana Studies at Morehouse College

"A generation ago Ntozake Shange gave us a 'choreopoem.' Today, Christopher Emdin offers us a 'pedagopoem.' This volume is a powerful dance of teaching and art. It engages both the art and science of

what teachers must do to be successful with all students. It is simultaneously lyrical and analytic, scientific and humanistic, a work of the heart and the mind. It belongs in every teacher's library!"

—Gloria Ladson-Billings, the Kellner Family Distinguished Chair in Urban Education, University of Wisconsin–Madison

From the Hardcover edition.

About the Author

Christopher Emdin is an associate professor in the Department of Mathematics, Science, and Technology at Teachers College, Columbia University, where he also serves as associate director of the Institute for Urban and Minority Education. The creator of the #HipHopEd social media movement and Science Genius B.A.T.T.L.E.S., Emdin was named the 2015 Multicultural Educator of the Year by the National Association of Multicultural Educators and has been honored as a STEM Access Champion of Change by the White House. In addition to teaching, he serves as a Minorities in Energy Ambassador for the US Department of Energy.

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From the Preface

I have always been fascinated by the brilliant theater piece *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide / When the Rainbow Is Enuf*, by Ntozake Shange. I was first drawn to this powerful work by its colorful cover, and I fell in love with it when I began to read the powerful prose. As a teenager, it was the title that affected me most. Seeing the word *enuf* in print, on the cover of a book, meant the world to me. It was bold and provocative—and it comforted me to know that someone from outside the four-block radius I called home knew this word. *Enuf* and *enough* are very different words. They have the same meaning, can be used in the same context, but each has very different significance to those who employ them. *Enuf* sits comfortably in the subtitle of a book like *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide*, allowing the work to call out to those for and about whom it is written. Its presence in the book title indicates that there is no political correctness, no tainting of the truth, and no hiding of what needs to be said. It prepares the reader for the substance of the text.

In many ways, this book draws from the traditions set forth by Shange. While it is neither a collection of poems and stories nor a theater piece, its intentions are similar. The title works toward invoking necessary truths and offering new ways forward. It is clearly intended for “white folks who teach in the hood.” But it is also for those who work with them, hire them, whose family members are taught by them, and who themselves are being, or have been, taught by them.

In short, this book is for people of all colors who take a particular approach to education. They may be white. They may be black. In all cases, they are so deeply committed to an approach to pedagogy that is Eurocentric in its form and function that the color of their skin doesn't matter. When I say that their skin color doesn't matter, I am not dismissing the particular responsibilities of privileged groups in societies that disadvantage marginalized groups. I am also not discounting the need to discuss race and injustice under the fallacy of equity. What I am suggesting is that it is possible for people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds to take on approaches to teaching that hurt youth of color. Malcolm X described this phenomenon in a powerful speech about the house Negro and the field Negro in the slave South. He described the black slave who toiled in the fields and the house Negro who worked in the white master's house. He noted that at some point, the house Negro became so invested in the well-being of the master that the master's needs and concerns took preeminence over his own needs and that of the field Negro. This is the equivalent of the black educator so

invested in the structure and pedagogies of the traditional school system that the needs of black and brown students become secondary to maintaining the status quo. For the “white” educator, this investment in traditional schooling is often generational, following the beliefs of parents and grandparents with college degrees and ideas about what school should look like. The point here is that there are both black and white people who can be classified as “white folks”—in that they maintain a system that doesn’t serve the needs of youth in the hood.

“The hood” is often identified as a place where dysfunction is prevalent and people need to be saved from themselves and their circumstances. The hood may be urban, rural, densely or sparsely populated, but it has a number of shared characteristics that make it easy to recognize. The community is often socioeconomically disadvantaged, achievement gaps are prevalent, and a very particular brand of pedagogy is normalized. In these communities, and particularly in urban schools, African American and Latino youth are most hard hit by poverty and its aftereffects. For example, in Atlanta, 80 percent of African American children have been reported to live in conditions of high poverty, compared with 29 percent of their Asian peers and 6 percent of their white peers. In fact, the largest twenty school districts in the nation enroll 80 percent minority students, compared with 42 percent in all school districts. In cities like Los Angeles, Chicago, and Miami, urban schools enroll less than 10 percent Anglo students, even though the teachers are overwhelmingly white. In New York public schools, over 70 percent of high school youth are students of color, while over 80 percent of public high school teachers in the state are white.

While some may use these statistics to push for more minority teachers, I argue that there must also be a concerted effort to improve the teaching of white teachers who are already teaching in these schools, as well as those who aspire to teach there, to challenge the “white folks’ pedagogy” that is being practiced by teachers of all ethnic and racial backgrounds.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Arlie Carrillo:

Why don't make it to become your habit? Right now, try to prepare your time to do the important work, like looking for your favorite book and reading a reserve. Beside you can solve your long lasting problem; you can add your knowledge by the e-book entitled For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood... and the Rest of Y'all Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education. Try to make the book For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood... and the Rest of Y'all Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education as your good friend. It means that it can being your friend when you truly feel alone and beside regarding course make you smarter than previously. Yeah, it is very fortunated in your case. The book makes you more confidence because you can know every little thing by the book. So , we need to make new experience and knowledge with this book.

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Playing with family within a park, coming to see the coastal world or hanging out with close friends is thing that usually you may have done when you have spare time, after that why you don't try matter that really opposite from that. One activity that make you not sense tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you have been ride on and with addition associated with. Even you love For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood... and the Rest of Y'all Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education, it is possible to enjoy both. It is great combination right, you still would like to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh occur its mind hangout people. What? Still don't get it, oh come on its named reading friends.

Yolanda Powers:

In this era which is the greater particular person or who has ability to do something more are more special than other. Do you want to become certainly one of it? It is just simple strategy to have that. What you have to do is just spending your time almost no but quite enough to possess a look at some books. One of many books in the top collection in your reading list is definitely For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood... and the Rest of Y'all Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education. This book which is qualified as The Hungry Hillside can get you closer in getting precious person. By looking upward and review this guide you can get many advantages.

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