

The Value of Seeing and Incorporating Race & Culture into Writing Assessment in Individual Classrooms and Writing Programs

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Topic Overview

I believe that it is important to argue for the visibility of race and culture because it is an aspect of student identity that is often overlooked and undervalued, but also because by choosing to focus on **one type of difference** in identity in the writing classroom we can begin to develop identification patterns and discussions that can be used to discuss differences like race and culture, but also many others.

Quotes to Consider

“maintaining one’s identity— that is, one’s sense of oneself—is the most fundamental human need and thus is the ultimate motive underlying all human behavior” (Bracher, 518).

“since racial formations construct at least the power relations and parts of an assessment, racism may occur even without expressed racist purpose by agents... if we do not construct methods of research that are reflective of the racial formations that surround our assessments (our civic communities) and make up our classrooms, then we risk (re)producing racism from our assessments and perhaps even from our pedagogies” (Inoue 126-7).

“race is a social and political construction that has created and sustained human hierarchies and domination, ones that we have not fully escaped, and that often inherently provide (or withhold) value... [Race is] constructed by external institutions, agents, and groups” (Inoue & Poe 4).

“in the past 20 years, writers have repeatedly noted transformations in U.S. racial ideologies, namely, the rise of color blindness as the dominant post-civil rights discourse on race... in a similar vein, issues of race and ethnicity have been marginalized in public discourse” (Davila 4).

Questions to Consider

- + Is there room for "seeing" race and culture in assessment?
- + What would this kind of assessment value?
- + How would this kind of assessment be constructed?
- + What is the differentiation between "seeing" race and culture and "assessing" race and culture?
- + How do we see this assessment combatting the "whitewashing" of students?
- + What kinds of writing programs are conducive to this kind of work?
- + What is the value we see in doing this kind of work?
- + What are the pitfalls/ potential issues in analyzing and implementing this kind of assessment?

- + What kinds of documents/ pedagogical plans would need to be constructed to address this need?
- + What value do we see for students from this type of assessment?
- + Can we see this being implemented on a writing program scale, or only in individual classrooms?

Points to Consider

- + Standard English versus dialectal English
- + Difference in the classroom
- + Shifting demographics of North American universities
- + Pedagogy: discourse, workshops, and process

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