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EDLP 380 Session 1
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Journal Reflection 2

The more I read in this book, the more I am struck by the contradictions that allowed me to become the educator I am today- interested in equity, driven by a need to equalize opportunity in STEM education. With each passing chapter that I read in this book, it becomes clearer that my privilege has given me opportunities that others simply don't have access to. This privilege has given me the access to my education that has led to my position today.

I am struck by my own conclusion that it is possible I shouldn't have a "say" in how we "fix" public education for underprivileged students. On page 46, the author says that the students- like myself- believe that "Given their lives and backgrounds, many just believe that their insight, hard work, and will are enough to overcome the poverty, social disorder, financial hurdles and structured inequality that some argue necessarily doom less privileged children to life of the second tier. There is not much research to support their beliefs." (Rooks, 2017). It is clear that the author is emphasizing how white, upper-class professionals are experimenting with the education of students of color and students living in poverty. As I read these chapters, many of these "innovations" are practices I have participated in. These experimentations include institutions like Charter schools- in which I have already spent a year teaching an underserved community. I have the same mindset that she speaks of about Ivy League students wanting to contribute to the solving of educational inequality. I can't help but be reminded of this inherent irony in my decision making- that my attempt to be an innovative educator isn't all that innovative, or creative. I am following in the path of many privileged, educated, well-intentioned

white people before me attempting to fix inequities in public education. I can't help but think- should I even be involved? Is my attempt to be involved perpetuating this cycle? But if I don't get involved, knowing that I am passionate about equity and quite competent at teaching- am I complicit to the systems of inequality?

My questions to myself to continue to consider are the following:

- *Is what I consider innovative educational practices (like charter schools) really the best option for students? Why shouldn't students of color have the opportunity to access an education similar to the one I had?*
- *What can I do differently to not become part of this stereotype of a Dartmouth graduate contributing to the cycle of educational inequality by working for so called "innovative" solutions that don't necessarily have results?*
- *Is there some benefit to continue working in systems like charter schools (specifically the one I worked in) because for this generation, these students, the charter schools are the way out? A choice other than the failing public school? Where do we draw the line between short-term and long-term?*
- *As I consider a teaching job in Winooski, what can I do to either disrupt or slow the forces of gentrification? While integration is the goal for public education... if more white families move to Winooski (even if Silas and I buy a house here), then prices will raise and gentrification may start. What is the solution?*

References

Rooks, N. M. (2017). *Cutting school: Privatization, segregation, and the end of public education*. New York: The New Press.