

Editorial: Anni Reinking, Ed.D.

This issue of First Opinion, Second Reactions (FOSR), grew out of my dedication to ensuring the truth is taught in schools, specifically focused on the history and reality of the United States. In my work as a social justice advocate, I strive to provide insights and resources to educators as a way to understand that we all grew up as -ism breathers, or as Lisa Delpit states, “smog breathers”. Regardless of your identity, you are constantly breathing in the smog of racism, ageism, sexism, classism, ableism, and more. Our society is built around a narrative written by and for the powerful and privileged. However, that is not reality. The reality is that on American soil we falsely imprisoned Japanese Americans, we stole the lands (and lives) of Native peoples, we have and continue to discriminate based on the color of our skin, the people we love, the language we speak, and the ability of our body. We are -ism breathers, however that is not an excuse to teach a one-sided history or provide a one-sided view of reality.

This issue of FOSR is rooted in the fact that in classrooms around the United States teachers are consciously or unconsciously teaching a hidden curriculum through the silence of voices, images, and knowledge shared in the environment. While the process to unlearn the history we have been taught is not easy, but, as you will read in these reviews, it is necessary. As educators we are creating change-makers; we are creating critical thinkers; we are creating problem solvers; we are creating a future generation of acceptance of all people through an equity-lens.

There are critics of this work (and these books) claiming educators have a “liberal agenda” or are “trying to change children” or are “trying to change history.” However, this is not the case. Allowing children to see themselves in the classroom is the first step to self-acceptance,

especially for identities that may be seen as “abnormal” compared to the generations of “normal” portrayed through books, media, and conversations around kitchen tables.

The books for this issue were chosen over many months and many conversations with fellow social justice advocates. These tell the true history, the true reality, and the concept of self-love for readers.