EDUCATIONAL
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Book Review

Anti-racism and Universal Design for Learning: Building Expressways to Success

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Anti-racism and Universal Design for Learning: Building Expressways to Success
by Andretesha Fritzgerald

Abstract
Antiracism and Universal Design for Learning: Building Expressways to Success by Andratesha Fritzgerald is a valuable resource for educators, researchers, and policymakers interested in addressing racial disparities in education. The book expertly weaves together theoretical frameworks from Antiracism and Universal Design for Learning to provide a comprehensive understanding of how to create inclusive and equitable learning environments for all students. As a guide for preservice teachers, Fitzgerald breaks new ground on addressing racism and the success of black and brown students.
Keywords: Universal Design for Learning, Antiracism

Ibram X. Kendi explained in *How to Be an Antiracist* (2019) that antiracism is a transformative concept and points us to liberating new ways of thinking about ourselves and others. Universities also ask this of preservice teachers as they prepare to become educators. We ask that they think of education, racism, and themselves in new ways. To be prepared to become better and more inclusive within the education systems that exist, and to push those systems to continued change.

In her book, *Anti-racism and Universal Design for Learning: Building Expressways to Success*, Andratesha Fritzgerald begins with a foreword by Samaria Rice, mother of Tamir Rice. In her foreword Rice asks the question, "Are you ready to admit that Black and Brown children have been geniuses sitting in broken systems that are not built to see the brilliance they bring?" (Fritzgerald, 2020, p. xi) Fritzgerald takes this question and with honesty, examples, and the framework of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (CAST, 2023) gives teachers specific pathways to implement change in their classrooms.

One of the strengths of this book is Fritzgerald's ability to connect antiracism theory to practical applications in the classroom. She provides concrete examples of how UDL strategies can be used to support the academic success of students of color, or as she describes them - "our beautiful black and brown students" (Fritzgerald, 2020, p. 152), and how these strategies can be integrated in the classroom. The author also offers a valuable critique of the limitations of current universal design for learning models and provides suggestions for how they can be adapted to better address the needs of students of color.

Fitzgerald's writing style is clear and engaging, making the book accessible to a wide audience.

The book is well-researched and draws on a variety of sources: scholarly literature, personal anecdotes, and interviews with educators. The author also includes reflection questions and activities at the end of each chapter, which provide readers with opportunities to apply what they have learned to their own practice.

The intended audience for Fritzgerald's book is intentionally broad. While the specific classroom examples apply to teachers, the work itself, a first book that uses the power of Antiracism and UDL, is useful to all of those interested in education for everyone. Parents, community members, and policy makers could use this as a blueprint for what to expect and encourage in our classrooms. Until real change is enacted in the way we teach black and brown students, an unequal systems will continue to exist. This book is one way future teachers can learn how to honor the brilliance these students bring to the classroom.

Overall, *Antiracism and Universal Design for Learning* is a valuable and timely contribution to the field of education. It provides a comprehensive and practical approach to addressing racial disparities in education, and is an essential resource for anyone interested in creating inclusive and equitable learning environments for students of all races.

References

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