

ABSTRACT

RACE, LITERACY, AND LANGUAGE: PEDAGOGY TO BUILD BRIDGES AND CROSS BORDERS

Several researchers such as Victor Villanueva, Shirley Brice Heath, Danling Fu, and bell hooks have proven that a teacher's expectations for their students directly affect their success or failure within the classroom environment. For this thesis, I will explore ways in which students are marginalized by the pedagogical practices of racially biased instructors and how, through re-evaluation, restructuring, and recomposing racial rhetoric, instructors of English studies might find new pedagogies that will build bridges that enable students of color and those with limited English proficiency to engage in literacy practices within the English composition classroom. Paulo Freire affirmed the idea that teachers should become aware of the cultural, socio-economic, and racial background of students in order to understand what students bring to the classroom. However, by grouping students according to stereotypical, racially biased, categories, instructors relegate these students to the borderlands within the classroom. Instead, I propose that there are ways of expanding curriculum to include all students.

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