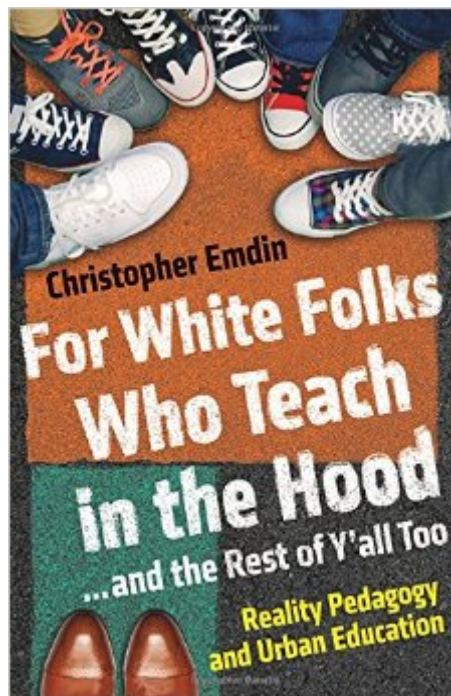


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# For White Folks Who Teach In The Hood... And The Rest Of Y'all Too: Reality Pedagogy And Urban Education



## Synopsis

A New York Times Best Seller Featured in: MotherJones.com, Education Week, Weekend All Things Considered with Michel Martin, Diverse: Issues in Higher Education, PBS NewsHour.com, Slate, The Washington Post, Scholastic Administrator Magazine, Essence Magazine, Salon, ColorLines, Ebony.com, Huffington Post Education Merging real stories with theory, research, and practice, a prominent scholar offers a new approach to teaching and learning for every stakeholder in urban education. Drawing on his own experience of feeling undervalued and invisible in classrooms as a young man of color and merging his experiences with more than a decade of teaching and researching in urban America, award-winning educator Christopher Emdin offers a new lens on an approach to teaching and learning in urban schools. He begins by taking to task the perception of urban youth of color as unteachable, and he challenges educators to embrace and respect each student's culture and to reimagine the classroom as a site where roles are reversed and students become the experts in their own learning. Putting forth his theory of Reality Pedagogy, Emdin provides practical tools to unleash the brilliance and eagerness of youth and educators alike—both of whom have been typecast and stymied by outdated modes of thinking about urban education. With this fresh and engaging new pedagogical vision, Emdin demonstrates the importance of creating a family structure and building communities within the classroom, using culturally relevant strategies like hip-hop music and call-and-response, and connecting the experiences of urban youth to indigenous populations globally. Merging real stories with theory, research, and practice, Emdin demonstrates how by implementing the "Seven C's" of reality pedagogy in their own classrooms, urban youth of color benefit from truly transformative education. Lively, accessible, and revelatory, *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood...and the Rest of Y'all Too* is the much-needed antidote to traditional top-down pedagogy and promises to radically reframe the landscape of urban education for the better.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Christopher Emdin's *Realities, For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood... and the Rest of Y'all Too* provides a breath of fresh air for any urban educator who is looking to improve their practice or gain authentic insight on urban youth. The title and book cover alone grabs the attention of anyone who has even the slightest interest in education and relates to all educators stakeholders in education. Dr. Emdin, associate director of the Institute of Urban and Minority Education at Teachers College, Columbia University and recipient of the Multicultural Educator of the Year award from the National Association of Multicultural Educators (to name a few) draws from his personal experiences as an urban student, urban educator and urban education researcher to offer a new approach to teaching and learning and urban educational spaces. In a time where researchers have described and discussed the pitfalls of urban education at nauseum, they also lack in providing notable policy or pedagogical practices that improve teaching and learning in urban schools. This allows urban schools to continue follow the same traditional narrative without a remedy. In his book, however, Emdin provides a rich description of urban schools through his multiple lens as an urban educator and more importantly and he provides pedagogical practices which he has developed through his research in urban schools. In his illustration of the context of urban education, he shares that urban educators often find themselves in a position to serve a *resavior* to urban students to improve their circumstance or save them from their communities, which teachers may deem as dangerous, gritty or not palatable. Emdin argues that when educators feel as if their are in a position to act as a *resavior* for urban youth, educators miss opportunities to create deep connections with students, which ultimately lead to the misunderstanding the realities of their students. Emdin questions and challenges the age old common practices of urban educators where teachers are encouraged to erase themselves to seem invisible to students, to not smile until november and condition students act *proper*. He argues that when educators enact these practices it allows them to be emotionally disconnected from students and in turn miss opportunities to foster deep connections with students. Emdin suggest that urban educators consider his approach to teaching and learning, *Realty Pedagogy*,

which focuses on teaching and learning as it is successfully practiced within communities physically outside of, and oftentimes beyond, the school. Emdin's Reality Pedagogy, which he thoroughly describes through personal anecdotes and practical examples, draws on enactments which occur in the Pentecostal church and Hip-Hop culture and is composed of practical tools (7C's) that educators can use in their classrooms tomorrow. Emdin, writes this book for white teachers who are already in these schools, the preparation of those being recruited to take these teaching positions, and [to] challenge a 'white folks pedagogy' that is enacted by teachers of all ethnic and racial backgrounds. While Emdin does not blame educators for their lack of understanding of the realities of urban youth, he also does not believe that increasing the number of Black educators is the ultimate solution to improving urban schools. Rather, he believes we should focus our attention on working with educators on improving their knowledge of urban youth and their connections with their students, with the already established teaching workforce. For *White Folks Who Teach in the Hood... and the Rest of Y'all Too*, comes at a pivotal time considering the state of urban education. Urban schools continue to fail to educate the students they serve. Emdin's approach to teaching and learning encourages educators to try a different approach and focuses on privileging the ways that students make sense of the classroom while acknowledging that the teacher often has very different expectations about the classroom.

Teachers, save your hard-earned money and precious time for more worth-while endeavors. While Prof. Emdin may have hooked initial readers (like me) with his catchy title, don't be fooled. Emdin does not deliver the resources he promises in *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood*. In the conclusion, he states: "Throughout this work, I have provided educators and those interested in the field of education a number of concepts to think about, new approaches to consider, and new practices to implement." As a 20-year teaching veteran in an urban setting, I can tell you that all Emdin has done is re-package common teaching practices using hip hop and Pentecostal church jargon. Emdin highlights effective teaching strategies such as (to name a few): connecting new content to students' prior knowledge and making real-world connections building a classroom community based on mutual respect, personal relationships, and cultural understanding using student jobs, routines and rituals to create buy-in and promote a positive classroom atmosphere engaging students through peer to peer teaching, using study buddies and heterogeneous groupings valuing students' voices and giving them choice soliciting frequent feedback from students to best meet their need teaching students to be

metacognitive. However, these same concepts (and more practical applications) can be found in resources like 1) Rethinking Schools, 2) Teaching Tolerance, and 3) Facing History and Ourselves publications. Plus, these resources do not serve up ideas or strategies with a side of condescending snark or white guilt. Overall, I did not care for Emdin's tone, and in a culture already obsessed with teacher-bashing, he did nothing to advance the cause of public education. For that reason alone, you should skip this one.

Although it reads "for teachers who teach in the hood" I think that the exercises and information shared in the text can be useful for any classroom. Easy read, quick read, but really in depth coverage of the facts. Good notes to stem future reading off of too.

Cliche and light. I've been teaching for over a decade and like to do "professional development" reading every year. I don't need a book that tells me to "treat students like people." Duh. FYI this book is also geared for African-American students only. I teach other minorities as well, mostly Latinos, and this book does not apply.

Wow! I am an African American teacher. I am very conscious and intentional when it comes to respecting the culture of our students. This book has given me even more tools to use in my classroom. I don't mind going against the grain and teaching outside of the box. This book is an excellent read for "all teachers!"

This is a must read for educators who teach children of color. Chris Emdin pushes educators to think about what it means to use a reality pedagogy. But the book is far more than just a call to be aware, this is a practical, thoughtful way to change pedagogy so that you don't end up teaching some idealized child in your head, but rather you teach the kids in front of you.

I honestly bought it's book for its provocative name. It ended up exceeding my expectations. As an African American teacher, I was surprised at how much I could relate to some of the struggles that middle-class teachers face in when teaching in "the hood". The book challenged me, but also gave me ideas that have the potential to significantly shift the culture of my classrooms. There are some gems here for any educator or person who is committed to teaching ANY culture not their own. I loved it.

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