

RESOURCE SHEET FOR CRITICAL REFLECTIONS & CLASS DISCUSSIONS

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EXAMPLES OF CRITICAL VS NON-CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Non-Critical Question Example

Do you think DuBois is arguing against integration in “Does the [N*] need separate schools?”

Critical Question Example

What does DuBois mean when he says that we cannot begin to talk about integration right now? Why do you think he makes the point that we have to have another conversation--to ask another question--and what is that conversation and/or question?

How does Baldwin’s point about critical education for Black (and other marginalized or other students of color) speak to DuBois’ point about knowing students and the “sympathetic touch between teacher and pupil?” (1935, p. 328).

Non-Critical Reflection Example (short)

In W.E.B. DuBois’ 1935 article, “Does the [N*] need separate schools?” DuBois says that Black students have been discriminated against in schools and says that students should still be educated in segregated schools. Black students are best educated by Black teachers, he argues, because they feel supported by Black teachers in ways white teachers cannot support them. White teachers don’t know enough about Black history to teach so schools should stay segregated. I wonder what others think of this. Does this still hold true today? Is this a good idea?

NOTE: (This is not a critical reflection because it is a summary rather than an engagement with the points. It also does not articulate DuBois’ points. DuBois makes clear a different point in his reading and does not argue for segregation. There is a difference between integration without contending with racism and white supremacy and integration that works to value an anti-racist education where all educators can become better equipped to holistically work with Black, Indigenous, and other marginalized students--especially students of color.)

Critical Reflection example

DuBois (1935) argues not for segregation, as is commonly assumed, but rather that we need to examine the rhetoric of “integration” through the lens of anti-racist education. Integration cannot be achieved until the predominantly white schools to which Black (and other students of color, though DuBois is speaking specifically to Black students) students are integrated contends with its historical and contemporary racism. To integrate them without eradicating that racism is “a costly if not fatal mistake.” (1935, p. 333). Black students in schools white predominantly white teachers are mocked, “neglected or bullied ..., and [their lives] literally rendered ... living hell” (p.333). DuBois argues that this is because white teachers and schooling, at least in 1935, have not

reckoned enough with their white supremacist racism to provide education in integrated white schools that value, challenge, and support in a safe environment the education of Black students. Integration does not mean that students of color should be integrated into white society via white schools. Integration needs to contend with dismantling normative, hegemonic schooling. Integration means also that whiteness and whitestream education must open up, be subject to drastic change in order for new ways of knowing and new ways of teaching (new pedagogy) to open up to provide space for Black students to thrive as themselves rather than conforming or assimilating into whiteness. Might this also benefit other students of color, other marginalized students, and all students? In what ways does education need to change for this to happen? What ways in 1935 does this need to change; what ways today?

APA Citation:

Du Bois, W.E.B. (1935). Does the [N*] need separate schools? *Journal of [n*] education* 4(3), 328-335.

**Note here also that if you are non-Black, you should not write out the “N” word even when citing. When citing, you may use this format as noted above (i.e. “[N*]”). For more on this, please see our “Key Terms & Concepts” document in our “Additional Resources” folder on our section on Blackboard.