



# For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood... and the Rest of Y'all Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education

By Christopher Emdin

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**For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood... and the Rest of Y'all Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education** By Christopher Emdin

*A New York Times Best Seller*

**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. *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.

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to unleash the brilliance and eagerness of youth and educators alike—both of whom have been typecast and stymied by outdated modes of thinking about urban education.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.

*For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood...and the Rest of Y'all Too* has been 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*

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**For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood... and the Rest of Y'all Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education** By Christopher Emdin **Bibliography**

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**Editorial Review**

Review

“The most important work of pedagogy I’ve read in ten years...Dr. Emdin’s humane, and more importantly, effective practices, filled me with great hope and excitement to keep engaging with the community in which I teach.”

—John Warner, *Inside Higher Ed*

“*For White Folks* ultimately teaches the unlearned lesson that a hip-hop people’s critical perspective must matter in order for authentic teaching and learning to take place, but more importantly the book offers a bigger case for colleges to make room for other hip-hop scholars.”

—Dr. Andre Perry, *The Hechinger Report*

“Dr. Chris Emdin...inspired me to become fearless while teaching for social justice. His commitment to young people showed me that integrity, humility and hope are three of the greatest principles a person can possess.”

—Bryan Mooney, contributor PBS *NewsHour*’s Education Lounge

“As the cries to recognize the relevance of Black lives in this country grow louder...Emdin’s advice about how to more effectively serve students (people) of color is a reminder that recognizing their humanity is a critical first step.”

—*Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*

“Emdin’s *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood...and the Rest of Y’all Too* is a brilliant, blistering, and bracing call to arms for those who teach and learn in urban America. Pivoting effortlessly from street vernacular to sophisticated theory without losing the common touch—or the lovely language and lucid thought—Emdin reminds us that the children and young people who throng our urban schools are worthy of every attempt to sharpen their minds and prepare them for a satisfying life far beyond the classroom. If you’re looking for the revolutionary meaning, and imaginative transformation, of teaching for the real America, you’re holding it in your hands! Christopher Emdin is Jonathan Kozol with swag!”

—Michael Eric Dyson, author of *The Black Presidency: Barack Obama and the Politics of Race in America*

“Emdin’s *For White Folks* is essential reading for all adults who work with black and brown young people...Filled with exceptional intellectual sophistication and necessary wisdom for the future of education.”

—Imani Perry, author of *Prophets of the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip-Hop*

“From hip-hop to high theory, the journey Emdin takes us on is at once critical and compassionate, analytical and actionable. Through rich stories and well-developed frameworks, *For White Folks* offers a compelling and accessible road map for anyone (not just white folks!) teaching twenty-first-century urban youth. It also confirms Emdin’s reputation as one of the most important education scholars of our generation.”

—Marc Lamont Hill, author of *Beats, Rhymes, and Classroom Life: Hip-Hop Pedagogy and the Politics of Identity* and Distinguished Professor of Africana Studies at Morehouse College

“A generation ago Ntozake Shange gave us a ‘choreopoem.’ Today, Christopher Emdin offers us a ‘pedagopoem.’ This volume is a powerful dance of teaching and art. It engages both the art and science of

what teachers must do to be successful with all students. It is simultaneously lyrical and analytic, scientific and humanistic, a work of the heart and the mind. It belongs in every teacher's library!"

—Gloria Ladson-Billings, the Kellner Family Distinguished Chair in Urban Education, University of Wisconsin–Madison

#### About the Author

**Christopher Emdin** is an associate professor in the Department of Mathematics, Science, and Technology at Teachers College, Columbia University, where he also serves as associate director of the Institute for Urban and Minority Education. The creator of the #HipHopEd social media movement and Science Genius B.A.T.T.L.E.S., Emdin was named the 2015 Multicultural Educator of the Year by the National Association of Multicultural Educators and has been honored as a STEM Access Champion of Change by the White House. In addition to teaching, he serves as a Minorities in Energy Ambassador for the US Department of Energy.

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#### From the Preface

I have always been fascinated by the brilliant theater piece *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide / When the Rainbow Is Enuf*, by Ntozake Shange. I was first drawn to this powerful work by its colorful cover, and I fell in love with it when I began to read the powerful prose. As a teenager, it was the title that affected me most. Seeing the word *enuf* in print, on the cover of a book, meant the world to me. It was bold and provocative—and it comforted me to know that someone from outside the four-block radius I called home knew this word. *Enuf* and *enough* are very different words. They have the same meaning, can be used in the same context, but each has very different significance to those who employ them. *Enuf* sits comfortably in the subtitle of a book like *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide*, allowing the work to call out to those for and about whom it is written. Its presence in the book title indicates that there is no political correctness, no tainting of the truth, and no hiding of what needs to be said. It prepares the reader for the substance of the text.

In many ways, this book draws from the traditions set forth by Shange. While it is neither a collection of poems and stories nor a theater piece, its intentions are similar. The title works toward invoking necessary truths and offering new ways forward. It is clearly intended for “white folks who teach in the hood.” But it is also for those who work with them, hire them, whose family members are taught by them, and who themselves are being, or have been, taught by them.

In short, this book is for people of all colors who take a particular approach to education. They may be white. They may be black. In all cases, they are so deeply committed to an approach to pedagogy that is Eurocentric in its form and function that the color of their skin doesn't matter. When I say that their skin color doesn't matter, I am not dismissing the particular responsibilities of privileged groups in societies that disadvantage marginalized groups. I am also not discounting the need to discuss race and injustice under the fallacy of equity. What I am suggesting is that it is possible for people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds to take on approaches to teaching that hurt youth of color. Malcolm X described this phenomenon in a powerful speech about the house Negro and the field Negro in the slave South. He described the black slave who toiled in the fields and the house Negro who worked in the white master's house. He noted that at some point, the house Negro became so invested in the well-being of the master that the master's needs and concerns took preeminence over his own needs and that of the field Negro. This is the equivalent of the black educator so invested in the structure and pedagogies of the traditional school system that the needs of black and brown students become secondary to maintaining the status quo. For the “white” educator, this investment in traditional schooling is often generational, following the beliefs of parents and grandparents with college degrees and ideas about what school should look like. The point here is that there are both black and white people who can be classified as “white folks”—in that they maintain a system that doesn't serve the needs of

youth in the hood.

“The hood” is often identified as a place where dysfunction is prevalent and people need to be saved from themselves and their circumstances. The hood may be urban, rural, densely or sparsely populated, but it has a number of shared characteristics that make it easy to recognize. The community is often socioeconomically disadvantaged, achievement gaps are prevalent, and a very particular brand of pedagogy is normalized. In these communities, and particularly in urban schools, African American and Latino youth are most hard hit by poverty and its aftereffects. For example, in Atlanta, 80 percent of African American children have been reported to live in conditions of high poverty, compared with 29 percent of their Asian peers and 6 percent of their white peers. In fact, the largest twenty school districts in the nation enroll 80 percent minority students, compared with 42 percent in all school districts. In cities like Los Angeles, Chicago, and Miami, urban schools enroll less than 10 percent Anglo students, even though the teachers are overwhelmingly white. In New York public schools, over 70 percent of high school youth are students of color, while over 80 percent of public high school teachers in the state are white.

While some may use these statistics to push for more minority teachers, I argue that there must also be a concerted effort to improve the teaching of white teachers who are already teaching in these schools, as well as those who aspire to teach there, to challenge the “white folks’ pedagogy” that is being practiced by teachers of all ethnic and racial backgrounds.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Troy Riley:**

This For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood... and the Rest of Y'all Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education is great reserve for you because the content and that is full of information for you who have always deal with world and still have to make decision every minute. This specific book reveal it data accurately using great plan word or we can point out no rambling sentences included. So if you are read it hurriedly you can have whole info in it. Doesn't mean it only gives you straight forward sentences but difficult core information with lovely delivering sentences. Having For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood... and the Rest of Y'all Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education in your hand like finding the world in your arm, info in it is not ridiculous a single. We can say that no reserve that offer you world in ten or fifteen minute right but this e-book already do that. So , this is good reading book. Heya Mr. and Mrs. stressful do you still doubt which?

#### **Kathe Waller:**

The book untitled For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood... and the Rest of Y'all Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education contain a lot of information on this. The writer explains your girlfriend idea with easy technique. The language is very clear to see all the people, so do not necessarily worry, you can easy to read the idea. The book was compiled by famous author. The author will bring you in the new era of literary works. You can actually read this book because you can read on your smart phone, or product, so you can read the book in anywhere and anytime. If you want to buy the e-book, you can available their official website and order it. Have a nice go through.

**Genia Vanderford:**

In this era globalization it is important to someone to receive information. The information will make professionals understand the condition of the world. The fitness of the world makes the information simpler to share. You can find a lot of referrals to get information example: internet, newspaper, book, and soon. You will see that now, a lot of publisher that will print many kinds of book. The particular book that recommended to you is For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood... and the Rest of Y'all Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education this book consist a lot of the information from the condition of this world now. This particular book was represented how does the world has grown up. The dialect styles that writer require to explain it is easy to understand. Often the writer made some analysis when he makes this book. Here is why this book ideal all of you.

**Mary Brott:**

A lot of reserve has printed but it is different. You can get it by net on social media. You can choose the top book for you, science, witty, novel, or whatever by searching from it. It is called of book For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood... and the Rest of Y'all Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education. You can contribute your knowledge by it. Without leaving behind the printed book, it could possibly add your knowledge and make anyone happier to read. It is most critical that, you must aware about reserve. It can bring you from one spot to other place.

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