

# **White Longing and Affective Curriculum: Reconstructionist Interventions to the White Hegemonic Mind and Heart**

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This paper explores the role of emotion and affect in whites' ability to develop an antiracist white racial consciousness, particularly as it implicates educational praxis and social justice education. Drawing on Leonardo and Manning's (2015) theorization of a "white zone of proximal (under)development," this paper problematizes recent reconstructionist interventions to whiteness, such as white double consciousness (Alcoff, 2015; Martinot, 2015) and white double image (Seidl & Hancock, 2011), questioning whites' developmental (un)preparedness to understand and transformatively mobilize negative affective experiences of their white racial identities. Using literature on white emotionality (Shotwell, 2011; Matias, 2016; Matias & Allen, 2013; Teel, 2014; Leonardo & Zembylas, 2013), this paper explores the potential extant in the experience of relational feelings like shame, and identifies negative affect as a necessary tool in whites' developmental journeys from a "zone of proximal underdevelopment" to an "antiracist zone of proximal development" (Leonardo & Manning, 2015).

This paper offers "white longing" as an intervention that seeks to theorize a persistent and deep, libidinal desire for an antiracist white identity that resides in whites' minds and hearts. Scholars have shown how white shame can disrupt the white habitus (Shotwell, 2011), and how humanizing love can "love whiteness to death" (Matias & Allen, 2013). Neither momentary nor context-specific, like shame, nor completable, like humanizing love, white longing is an everpresent sense of discomfort and incompleteness that articulates whites' yearning for an identity that does not subsist on subjugation of the other. The paper concludes by suggesting that current emphasis on efficient curriculum fosters an intolerance and impatience for emotional learning, which contributes to whites' emotional paralysis when confronting their privilege. An affective rather than effective curriculum appreciates the time it takes to linger in emotions and recognize their radical potential, leveraging them as antiracist developmental tools.