

Dear Megan,

I'd just say that I always analyze for systems rather than individuals and that I personally learn best from talking with other people (and the occasional intake from "experts"), which might explain my point of view on education more? As Parker Palmer says in this week's materials, we teach who we are. I'm curious why you ask!

Interesting, I applaud your open-mindedness. I enjoy talking with people with different perspectives, ideologies, and values; most people hold such ideas to a high degree of certainty, which can quickly lead to unproductive conversations. I do have to say, it's rather unusual to speak with someone that adopts constructivism that isn't so ideological about it.

A quick aside: I'm going to use abbreviate critical race theory as CRT, and I'm going to incorporate constructivism into that, as it is a core principle of CRT. Based on the language you've used, I'm just assuming that you support the more generalized ideology. I don't want to put any words into your mouth, so feel free to make any notable distinctions.

Anyway, I ask because I am under the impression that CRT is doing more harm than good for the communities it claims to represent. A short, definitely oversimplified, summary of my argument is essentially that CRT has correctly identified problems, but failed in identifying solutions to fix said problems, and it's actually becoming the very evil it sought to destroy.

System thinking, encouraging social dialogues, removing violence and power from the institutions, and pushing for equality are the main things I think it's doing right. These are the values I think you have described and match my values. I think I know where the disagreement would arise, but what I'm curious in is if you think it's possible that there is merit to my argument and would even consider changing your beliefs.

If the answer is yes, then I'll ask more questions. Hopefully the discussion would be a constructive social dialogue! However, it's totally okay to not participate, I have no agenda.

I do have worry, though. Because to me, discussing such ideas would be like discussing atheism at the most religious church in the nation and not expecting blow back. I say this because it appears that PSU is probably by the most CRT-oriented culture in the nation, and right now the most blinded to its own beliefs. I highly doubt I'd change your mind, but if you do change your mind, then you'd find yourself in the center of a place that would not welcome your change in mindset.

Nature Journal

I'd encourage you to use the nature journal reflections to learn about and begin to form an understanding of and connection to the material (and preferably non-human) world around you.

Hmm, I suppose I'm confused what you mean by "understanding" and how I'm supposed to be showing connection to the material during these.

As pretty as Braiding Sweetgrass is, I actually don't find much substance in the book. It's entertaining, lovely, poetic, and beautiful description of someone's experience. I normally consume books in 2-3 days if I have free time, or over a week if I'm busy, but Braiding Sweetgrass wasn't teaching me anything and I stopped reading it; now only read one of the assigned chapters. I have many other books to read, but maybe I'll be convinced to come back to it.

To me, it feels like many of the propositions in the book are trying to be extremely profound, but the poetic beauty and richness of the described experiences is doing all the heavy lifting, while actually offering little value besides a means for virtue signaling one's alignments. Anyway, I digress.

If you want me to write more like Robin when describing my nature journals, then I can, but that's not what I observed when in nature. I've been practicing meditation for ~3 years now, watch the sunset nearly every evening that it's viewable, and take walks through the city, parks, and full on nature trails. I absolutely love observing nature.

However, the more I do such things, the less I find myself explicitly noting the sensory inputs from my environment. It's become more about observing attention itself and letting that attention rest in its own space. Thinking about what I'm observing defeats the very purpose of the practice, as awareness of attention is lost, and instead found in what ever sensory input has your attention at the time.

Ahh, writing too much again... I guess there are worse problems to have. Thanks for reading it all, if you did!

Also, I should be able to make it to the shadowing of the events at Tyron. My circumstances have changed since the survey was taken, so making it to the park is quite the endeavor for me now.