



Dismantling Contemporary Deficit Thinking: Educational Thought and Practice (Critical Educator)

Richard R. Valencia

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Deficit thinking is a pseudoscience founded on racial and class bias. It "blames the victim" for school failure instead of examining how schools are structured to prevent poor students and students of color from learning. *Dismantling Contemporary Deficit Thinking* provides comprehensive critiques and anti-deficit thinking alternatives to this oppressive theory by framing the linkages between prevailing theoretical perspectives and contemporary practices within the complex historical development of deficit thinking.

Dismantling Contemporary Deficit Thinking examines the ongoing social construction of deficit thinking in three aspects of current discourse – the genetic pathology model, the culture of poverty model, and the "at-risk" model in which poor students, students of color, and their families are pathologized and marginalized. Richard R. Valencia challenges these three contemporary components of the deficit thinking theory by providing incisive critiques and discussing competing explanations for the pervasive school failure of many students in the nation's public schools. Valencia also discusses a number of proactive, anti-deficit thinking suggestions from the fields of teacher education, educational leadership, and educational ethnography that are intended to provide a more equitable and democratic schooling for all students.

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