Chapter 3

Deficit Thinking

To begin to assess the presence of deficit thinking, one might ask readers to respond to statements such as the following:

1. There is very little racism in our school. True False
2. Students with special needs should be integrated into the life of the classroom. True False
3. Latino men teach their sons to respond to insults with violence. True False
4. White people are racist. True False
5. All Black people suffer from the effects of racism. True False
6. Grouping students periodically by achievement level is an appropriate pedagogical strategy. True False
7. All of our students can (have the ability to) pass the required state tests at the required level. True False
8. Children from impoverished backgrounds generally come from homes that do not value education. True False
9. We have no need for gender neutral bathrooms in our school. True False
10. A three strikes discipline policy is fair because it treats every child equally. True False
11. It is fair that Blacks are stopped by police more often than Whites because they commit more crimes. True False
12. Gay students should not be permitted public displays of affection. True False
13. A school should have a prayer room for students from other cultures and religions to pray or meditate. True False
14. Children should speak only English in school so everyone can understand them. True False
15. Good teachers are “color-blind” and treat all children as simply part of the human race. True False