



Embracing Equity

Session 2



RACIAL AND ETHNIC
IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT



Preparation Work (45 minutes)

Before this session, complete the following prep work so you can be fully present and participate.

First, read through the guiding questions that you will discuss as a group during this session. Keep these questions in mind as you complete the prep work:

- TERMS: What is stereotype, **prejudice**, racism, privilege, oppression and liberation?
- What does it mean to educate to “transform” society/White supremacy?
- What is racial and ethnic identity (REI)?
- How can schools help foster REI?

Second, read the *Defining Racism “Can we talk?”*¹ portion of Dr. Beverly Tatum’s *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria*. After you do so, answer the following questions:

1. What is racism?
2. How have assumptions impacted our view of other races?
3. What is prejudice and how is it similar or different from racism?

Third, watch the following video: *Moving the Race Conversation Forward*².

Fourth, read the corresponding case study on the next few pages.

"The most dangerous shackles are the invisible ones, because they deceive people into believing they are free. This delusion is the new prison that people inhabit today...True democracy obtains only when the people - women, men, young people, children - have the ability to change the system of industrial capitalism that has oppressed them since the earliest days of slavery: a system based on class division, patriarchy, and military might, a hierarchical system that subjugates people merely because they are born poor, or female, or dark-skinned." -Nawal El Saadawi



Case Study Directions

As you read the case, think about the following questions that you will discuss as a group after you finish reading the case*. Feel free to annotate the case and jot down your thoughts:

1. Using a critical lens, what is the dilemma (or dilemmas) in the case?
2. For whom is it a dilemma?
3. Why is this a dilemma?
4. What values or principles are at stake?
5. What practical and/or policy considerations are at stake?
6. How does your racial identity development and positionality influence your feelings and reactions to the case? How does this impact what you think are the dilemmas in the case and why?
7. How does the racial identity development and positionality of the people in the case influence your feelings and reactions to the case? How does this impact what you think are the dilemmas in the case and why?

*These questions are modified from the Protocols for Case Discussions from Justice in Schools (<http://www.justiceinschools.org/protocols/>) and published in *Dilemmas of Educational Ethics* by Meira Levinson and Jacob Fay³

Racial and Ethnic Identity Development Case Study*



Ms. Johnson is a first year Montessori teacher in an urban area. She teaches lower elementary in a community in which she is unfamiliar. Although Ms. Johnson has lived in the suburban areas surrounding this community her entire life, she has never crossed to this particular side of the railroad tracks. She is a recent college graduate and is thrilled to have her first teaching job. Ms. Johnson is excited to teach and looks forward to meeting her students. Upon entering her classroom, she realizes that the majority of her students are of African American and Latino descent and Ms. Johnson is White. She assumes that teaching these students will be no different than the students she had as a student teacher in the surrounding suburban areas.

Ms. Johnson had little training on classroom management in her teacher preparation program. There were a few techniques she learned such as “natural consequences” and giving warnings. She used these in her classroom, but soon realized that it would require more tools to effectively manage her classroom.

Now, when students are not meeting classroom expectations, students are sent out of the room. On a regular basis, Ms. Johnson will send 2-3 students out of her room every week. One day, an African-American student, Brian, was having an extremely difficult time meeting classroom expectations. Throughout the day, Brian was off task and required frequent redirection. Eventually, Brian was sent out of the classroom for his misbehavior.

Meanwhile, a White student, Danny, was displaying similar misbehaviors. Danny was regularly off task and distracted other students from their learning. The next week, Brian was sent out of the classroom two more times. Upon re-entry into the classroom, Brian grumbled, “You are racist and only send Black students out of the class. What about Danny? He wasn’t working either!”

Some of the other Black students in the classroom agreed with Brian and said, “yeah” or nodded their heads. Ms. Johnson felt herself getting red and felt flustered. “Get back to work,” she said, and continued teaching.

- **Have you ever been accused of being racist in your classroom?**
- **Have students made comments similar to the one Brian made?**
- **How did you respond? How did this make you feel?**
- **Did you ever notice discrepancies in your classroom management?**
- **Now that this has been pointed out to Ms. Johnson, what should she do?**
- **When students notice instances of race that you may not have noticed, how do you respond? What should you do?**
- **If you are accused of racially patterned behavior, how would you respond?**

Personal Check-In



Part of engaging in this necessary and important work is checking in with ourselves to recognize and name our emotions throughout this process. Notice if you are feeling defensive, alarmed, sad, joyful, or hopeful. Honor your feelings and process them.

The goal is to stay engaged, be actively present, effectively communicate with others, and speak our truths. This self-reflection is just for you and will not be shared with the group (unless you feel it is important to do so).

After completing the preparation work, take a few minutes to reflect on the following questions:

- What were some of the emotions you felt while completing the preparation work and reading the case study?
- Why do you think you felt these emotions?
- How might your racial identity development and positionality be affecting the emotions you are feeling?

“The educator has the duty of not being neutral.”
- Paulo Freire

COHORT Hangout





Re-Commit to Group Norms (about 15 minutes)

Take time now to silently review the group norms. Remind yourself of the group's commitment to these norms. Also recognize that it is hard to perfectly follow every norm in every conversation. Therefore, as you review the group norms, identify one norm that you want to focus on for this specific session and be intentional about re-committing to it. This will help you recognize and actively practice these norms and translate them to other aspects of your life.

Have each group member briefly SHARE:

Which norm do you want to focus on during this specific conversation and why?

Circle of Trust® Touchstones

developed by Parker J. Palmer and the Center for Courage & Renewal
www.courage renewal.org

Learn more about Circles of Trust® at www.courage renewal.org/approach

Give and receive welcome.

People learn best in hospitable spaces. In this circle we support each other's learning by giving and receiving hospitality.

Be present as fully as possible.

Be here with your doubts, fears and failings as well as your convictions, joys and successes, your listening as well as your speaking.

What is offered in the circle is by invitation, not demand.

This is not a "share or die" event! Do whatever your soul calls for, and know that you do it with our support. Your soul knows your needs better than we do.

No fixing, saving, advising or correcting.

This is one of the hardest guidelines for those of us who like to "help." But it is vital to welcoming the soul, to making space for the inner teacher.

Speak your truth in ways that respect other people's truth.

Our views of reality may differ, but speaking one's truth in a Circle of Trust does not mean interpreting, correcting or debating what others say. Speak from your center to the center of the circle, using "I" statements, trusting people to do their own sifting and winnowing.

Learn to respond to others with honest, open questions...

instead of counsel or corrections. With such questions, we help "hear each other into deeper speech."

When the going gets rough, turn to wonder.

If you feel judgmental, or defensive, ask yourself, "I wonder what brought her to this belief?" "I wonder what he's feeling right now?" "I wonder what my reaction teaches me about myself?" Set aside judgment to listen to others—and to yourself—more deeply.

Trust and learn from the silence.

Silence is a gift in our noisy world, and a way of knowing in itself. Treat silence as a member of the group. After someone has spoken, take time to reflect without immediately filling the space with words.

Observe deep confidentiality.

A Circle of Trust depends on knowing that whatever we say will remain with the people to whom we choose to say it — whether in small groups or in the large circle — and will never be passed on to others without our explicit permission.

Attend to your own inner teacher.

We learn from others, of course. But as we explore poems, stories, questions and silence in a Circle of Trust, we have a special opportunity to learn from within. So pay close attention to your own reactions and responses, to your most important teacher.

Know that it's possible...

to leave the circle with whatever it was that you needed when you arrived, and that the seeds planted here can keep growing in the days ahead.

Four Agreements of Courageous Conversation

STAY ENGAGED

SPEAK YOUR TRUTH

EXPERIENCE DISCOMFORT

EXPECT AND ACCEPT NON-CLOSURE

Guiding Questions Discussion (about 30 minutes)

- TERMS: What is stereotype, prejudice, racism, privilege, oppression and liberation?
- What does it mean to educate to “transform” society/White supremacy?
- What is racial/ethnic identity (REI)?
- How can schools help foster REI?

In this group discussion, reflect on the prep work that you completed before the session. To get this part of the conversation started, it might be helpful to share and discuss your reactions to the reading and video or your answers to the prep work questions (your group will have time in the next part of this session to discuss the case study).

This should eventually move into discussing the guiding questions.



Case Discussion (30 minutes)



As a group, discuss your reactions, reflections, and responses to the case. Here are the case discussion questions again for reference:

1. Using a critical lens, what is the dilemma (or dilemmas) in the case?
2. For whom is it a dilemma?
3. Why is this a dilemma?
4. What values or principles are at stake?
5. What practical and/or policy considerations are at stake?
6. How does your racial identity development and positionality influence your feelings and reactions to the case? How does this impact what you think are the dilemmas in the case and why?
7. How does the racial identity development and positionality of the people in the case influence your feelings and reactions to the case? How does this impact what you think are the dilemmas in the case and why?

Case Discussion Reflection



There are two key aspects of the discussion reflection.

First, it is important to reflect on what you learned from your peers in this conversation. While the discussion is fresh in your mind, you want to identify what new knowledge, perspective, or understanding you have gained. Second, it is helpful to reflect on what the group did well and what the group could work on when it comes to case discussions. This helps your group learn and grow in its ability to have conversations that are respectful, engaging, and productive.

Part 1:

REFLECT*: What new knowledge, perspective, or understanding did you gain from this conversation? What is something that was said that you hadn't thought about before that you want to remember in the future?

Part 2:

REFLECT and then SHARE: With the group norms in mind, what are some things the group did well in your conversation? (Feel free to share appreciations to each other!)

REFLECT and then SHARE: With the group norms in mind, what are some things the group could do better in the next conversation?

***It is up to your group if you would like to share these personal reflections with each other.**

Closing Thoughts (20 minutes)

As you end your session, return to the guiding questions below:

- TERMS: What is stereotype, prejudice, racism, privilege, oppression and liberation?
- What does it mean to educate to “transform” society/White supremacy?
- What is racial/ethnic identity (REI)?
- How can schools help foster REI?

REFLECT and then SHARE:

- How have your answers or thoughts to these questions changed since you first read them during the prep work?
- What are the major understandings and actions steps you are taking away from this session?





POST-Session 2 PROJECT

USING PHOTOGRAPHY TO
EXPLORE RACIAL IDENTITY



Using Photography to Explore Racial Identity⁴

The objective of this assignment is to take the time to examine yourself, your race, and your identity. Create a pair of written and photographic portraits. One self-portrait depicts who you are, or how you see yourself in a racialized world. The second self-portrait envisions who you might be as a member of a race other than your own, or how you might be involuntarily seen by others.

In *no more than* a two-page written reflection answer the following questions:

- Why is it necessary to work to see racial identities as complex and fluid, rather than fixed or static?
- What is gained, academically, when students and teachers use school time to do such inquiry into racial identity?
- How could you implement some aspect of this type of project in your own school, organization, classroom, or innovative design?
- What personal reflections do you take-away from this exercise?

Be prepared to share your racial identity explorations with your cohort.

LET YOUR CREATIVITY TAKE OVER!

If you choose to create a hardcopy version of your self-portrait, please scan or take a picture of your self-portrait to easily share with your cohort.

On the next page, you will find examples of projects completed by two teachers.



#BlackGirlMagic

#Ambitious

#Determined

#Educator



#Family

#DefyAllOdds

#RoleModel

#AKA





1 in 42,748,703
blacks in America



Successful, Driven, Smart,
Strong, Brave, Focused

Anomaly, Exception, Token, Acceptable



Pray

Christian

Peaceful

Disrespect

Strong

Hostile

Forgiveness

Follower

Weak

Leader

#KorrynGaines

Revenge

Harvard

Black Lives Matter

