



POST-Session 4 PROJECT

CRITICAL ACTION



Transforming Society

Taking Critical Action and Activism as a Montessorian

We define critical consciousness as an ability to recognize, understand, and reflect on interlocking systems of oppression and to take action to resist them⁴. Critical consciousness involves reflection on the interaction of privilege and oppression in your daily life, as well as reflection on how systems of oppression are institutionalized. In addition to reflection, critical consciousness includes action to resist oppression. Taking action in your personal life includes may take a lot of different forms: (1) interpersonal relationships; (2) conversations you have with others about the systems of oppression (e.g., socializing one another's critical consciousness versus bigotry talk). Action within larger social systems includes joining together with other people to build a community of resistance that will collectively work toward dismantling systems of oppression.

The development of critical consciousness is important in teacher training because it contributes to teacher competence in classroom culture, student assessment, discipline, and family engagement⁵. In the process of developing critical consciousness, teachers are challenged to explore power dynamics in the classroom. This enables teachers to incorporate an understanding of how sociopolitical and economic systems shape people's experiences. In turn, informed by such understanding, the teacher's ability to validate human experiences and establish alliance increases.

The development of critical consciousness also involves recognizing and challenging personal biases regarding aspects of social identity such as race, gender, or nation of origin; this in turn provides for a deeper understanding of how internalized and interpersonal oppression shape teaching practices. Moreover, an understanding of the institutionalized oppression enables teachers to support students' resistance to unjust structures and practices.



Post-Session 4 Project: Create a TOOL for Critical Consciousness

Choose one of the following options, or create your own! The goal of this tool is for it to be useful for you in your day-to-day teaching practice.

___ **Scorecard on Lessons:** Create a tool to evaluate the Critical Consciousness in your lesson plans. Use these scorecard weekly with at least one of your lessons.

___ **Reading List:** Create a list of at least 5 books you will include in your classroom for the age-group of your students that promote critical consciousness.

___ **Critical Action Assessment:** Create a guide for checking for microaggressions and stereotypes in books.

___ **Learning to Cultivate Classroom Culture:** What are at least 3 classroom culture techniques that promote critical consciousness? How and why? Implement these in your classroom.

___ **Responding to Trauma:** Write a 1-2 page reflection and synthesis of race-based trauma and some relevant resources that you could utilize to support students.

___ **Student Activism:** Help students develop their identities as activists by intentionally highlighting how students are doing critical action inside or outside of the classroom.

BEFORE THE FINAL Embracing Equity Session, email your project to everyone in your cohort.