

# CRITICAL SELF-REFLECTION: TOOLS FOR UNPACKING SEEN, UNSEEN, AND UNFORESEEN RACIAL BIASES

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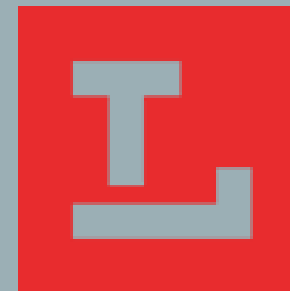
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August 10, 2020



**Anti-Racism Teach-Ins**  
**August-Labor Day, 2020**  
**On Zoom in Toledo, Ohio**



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## RACISM AND ANTIRACISM DEFINED

- "A **racist idea** is any idea that suggests one racial group is inferior or superior to another racial group in any way. Racist ideas argue that the inferiorities and superiorities of racial groups explain racial inequities in society." (Kendi, p. 15)
- "**Racism** is a powerful collection of racist policies that lead to racial inequity and are substantiated by **racist ideas**."
- "**Antiracism** is a powerful collection of antiracist policies that lead to racial equity and are substantiated by antiracist ideas." (Kendi, p. 16)

## KEY CONCEPTS COLORBLINDNESS

- According to Bonilla-Silva (2013), colorblindness occurs when educators embrace ideologies, such as the following, to support their understandings of race and schooling:
  - **The minimization of racism frame**— believing that discrimination is no longer a crucial factor affecting minorities' life chances (“It’s better now than in the past”);
  - **the cultural racism frame**— relying on culturally-based arguments such as “Mexicans do not put much emphasis on education”(p. 76).
  - Together, these ideologies underlie the widespread adoption of the **social equality maxim**— **the belief that race and gender do not have an impact on a student’s ability to flourish in the classroom**— and reflect and sustain the creation of color-blind classrooms (Stoll, 2014).

# ANTIRACIST TEACHING

We define antiracist teaching as the personal and pedagogical work of developing one's stance as "educator as an ally, an advocate for students of color, and a much-needed anti-racist role model for students" (Lawrence & Tatum, 2004, p. 371).

- **Becoming an anti-racist is always a work in progress, seldom yields perfection, and differs depending on who you are.**
- **Becoming an anti-racist as a white person** means taking responsibility for your power and privilege, acknowledging the feelings you have to increased multiculturalism, cultivating a desire for understanding and growth, etc.
- **Becoming an anti-racist as a person of color** means recognizing that there are important class differences between people of color, understanding that all racial groups are struggling in some way under White supremacy, realizing that people of color groups are not always united in solidarity, and challenging internalized White supremacy, etc.

# CHARACTERISTICS OF ANTIRACIST EDUCATORS

- **Understand the impact of White supremacy in their work**
  - It is important to understand that racism in schools is expressed in individual lives as well as particular institutional challenges
- **Learn about how racism shapes lives**
  - Consider reading books like DiAngelo's *White Fragility* or Anderson's *White Rage* (And of course Kendi's *How to be an Antiracist*)
- **Acknowledge racial trauma**
  - In this era of having witnessed multiple police killings of African American boys and men and girls and women either directly or vicariously through media accounts, communities of Color may experience post trauma symptoms
- **Critically Self-Reflect**
  - Richert, Donahue, and LaBoskey (2008) suggest that teachers must “grapple honestly with the reality of race, racism, and racial politics in the United States—and own their role in perpetuating systems of oppression” (p. 648)

# CRITICAL SELF-REFLECTION DEFINED

- Engaging in a process of analyzing and making judgments about one's experiences (a “conscious exploration” or a “deep deliberate search”)
- Observing, asking questions, and putting facts, ideas, and experiences together to derive new meaning and self understanding
- It is a vehicle for critical analysis, problem-solving, synthesis of opposing ideas, evaluation, identifying patterns, and creating meaning .(Bart, 2011; Jacoby, 2010)

## FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHER SELF-REFLECTION(MILNER, 2007)

- 1. Reflecting on Self:** Pose racially and culturally grounded questions about yourself to increase awareness of seen (consciously known), unseen (unknown), and unforeseen (unanticipated) issues
- 2. Reflecting on Self in Relation to Others:** Acknowledge the multiple roles, identities, and positions you and your students bring to the learning process
- 3. Shifting from Self to System:** Consider how history, politics and your institution's arrangements shape your (and your students) racialized and culturized ways teaching and learning.

# SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

## **Reflecting on Self**

- What is my racial and cultural heritage? How do I know?
- In what ways do my racial and cultural backgrounds influence how I experience the world, what I emphasize in my teaching, and how I evaluate and interpret others and their experiences? How do I know?

## **Reflecting on Self in Relation to Students**

- What are the cultural and racial heritage and historical landscape of my students? How do I know?
- In what ways do my students' racial and cultural backgrounds influence how they experience the world? How do I know?

## **Shifting from Self to System**

- What is the contextual nature of race, racism, and culture in my classroom, my school, and the broader community? How do I know?
- What systemic and organizational barriers and structures shape peoples' experiences in school, and in the broader community? How do I know?



## REFLECTING ON SELF

- What is my racial and cultural heritage? How do I know?
- In what ways do my racial and cultural backgrounds influence how I experience the world, what I emphasize in my teaching, and how I evaluate and interpret others and their experiences? How do I know?
- What do I believe about race and culture in society and education, and how do I attend to my own convictions and beliefs about race and culture in my teaching?
- What are and have been the contextual nuances and realities that help shape my racial and cultural way of knowing, both past and present? How do I know?
- What racialized and cultural experiences have shaped my curriculum, my classroom management, how and who I scaffold, and my expectations for students?

## REFLECTING ON SELF IN RELATION TO STUDENTS

- What are the cultural and racial heritage and historical landscape of my students? How do I know?
- In what ways do my students' racial and cultural backgrounds influence how they experience the world? How do I know?
- What do my students believe about race and culture in society and education, and how do they and I attend to the tensions inherent in theirs and my convictions and beliefs about race and culture in teaching and learning? How do I know?
- What are and have been some social, political, historical, and contextual nuances and realities that have shaped my students' racial and cultural ways of knowing, both past and present? How consistent and inconsistent are their realities with mine? How do I know?

## SHIFTING FROM SELF TO SYSTEM

- What is the contextual nature of race, racism, and culture in my classroom, my school, and the broader community? How do I know?
- What is known socially, institutionally, and historically about school, and the broader community? In particular, what do marginalized racial and cultural groups say about the school and broader community?
- What systemic and organizational barriers and structures shape peoples' experiences in school, and in the broader community? How do I know?

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