DISCUSSION GUIDE

READING, WRITING, AND RACISM

Disrupting Whiteness in Teacher Education and in the Classroom

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This discussion guide can be used independently or with a partner, but we also encourage readers to engage in conversations in small groups of up to eight participants and one or two facilitators. Each section includes a pre-reading focus prompt to help tune the reader into the key concepts presented in each chapter. Given the nature of the book, this pre-reading focus includes an opportunity to check in on how the content in each chapter may be impacting you emotionally. A chapter summary, key concepts, questions, and an application activity are next. We recognize that people of different racial identities, as well as different professional roles, will come to this book from different vantage points. As such, there are reflection questions in this guide for all readers but also ones that are geared specifically for different audiences, i.e., White people, people of Color, and educators. The application activity encourages you to apply the themes of the chapter to your own context. Each section ends with a list of further resources, many of which are cited throughout the book. We encourage you to continue your journey independently and as a group by engaging in discussion around these additional texts, videos, and websites.

Tips for Independent Study

If you are reading this text independently, please consider having a place to keep your written reflections. Before reading each chapter, take a look at the pre-reading focus. As you read the chapter, take notes based on the pre-reading focus and also pay attention to the key concepts presented throughout. After you read the chapter, reflect on the questions provided. While some of the application activities require a partner, most can be done individually. That said, we encourage you to read with a buddy!

Tips for Productive Group Discussions

Below we offer a few key guidelines for facilitating conversations about the book. However, we encourage you to check out these more comprehensive resources for facilitating discussions about race.


Have a Group Facilitator(s)

We encourage all discussion groups to have one or two facilitators who can organize the gathering, prepare for the conversation, guide the discussion, monitor time, and ensure that participants follow the group commitments (see next page). The facilitator(s) need not be “experts” in the content; rather, their role is to guide the discussion and be thoughtful about how group dynamics might be emerging given the different racial positionalities of participants.

Decide on Number of Sessions

As a group, you will want to decide if you intend to discuss the entire book in one meeting or discuss chapters across multiple sessions. If your group chooses to discuss the entire book in one meeting, then we suggest having the facilitator(s) ask each participant to engage in the Independent Study described above.
We believe the book lends itself well to being discussed over three sessions in which two chapters are addressed together. Session 1, using the introduction and chapter 1, can focus on how racism and Whiteness show up in schools and curriculum. Session 2, using chapters 2-3, can focus on how our understandings of race impact our personal and professional decisions and how those understandings can be reframed. The final session, using chapters 4-5, can focus on how institutions can disrupt Whiteness and how we can work toward making schooling a humanizing experience. If your group chooses to discuss each chapter across multiple meetings, then we encourage you to discuss all of the questions in the section that pertain to the participants in the group and then engage in the application activity before closing each discussion.

Set Group Commitments
Every participant comes to discussions about race with their own prior experiences that can influence how they engage in the conversation. Further, power dynamics by way of race, gender, or other social group membership can negatively impact everyone’s ability to participate in the discussion. To mitigate influences that may impede productive discussion, the facilitator may start group discussions by sharing a set of group commitments, or shared expectations. After presenting the group commitments, participants can take time to understand them by talking about what they mean and which commitments resonate most to each participant. We provide a suggested list of group commitments below and encourage groups to adapt them as needed (group commitments adapted from Participant Media’s America to Me Real Talk Organizer Guide, https://www.americatomerealtalk.com/assets/files/Organizer-Guide.pdf).

1. Appreciate that everyone in the room has good intentions and also biases. Everyone is doing the best they can from their current state of awareness.

2. Speak for yourself (“I feel…”; “I think…”), not on behalf of your identity (“We feel…”; “We are…”) or other identities (“They think…”; “They act like…”).

3. Listen to understand and not to respond.

4. Take the time to process what you’ve heard. Avoid negative judgments, language, and name-calling. Be open to feeling uncomfortable: all growth comes with some discomfort.

5. Acknowledge harm (“Oops, I think what I said may have caused harm…”; “Ouch, what you just said caused harm.”)

6. Be gentle with yourself as you learn and grow. Reflect on any harm you may cause, hold yourself accountable, and allow yourself to move forward.

7. Understand that groups of a single race can have multiple perspectives and even the most diverse groups will have missing perspectives.

8. Stay engaged. Take a moment if you feel frustrated or misunderstood, but don’t drop out.

9. Don’t dominate the conversation. Everyone gets a chance to speak and be heard.

10. Don’t expect resolution, complete agreement, or definite answers.

11. What is said in the space, stays in the space. What is learned in the space, leaves the space.

12. This is a discussion, not a debate or a lesson.
Prepare for the Discussion

To prepare for the discussion, the facilitator(s) will want to pull questions and applications from across the guide that can help participants (1) understand the key concepts, (2) discuss how the key concepts resonate with them, and (3) decide on next steps for themselves and for the group. Choose a space that allows everyone to sit in a circle comfortably so that everyone can see and hear one another.

Whether the group consists of people who know each other well or individuals coming together for the first time, we suggest starting the discussion with introductions and a brief icebreaker conversation to build community before going over the group commitments. The facilitator(s) can begin to guide the conversation with their prepared questions and application activities. To close the conversation, we suggest asking everyone in the group to respond to a prompt (i.e., What is one new idea you will discuss with a friend?). You might also provide everyone with a task or expectation, such as assigning what the group will read next and how you will use the guide. Having a plan for the discussion will allow the facilitator(s) and participants to feel more present and able to fully engage in the discussion.
INTRODUCTION #CURRICUMSOWHITE

Pre-reading focus

- As you read the introduction, think about your own racial identity and how the concepts presented apply to your life.
- Keep track of what is surprising or challenging you in this chapter.
- Please continue to check in with yourself emotionally as you read. Note the emotions that come up at various parts of the text. What are moments in which you feel angry, frustrated, overwhelmed, energized, motivated, etc.? Where in your body do you feel these emotions? What ideas come up for how you might channel these emotions?

Summary

This chapter starts by examining viral racist curriculum, called #CurriculumSoWhite, and situates these examples within their broader place in historical and structural racism. These racist curricular examples are not part of a new phenomenon attributable to changes in US political structure, as racism has always been implicated in curriculum and schooling. This chapter sets up the main argument of the book, namely that what teachers choose to teach often represents their ways of thinking about race and how they have been socialized to understand difference. Therefore, there is a direct relationship between individual teachers’ racial beliefs and the curriculum they choose. By understanding how teachers, particularly White teachers, have come to hold dominant racial ideologies, we can also see the role that teacher education can play in disrupting such understandings. The introduction sheds light on theories such as White supremacy and Whiteness, and the author examines her own positionality related to these phenomena.

Key concepts

- White supremacy
- Whiteness
- White socialization
- #CurriculumSoWhite
- Ally vs. co-conspirator
- Four I’s of Oppression and Advantage
- Positionality

Questions

1. Picower shares definitions about White supremacy and Whiteness. How do these definitions clarify your understandings about the distinction between these theories? Where do you locate yourself in these definitions? How does it feel to locate yourself there? (All)
2. Picower states that individual people of Color can enact Whiteness even though they do not benefit from the broader system of White supremacy. How have you enacted Whiteness? How did enacting Whiteness, at times, feel like it was what was expected of you? (People of Color)

3. Reflect on the section about Dawn and how the 4I’s are described in the introduction. How do you see the 4I’s showing up in your community? (All) In your school? (Educators)

4. What came up for you in reading about patterns of White socialization? Did you try to think about how this does not apply to you, or did you think about ways that it fit your life? Why do you think you responded the way you did? (White people)

5. What is the difference between being an ally vs. a co-conspirator with people of Color? When have you acted as either? How can you continue to move toward being more of a co-conspirator? (White people)

6. How do you distinguish between when White people are engaging with you as an ally vs. a co-conspirator? How do these types of relationships with White people feel different from each other? (People of Color)

7. The author shared some of the ways that she grapples with being a White person involved in anti-racist work. What are some of the questions that have come up for you as a White person who cares about these issues? (White people)

8. The author shared some of her principles of anti-racist work. What are some principles that might guide your actions? (All)

Application

Racial Autobiography*
Just as the author modeled, it is important to trace your own history with your racial identity in order to understand how we have all been socialized to hold mainstream ideology. Write your racial autobiography by addressing the following prompts (All):

- What was the first time you recall realizing that the world was not just like you? When was the first time you remember being conscious of race?
- Describe the racial and ethnic composition of your schools, neighborhoods, and family. Do any memories stand out?
- What were your family’s attitudes about your own race/ethnicity and the race/ethnicity of others?
- How have your family, friends, movies, or books influenced your feelings about race?
- Include incidents that happened to you personally, as well as historic events, that made you aware of your own racial ideology or of ideology of the country.

Return to your autobiography and reflect on the following prompts:

• Where do you see connections between your racial autobiography and the frameworks for racial identity development?

• Where do you see places in which the Four I’s of Oppression and Advantage might have impacted your trajectory?

*This application activity was adapted from Antiracist Education: From Theory to Practice (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002), by Julie Kailin.

Further resources

To further your knowledge and understanding of how racism functions in American society, these are some good places to start:

• The Mis-Education of the Negro (Washington, DC: Associated Publishers, 1933), by Carter Godwin Woodson

• White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), by Carol Anderson

• How to Be an Antiracist (New York: One World, 2019), by Ibram X. Kendi

• So You Want to Talk About Race (New York: Seal Press, 2019), by Ijeoma Oluo

• To solidify your understanding of the Four I’s and how racism shows up on multiple levels, watch this short video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WWyVRo4Uas.

To further your understanding about how racism operates specifically in education, these are important texts:

• Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago’s South Side (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020), by Eve Ewing

• We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom (Boston: Beacon Press, 2019), by Bettina Love


• Born Out of Struggle: Critical Race Theory, School Creation, and the Politics of Interruption (Albany: SUNY Press, 2016), by David Stovall

• Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations About Race (New York: BasicBooks, 1997), by Beverly Daniel Tatum

• Crossing Over to Canaan: The Journey of New Teachers in Diverse Classrooms (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 81; by Gloria Ladson-Billings

• Perspectives of Black Histories in Schools (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2019), by LaGarrett J. King
For White people interested in examining the ways they personally enact Whiteness:

- *Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor* (Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, 2020), a workbook by Layla F. Saad

- *White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018), by Robin DiAngelo

CHAPTER 1: CURRICULAR TOOLS OF WHITENESS

Pre-reading focus

• As you read chapter 1, consider how each example of racist curriculum is part of a larger system of racial oppression and advantage.

• Keep track of what is surprising or challenging you in this chapter.

• Please continue to check in with yourself emotionally as you read. Note the emotions that come up at various parts of the text. What are moments in which you feel angry, frustrated, overwhelmed, energized, motivated, etc.? Where in your body do you feel these emotions? What ideas come up for how you might channel these emotions?

Summary

This chapter highlights examples of curriculum used in K–12 schools that publicly came to light because of the outrage and organizing of parents of Color who came across their children’s assignments and took to social media to share their righteous indignation. The examples of curriculum in this chapter are distressing. They range from potentially easy-to-miss examples to violent and traumatic assignments. The majority of the examples are anti-Black in nature and deal with the teaching of enslavement in particular. The goal of this chapter is to bring to light the breadth and depth of how racism is perpetuated through everyday, real assignments in K–12 schools. This way we can name, disrupt, and change it. The other goal of this chapter is to demonstrate that racism is embedded in the school system, it is not simply the act of one individual racist teacher who may have gotten “caught” teaching a harmful lesson.

Key concepts

• Curricular tools of Whiteness
• White gaze
• Hidden curriculum
• Curriculum violence
• Educational malpractice

Questions

1. What do you find helpful about the curricular tools of Whiteness framework? (All)

2. How have you seen any of the curricular tools of Whiteness in action? What did you do in the moment? (All)

3. Can you think of times you consciously or unconsciously taught #CurriculumSoWhite? (Educators)

4. What is the White gaze and how does it influence the curriculum taught in school? (All) What are the consequences of allowing the White gaze to influence your decisions in or outside the classroom? (Educators)
5. In what ways have you thought about yourself or other people of Color through a White racist lens? When has school curriculum asked you to see people of Color through this lens? (People of Color).

6. How is #CurriculumSoWhite violent? (All)

7. Bill Bigelow (p. 27) and Laura Whooley (p. 35) are educators who used #CurriculumSoWhite as a way to teach students to recognize and critically analyze racism in the world around them. How might you be able to use existing curriculum, books, or media to help children become critical examiners of racism? (Educators)

8. What hesitations come up when contemplating veering away from the existing curriculum? (Educators)

Application

Disrupting #CurriculumSoWhite

Perhaps you would not have taught the kinds of lessons in chapter 1. However, if we are not disrupting #CurriculumSoWhite, we are also perpetuating racist curriculum. Part of being a co-conspirator is a willingness to disrupt this type of racism, even if it is uncomfortable. In this activity, you will analyze an example of #CurriculumSoWhite to understand how it upholds White supremacy and then you will engage in a role-play to practice calling in a teacher who may have taught this lesson.

Part 1: Curricular Analysis

Part 1 asks you to get clear on how the racism in this lesson functions to maintain White supremacy. Look at this curriculum from New Jersey: https://www.insideedition.com/headlines/22336-parents-outraged-after-black-student-is-sold-during-class-assignment-on-slavery.

This article describes a project in which students were asked to create “Slave Wanted” posters. These are two examples:

\[
\begin{align*}
&WANTED \\
&Mary Brown \\
&Dead or Alive \\
&$1,000,000.
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
&SLAVES At Auction \\
&On Wednesday the 15th \\
&1. Anne, aged 12 years a fine house girl. \\
&2. Edwin, aged 24 years a great hunter. \\
&3. Jane, aged 32 years a superior nurse.
\end{align*}
\]

Analyze these posters using curricular tools of Whiteness:

1. How does this curriculum function to transmit racial understanding?

2. How does this curriculum function to maintain racial hierarchies?
Part 2: Role-Play Calling In:
To prepare for the role-play, read these two short pieces about how to call someone in for oppressive behavior:

1. A Practical Guide to Calling In by Mariposa [https://theconsentcrew.org/2016/05/29/calling-in/]

Scenario:
You are walking down the 5th grade hallway and see the posters described above on the bulletin board in front of Ms. Mitchell’s class, a White teacher. Even though you aren’t close with Ms. Mitchell, she has always been cordial with you. You know this curriculum is problematic, but you aren’t sure what to do. In order to disrupt this racist curriculum, how could you approach Ms. Mitchell? Engage in a role-play with a partner.

After engaging in the role-play, reflect on the following prompts:

1. Which part of the conversation was the most uncomfortable? Which was the most comfortable?
2. Did the conversation go as planned? Was there anything that made you veer off course?
3. What lessons can you take away for a real life call-in conversation?

Further resources
In order not to perpetuate #CurriculumSoWhite, you need to have a comprehensive understanding of the history of both oppression and resistance of White supremacy by BIPOC. These texts are recommended:

- *Rethinking Columbus: The Next 500 Years* (Milwaukee: rethinking Schools, 1998), by Bill Bigelow and Bob Peterson
- *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* (New York: Nation Books, 2016), by Ibram X. Kendi
- *An African American and Latinx History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018), by Paul Ortiz
CHAPTER 2: THE ICEBERG

Pre-reading focus

- As you read chapter 2, think about how the relationship between racial ideology and curriculum varies across the cases presented in the chapter.

- Keep track of what is surprising or challenging you in this chapter.

- Please continue to check in with yourself emotionally as you read. Note the emotions that come up at various parts of the text. What are moments in which you feel angry, frustrated, overwhelmed, energized, motivated, etc.? Where in your body do you feel these emotions? What ideas come up for how you might channel these emotions?

Summary

What teachers choose to teach represents their individual ways of thinking about race, which have been influenced by broader racial ideologies. As they enact this ideology through curricular tools of Whiteness, teachers transfer these individual forms of racism in ways that have institutional impact on students. Given that *Reading, Writing, and Racism* draws attention to how teachers’ racial ideology affects what they choose to teach, this chapter highlights four White teachers and how their beliefs about race show up in their curriculum. Part of what mitigates the potential racism in these teachers’ curricula is how they respond to challenges to their understandings of race, demonstrating that how we think is often more important than what we think.

Key concepts

- Racial ideology
- White apologist curriculum
- White protectionism
- Open-mindedness
- Questioning
- Transformative teaching

Questions

4. How did the way the different teachers responded to challenges to their beliefs help you understand the relationship between racial ideology and curriculum? (All)

5. Where have you heard ideas such as those reflected by Dawn? (All)

6. What has it looked like for you to protect White innocence? (All)

7. What would Cara and Grace need to do to make their already strong curriculum more transformative? (All)
8. What makes Diana a transformative teacher? (All)

9. What connections can you make between the concept of “defaulting to racism” and the concept of the White gaze presented in chapter 1? (All)

10. This chapter argues that there is a direct relationship between our thinking about race and our curriculum. Think of lessons you taught earlier in your career. Can you see changes in what you’ve taught based on shifts in your own thinking? What insights does that provide as you think about how to push your teaching further toward racial justice? (Educators)

**Application**

This chapter demonstrates that what teachers think about race shows up in their curriculum. In order to engage in a similar analysis, return to your racial autobiography that you wrote in the application section of the introduction of this guide and reread it, reflecting on the following prompts:

- Where do you notice your racial ideology showing up in your personal and/or professional decisions and approaches?
- When did you respond to challenges to your understandings of race using protectionism, open-mindedness, questioning, or transformation?
- How can you move along the continuum from protectionism toward transformation?

**Further resources**

- *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2016), by Gary R. Howard
- *Practice What You Teach* (New York: Routledge, 2012), by Bree Picower
CHAPTER 3: REFRAMING UNDERSTANDINGS OF RACE WITHIN TEACHER EDUCATION

Pre-reading focus

• As you read chapter 3, consider how transforming individual thinking works to change institutional racism.

• Keep track of what is surprising or challenging you in this chapter.

• Please continue to check in with yourself emotionally as you read. Note the emotions that come up at various parts of the text. What are moments in which you feel angry, frustrated, overwhelmed, energized, motivated, etc.? Where in your body do you feel these emotions? What ideas come up for how you might channel these emotions?

Summary

This chapter examines how the institution of teacher education can support teachers to shift their understandings about race in order to teach toward antiracism instead of reinforcing #CurriculumSoWhite. If we can support new teachers in understanding the full system of racism, we can encourage them to choose to dismantle it, rather than reproduce it, by setting aside tools of Whiteness. There would be no need for a teacher to use such tools if their understanding of the world no longer aligned with the ideology of White supremacy. This chapter examines how White teachers reframed their understandings about ideological, internalized, institutional, and interpersonal racism within their teacher education program.

Key concepts

• Four I’s of Oppression and Advantage

• Racial reframing

• Social construction of race

• White racial identity

• Charity vs. justice

• Blaming the victim

• White cultural norms

Questions

1. While previous chapters focus on racism in curriculum, Picower starts this chapter arguing that racism shows up in more than just curriculum in schools. What are examples of racism across the 4I’s that you have experienced or witnessed in education? (All)

2. If racism is not solely the result of individual racist teachers, how else do you explain its existence in education? (All)
3. As you think about what catalyzed reframes in thinking about race, how might you be able to support other people in shifting their understandings toward antiracism? (All)

4. What are some common sense ideas about race that have influenced your thinking at various points of your life? How have they changed over time? Consider how you are reframing your own understandings about race across each of the 4I's. (All)

5. When was the first time you realized you were White? What emotions are attached to that realization? (White)

6. As demonstrated by the teachers in chapter 3, understanding the social construction of race was key to their ability to think differently about race. We often hear the phrase “race is a social construction.” How does the section on ideological racism help you to understand what that actually means? (All)

7. In the domain of internalized racism, on p. 92, Picower shares a story of how she and her colleague of Color uncovered internalized racism in how they each responded differently to a challenging situation. Think about seemingly “race-neutral” aspects of your personality. How might internalized racial superiority or inferiority be lurking beneath these ways of being in the world? (All)

8. In the section on institutional racism, Picower discusses the difference between charity and justice. What anti-racist actions have you taken in your life? Do you think they fall more under charity or justice work? What are the implications of this? (All)

9. Picower suggests that asking oneself challenging questions is part of the process of decentering the White tendency of thinking that White people can do whatever they want, wherever they want. Critical self-questioning is therefore a vital part of developing racial consciousness—as long as it does not become an excuse to retreat. What are some of the critical self-questions that have come up for you as you think about teaching BIPOC students or teaching from an anti-racist perspective? (White educators)

10. How can reframing your racist thinking across the 4I’s influence how you teach and/or take action in your context? (All)

Application

Shifting Blame Activity
In the section about institutional reframes, Picower discusses the importance of shifting blame to the system, not targets of racism, and offers a reframe using the “achievement gap” (pp. 100-101). This application activity asks you to engage in a similar reframing exercise.

1. Identify a problem of race in your own setting.

2. How might you reframe your understanding of why this is a problem by looking to institutional causes, rather than targeting the people who are experiencing racial oppression?

3. Keep asking yourself “Why is this a problem” as a way to identify the roots, and not the symptoms, of the problem.

4. How does this reframing change the potential actions you might take?
Further resources


- *The Seduction of Common Sense: How the Right Has Framed the Debate on America’s Schools* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2008), by Kevin K. Kumashiro


To learn more about how racial categories were created by scientists to justify colonization and slavery, I recommend the following:

- *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* (New York: Nation Books, 2016), by Ibram X. Kendi. *Stamped from the Beginning* has also been adapted with Jason Reynolds into a young adult edition called *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism and You.*

- The PBS series *Race: The Power of an Illusion* illustrates how various legal rulings create and change racial categories, refuting biological arguments of racial difference.

- Undoing Racism Workshop, put on by the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond. Their website includes an event calendar: [http://www.pisb.org](http://www.pisb.org).
CHAPTER 4: DISRUPTING WHITENESS IN TEACHER EDUCATION

Pre-reading focus

- As you read chapter 4, identify the ways in which the teacher educators disrupted whiteness in their contexts. Reflect on how their actions make you feel uncomfortable and/or empowered.
- Keep track of what is surprising or challenging you in this chapter.
- Please continue to check in with yourself emotionally as you read. Note the emotions that come up at various parts of the text. What are moments in which you feel angry, frustrated, overwhelmed, energized, motivated etc.? Where in your body do you feel these emotions? What ideas come up for how you might channel these emotions?

Summary

Given the previous chapters, teacher education programs must take seriously the negative impact that Whiteness can have on all teachers’ understanding of what and how they teach. As an institution, teacher education is one of the few places where pre- and in-service educators are required to be for substantive amounts of time. This chapter examines the ways that teacher education can disrupt Whiteness as a way to prioritize racial justice in preparing the next generation of teachers. By examining five teacher education programs that center racial justice, this chapter demonstrates how disrupting Whiteness requires an explicit, shared commitment among all stakeholders to center race and address racism.

Key concepts

- Disrupting Whiteness
- Centering race
- Being explicit about race
- Calling in vs. calling out
- Resistance

Questions

1. What does it mean to disrupt Whiteness? As you read the ways racial justice programs (RJPs) disrupted Whiteness, what made you feel uncomfortable? What made you feel empowered? (All)
2. How can you move race from the margin to the center in your own setting? (All)
3. What are respectability politics? (see footnote on p. 188). How were you taught these politics? How are they a form of internalized racism for people of Color? How do you maintain these politics? (People of Color)
4. What is a “Karen”? When you see Karens in action, what emotions do you see them expressing? What are times you may have experienced those emotions? What ideology is underneath those emotions? How may you have knowingly or unknowingly acted as a Karen? (White people)

5. When have you had explicit discussions about race or racism with your colleagues? How have those conversations unfolded? What was your role in these conversations? (All)

6. The teacher educators in this chapter are very knowledgeable about race and know how to navigate challenging racial moments. What are your learning goals for yourself to acquire some of these important skills? (All)

**Application**

In the last chapter application, you named a problem of race in your setting and reframed to understand the role that institutional racism plays in this problem. Now that you have identified the source of the problem, consider the following prompts:

- What role can you play in disrupting Whiteness in your professional context?
- Who can be your co-conspirators in this work?
- Who are you accountable to?
- What do you need to learn before disrupting?
- What are your immediate next steps?

**Further resources**

- *Eloquent Rage: A Black Feminist Discovers Her Superpower* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2018), by Brittany Cooper
CHAPTER 5: HUMANIZING RACIAL JUSTICE IN TEACHER EDUCATION

Pre-reading focus

- As you read chapter 5, consider how racial justice is humanizing work for everyone.

- Keep track of what is surprising or challenging you in this chapter.

- Please continue to check in with yourself emotionally as you read. Note the emotions that come up at various parts of the text. What are moments in which you feel angry, frustrated, overwhelmed, energized, motivated, etc.? Where in your body do you feel these emotions? What ideas come up for how you might channel these emotions?

Summary

This chapter explores how racial justice programs (RJPs) work to develop like-minded program teams with a shared vision and how they recruit students with the most capacity to teach toward anti-racism. From students and faculty to mentors, field supervisors, and community-based organizations, nothing is more vital to advancing racial justice in teacher education than ensuring the right people are around the table. While the introduction and previous four chapters of this book focused on disrupting Whiteness, the RJPs in this chapter provide a path toward the radical possibilities of what humanizing education can look like in teacher education and in schools.

Key concepts

- Humanizing work
- Shared mission
- Internal work of racial justice
- White tears
- Teacher activist groups

Questions

1. What does the author mean when she writes, “Racial justice in teacher education is humanizing work?” (p. 135). (All)

2. On p. 149, Picower discusses the difference between the authentic, messy emotions of coming to terms with Whiteness versus strategies that White people might use to avoid self-discovery. What experiences do you have with these different stances and when have you engaged in one or the other? (White people)

3. What experiences have you had navigating White resistance in your professional context? How has navigating racism taken an emotional toll on you? How do you engage in healing practices? (People of Color)
4. What does it look like for you to engage in the internal work of racial justice? (All)

5. The RJPs in this chapter use racial affinity groups to create spaces where people of different identity groups can engage with position specific questions. Such questions might include the following:
   a. How often have you spoken with other White people about what it means to be White? Why might this be? How might doing this advance racial justice? (White people)
   b. How does your own internalized racism show up in how you engage in your personal and professional contexts? How do you find ways to experience joy and maintain your peace? (Black people)
   c. What are the anti-Black beliefs in your community? How do you maintain these beliefs? (Non-Black people of Color)

6. Given your racial positionality, what are appropriate roles for you in disrupting Whiteness in your setting? What roles are more strategic for someone of a different positionality to take on and why? How can you work across race to strategically disrupt Whiteness together? (All)

Application

Racial Justice Vision Board

Freedom dreaming (Kelley, 2002) allows us to imagine radical possibilities for what we are fighting for, not just what we are fighting against. What radical possibilities do you imagine for what humanizing, racial justice work in your own context could look like?

Create a vision board that will serve as a visual representation of your freedom dream.

- Select images from photographs, the internet, or magazines that represent both short- or long-term goals of your vision for racial justice. What goals are most important to represent?
- Add quotes from this book or others that inspire you toward this vision. They might be aspirational or important reminders of why you are engaging in this work.
- Keep your vision board somewhere that you will see it. Take a picture and post on social media using the hashtag #ReadingWritingRacism or save as your phone home screen. The idea is to see it regularly so it will be both a source of inspiration and accountability.

Further resources

• *Radical Possibilities: Public Policy, Urban Education, and a New Social Movement* (New York: Routledge, 2014), by Jean Anyon

• *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), by Robin D. G. Kelley

### About the authors of this guide

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