Theme: Racism and White Privilege

Supplementary Lesson Plan for 2016-17 Campus Read “Just Mercy,” by Bryan Stevenson

Racism and White Privilege

“Skin color is only skin deep” (PBS)

“It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences.” Audre Lorde, Our Dead behind Us

Lesson Objectives:

- Identify and analyze the material consequences of racial construction for people of color
- Discuss white privilege and different ways to combat racism/prejudice/discrimination

Beginning the Lesson:

- Create a positive and safe learning environment through developing community agreements/guidelines for support and risk taking activities
- Explore personal learning experiences about race and racism to begin to develop understanding of the ways that racism is communicated and reinforced at systemic, institutional, and cultural levels
- Develop a shared understanding of key terms and ideas, including racial formation, race, socialization, and social construction
- Explain that racism occurs at different levels (individual, institutional, cultural, and societal). This also intersects with social constructs to further complicate the levels of oppression
- Explore institutional and cultural forms of racism

Body of the Lesson

- Share with the participants a handout with definitions about race and racism (see Appendix A below)
- Show PBS clips from the stories we tell about race or share some quotes/excerpts from Just Mercy regarding race and racism (see Appendix B below for a sample of quotes)
- Explore or discuss some fallacies below
  - We are in a “post-racial” state
  - Color-blind…talks such as “I don’t see color, I just see people.” “I treat everyone the same”
- Discussion around contemporary and systemic racism
  - Microaggressions
  - How does contemporary and systemic racism affect us individually and as a society?
- White privilege
  - Tracking everyday white privilege activity
    - Provide participants with a Peggy McKintosh Handout (https://www.deanza.edu/faculty/lewisjulie/White%20Privilege%20Unpacking%20the%20Invisible%20Knapsack.pdf)
  - Ask participants to check all statements that they agree with in the handout
• Discuss participants’ findings when tracking to see how many times a day they benefit from white privilege or see white privilege

• Scenarios for taking action
  o Ask participants to analyze how racism occurs individually and institutionally in everyday occurrences and have them brainstorm different scenarios of taking action, where they disrupt racist attitudes and behaviors (thus avoiding the bystander effect)

• Handout Langston Hughes’s “I Too” poem (see Appendix C) and ask participants to write their “I too” poems. Participants can self-identify as a queer, first generation, international students (nationality), etc.

• Earliest memories and personal timeline activity
  o Directions
    ▪ Ask participants to recall and write down their early memories related to race in order to explore learned (consciously and unconsciously) messages about race, their own racial group, and other racial groups. Ask participants in small groups to discuss and analyze how they are socialized about race and the multiple levels on which racism has affected their lives or lives of others.

Closing the Lesson

• Think-Pair-Share Activity
  o Think
    ▪ How does understanding of white privilege help you understand racism and the way it is maintained and reinforced?
    ▪ How might your understanding of white privilege help you challenge racism?
  o Pair Share
    ▪ In small groups, share your reflections on the above questions
    ▪ Engage in active listening

• Closing Circle
  o Ask each participant to:
    ▪ Share one lingering question from the session or
    ▪ Share a feeling, an emotion, thought (one word) based on the discussion on race and racism
    ▪ Share a declarative statement or commitment toward eradicating racism

• One thing you learned today that you want to remember
Appendix A: Definition of Terms

Racism: “Racism as a pervasive system of advantage and disadvantage based on the socially constructed category of race. Racism is enacted on multiple levels simultaneously: institutional, cultural, interpersonal, and individual. Institutional structures, policies, and practices interlock with cultural assumptions about what is right and proper to justify racism. Individuals internalize and enact these assumptions through individual behavior and institutional participation. Woven together, these interactions create and sustain systemic benefits for whites as a group, and structure discrimination, oppression, dispossession, and exclusion for people from targeted racial groups.” (Adams, & Bell, 2016, p. 5)

Ethnicity: Is a demographic descriptor that identifies a person based on his nationality, region, ancestry, shared culture, and language. Ethnicity is an attribution that signifies group affiliation with others who share values and ways of being

Individual/Interpersonal Racism: Occurs when an individual may intentionally express or act on racist ideas and assumptions. It is mostly explicit when a person is perceived through a stereotype. This can be overt or covert

Institutional Racism: is reflected when the policies, laws, rules, norms, and customs enacted by organizations and social institutions advantage the whites as a group and disadvantage groups of color. These institutions include healthcare system, education, criminal justice, government, businesses/employment, etc.

Societal/Cultural Racism: Occurs when social norms, roles, rituals, language, music, and art reinforce the notion that white (European) culture is superior to others. This revolves around normative assumptions of good and evil, beauty and ugliness, normality and deviance, and so forth.

Overt Racism: Refers to conscious attitudes and behaviors that intentionally harm people of color or define them as inferior to whites and less entitled to society’s benefits.

Covert Racism: Is hidden and unacknowledged form of racism which includes cultural and religious marginalization, color-blind racism, and tokenism. Here people use code words such as “inner city” “law and order,” and “welfare”.

Racial Micro aggressions: Commonplace experiences of people of color which include being ignored by a sales clerk or followed in a store by security guards, being complimented for speaking good English. Microaggressions have a psychological impact on people of color

Internalized Racism: Occurs when people of color believe and/or act on negative stereotypes (as a result of socialization) about themselves and their group as less capable, not entitled, or more violent than whites. This can be manifested as denying one’s ethnic or cultural background e.g., refusing to eat ethnic foods in an effort to conform to white norms.

White Privilege:

Intersectionality: “Race and racism intersect with other social identities and forms of oppression, and position individuals and groups differently in the system of racism by virtue of gender, class, sexuality, ability, and other social markers.” (Adams & Bell, 2016, pp. 5 -6)
Appendix B: Notes

- “Racism as a pervasive system of advantage and disadvantage based on the socially constructed category of race. Racism is enacted on multiple levels simultaneously: institutional, cultural, interpersonal, and individual. Institutional structures, policies, and practices interlock with cultural assumptions about what is right and proper to justify racism. Individuals internalize and enact these assumptions through individual behavior and institutional participation. Woven together, these interactions create and sustain systemic benefits for whites as a group, and structure discrimination, oppression, dispossession, and exclusion for people from targeted racial groups.” (Adams, & Bell, 2016, p. 5)
- The concept of race is a social construct used to interpret human differences and justify socio-economic arrangements that benefit the white racial group
- Racism is historical as exemplified by the propagation of manifest destiny
- Race impacts people’s lives, psychologically and materially, in consequential and enduring ways (Adams, & Bell, 2016)
- Bryan Stevenson outlines the four institutions in American history that shape our approach to race as (see pp. 299-301):
  - Slavery
  - Racial terror
    - “Lynching created modern death penalty”
    - Racial hierarchy
  - Jim Crow
    - Legalized racial segregation
    - Left a legacy of racial profiling
  - Mass incarceration
    - Overrepresentation of people of color
    - Disproportionate sentencing of minorities
    - Targeted prosecution of drug crimes in poor communities
    - Criminalization of new immigrants/undocumented people
    - Collateral consequences of voter disenfranchisement
- Colorblindness or pretending that race does not exist will not end racism
- To combat racism, we need to identify and remedy social policies that advantage some groups at the expense of others
Appendix A: “I Too” by Langston Hughes

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I’ll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody’ll dare
Say to me,
“Eat in the kitchen,”
Then.

Besides,
They’ll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed-

I, too, am America.
Appendix D: Resources

1. Race timeline: [http://www.pbs.org/race/000_General/000_00-Home.htm](http://www.pbs.org/race/000_General/000_00-Home.htm)
3. Race Forward: [https://www.raceforward.org/](https://www.raceforward.org/) (Race Forward provides some research pieces and activities on pressing racial justice issues, pay equity, activism, and LGBTQ)