



RE  THINK

RE  CONNECT

RE  IMAGINE

Thinking about ourselves,  
our schools, our communities

## ETFO statement and definition of equity, June 2011

It is the goal of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario to work with others to create schools, communities, and a society free from all forms of individual and systemic discrimination. To further this goal, ETFO defines equity as fairness achieved through proactive measures which result in equality, promote diversity, and foster respect and dignity for all.

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## Re-think, Re-connect, Re-imagine

Congratulations! You are about to embark on a journey of discovery, which may lead you to re-think your privilege, re-connect with your students and re-imagine a world where everyone is valued for who they are.

## WHY WHITE PRIVILEGE?

The concept is not new. In 1989, Peggy McIntosh, a White American educator, wrote in her influential article, *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*, “ ... I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was ‘meant’ to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless backpack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks.”

In 2013, delegates to ETFO’s Annual Meeting called for ETFO to “provide resource materials on white privilege, anti-racist theory and culturally relevant pedagogy.” Since then, ETFO members, working with ETFO staff, have created a workshop for members, Re-Thinking White Privilege, which invites participants to reflect on their own privilege and become motivated to make positive changes to their teaching practices.

This resource builds on that work. Writers Stephanie Fearon, Catherine Inglis and Velvet Lacasse share their visions and intentions for this project:



### STEPHANIE FEARON:

“I want people to see me. I want people to remember me,” revealed a Grade 4 African-Canadian student in my French class. Like my student, when I was in Grade 4 I wanted my identities, experiences and abilities to be valued within the school setting. I longed for my teacher to recognize me as an accomplished historian who accompanied her father on expeditions deep in the Jamaican countryside as he recited the heroism of our enslaved African ancestors who resisted injustice and oppression. Like my student, I yearned to be honoured as a talented linguist having been taught by community elders the art of using allegories, rhyme and rhythm in English and Créole to orally

document and share the diverse experiences of community members. I wanted to be remembered by my teachers as an artist who learned the importance of unity and self-determination through popular Caribbean parables of Anansi the Spider, reggae music and Jamaican dub poetry.

Educators are afforded opportunities to affirm the multiple identities and experiences of students and their families. ETFO's White Privilege document encourages educators to critically explore the questions: Who am I? Who are my students and their families? How can I affirm their identities in ways that support teaching, learning and well-being? As an African-Canadian woman and teacher, I have experienced and witnessed the anger, frustration and sorrow at being denied equitable opportunities of self-expression, dignity and student success within the school system. It is my hope that this resource helps educators think of responsive and relevant ways to create schools where all students are seen and remembered for their diverse identities, experiences and talents.

#### CATHERINE INGLIS:

The concept of White Privilege isn't a new one to me; I remember



reading Peggy McIntosh's seminal essay when I was in my pre-service program, thinking, "Yeah. This makes sense!" As a bi-racial woman, I've sometimes felt caught in the middle of discussions around privilege. At times, I can "pass" and don't feel immediately aware of my privilege, while there are other times I am acutely aware of others' privilege and ways I don't fit in (either imagined or real). Participating in this writing team has led me to reexamine not only my own privilege, but the myriad ways privilege has been institutionalized in our classrooms, schools and communities. My hope is that users of the resource will begin to question some of the structures we may take for granted and look toward communities that truly include all members.

#### VELVET LACASSE:

Talking about White Privilege makes



me feel uncomfortable: guilty, ashamed, overwhelmed. It's hard to talk about it, to take a risk and expose yourself, to be vulnerable. But the consequences of not talking about it are worse. I've learned that privilege is sustained and re-enforced by the fact that many White people don't notice or acknowledge it. So, the question becomes: How do we encourage White people to notice and confront their own privilege without getting defensive or angry? How can we confront and dismantle and re-imagine the system of privilege that disadvantages so many? I think the answer is to take a deep breath, lean into our fear, remember to listen and start by having one courageous conversation with our students or our colleagues. We are not alone in this work; there are allies inside and outside of the school. And don't forget to celebrate our transformation and commitment

to learning, teaching, reflecting and growing.

"To realize the promise of our diversity, we must respect and value the full range of our differences. Providing a high-quality education for all is a key means of fostering social cohesion, based on an inclusive society where diversity is affirmed within a framework of common values that promote the well-being of all citizens."

— MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, *EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN ONTARIO SCHOOLS*, 2009.

#### How to use this resource:

- find an ally to discuss the reflection prompts;
- journal your responses;
- create a discussion group;
- integrate ideas around privilege into a learning community; and
- weave issues of privilege into lesson and unit planning.

#### Prepare to ...

- be challenged;
- experience discomfort;
- sometimes feel anger; and
- be open to new learning.

## RE THINK: What is privilege? What is White privilege?

### LEARNING GOALS

To understand that diverse forms of privilege and oppression can be experienced simultaneously and vary depending on context and time.

To examine and reflect on personal experiences of privilege and oppression.

### PRIVILEGE

People can be privileged in some ways, while disadvantaged in other ways. There are many different types of privilege that shape how we move through the world. These are typically things we are born into, not things we have earned, that afford us opportunities and advantages that others may not enjoy.

### REFLECTION

Take a moment to reflect on your own identity and its impact on how you navigate the society in which you live:

- Do I share a similar social class with my elected representatives?
- Am I able to move about in public without fear of being harassed or physically attacked because of my sexual orientation?

- Am I slotted into a narrow range of occupations identified with my gender?
- When I am in public spaces, will I be treated as if I belong there?
- Do I assume that most buildings and other structures will be designed in ways that limit my access?
- Am I free to reveal and live my gender identity openly in public and at work without risk of discrimination and violence?

### WHITE PRIVILEGE

Our race is one of those factors that shapes the benefits and resources that we have access to in our society. These privileges based on race vary depending on the other identities that we hold, such as our gender, sexual orientation, class, citizenship status, physical ability, religion and so on.

White privilege describes the benefits, resources and rewards that White people receive by virtue of their skin colour. Privilege or discrimination based on our race does not determine our outcome in life, but it does affect how our talents, abilities and aspirations are received in society.

### REFLECTION

Examining the power or oppression that we experience based on our race can be difficult. Think about the ways that you benefit from or are disadvantaged by White privilege:

- I choose whether to be conscious of my race or to ignore it.
- I share the same race as most of the people I studied at school and saw in textbooks.
- Because of my race, I was discouraged or prevented from pursuing academic or work goals.
- National heroes, success models and other figures held up for admiration are generally of my race.
- I assume that when in public, I won't be challenged or attacked because of my race.

- The ruling circles of government, corporations, universities and other organizations disproportionately reflect my race.
- My failures are attributed to my race; my successes are met with surprise.
- When I meet someone for the first time, I am often asked, "Where are you from?"

*"How we set up the terms for discussing racial issues shapes our perception and response to these issues."*

— CORNEL WEST [33]

**RE @CONNECT: So what?  
What does this mean for my teaching practice?**

**LEARNING GOALS**

To explore relationships between privilege, oppression and schooling.

To learn about and reflect on personal teaching practice while using an equity lens.

**MY TEACHING PRACTICE AND EQUITY**

The same attitudes, ideas and practices that sustain White privilege in society also work to deny Aboriginal and racialized peoples their dignity and success in the school system.

Understanding how privilege and oppression work in the education system helps us to think of ways that we can create schools where students are engaged, have their voices heard and enjoy equitable opportunities for high academic achievement:

- How are Aboriginal and racialized students routinely perceived and treated in my school by staff and other students?

- What attitudes, ideas and practices found in Canadian society (e.g. media, government, police, etc.) shape these perceptions of Aboriginal and racialized students?
- How do societal attitudes, ideas and practices in relation to Aboriginal and racialized peoples influence my own assumptions about race and education?

**CALL TO ACTION**

We have a responsibility, as educators, to work with students, their families and colleagues to challenge and disrupt racism and other forms of discrimination found in schools and communities across Ontario. To achieve this goal, educators are being called on to explore their practice and the

outcomes of schooling by asking critical questions of themselves and their work.

This is challenging, requiring courage and humility, yet it is necessary and relevant especially in current times of racial tensions, academic achievement disparities, institutional inequities and globalization.

**REFLECTION – EQUITY WITHIN MY TEACHING**

Consider the ways that you can help create a culture of equity in your classroom where students and their families are honoured and empowered:

- How can I use my students’ interests and current issues to help develop curriculum lessons and units?
- How can I design assignments that allow students to discuss narratives that reflect their own lives and experiences?
- In my classroom, how can I give students time to share and validate learnings from their own communities and families?

- In what ways do the school resources and library reflect the needs, interests, languages and demographics of my students and their families?
- How can I use curriculum materials in my classroom to critically explore power, privilege and oppression?
- How can I connect with my students and their families in ways that honour them as valuable resources in my classroom?

Resources committed to advancing equity and professional learning in schools can be found on the ETFO website. These resources help educators to implement the Ontario curriculum in ways that provide students with authentic opportunities to engage in social justice and activism. [8,9]

*“A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new.”*

— ALBERT EINSTEIN

**RE♥IMAGINE: Now what? How do I become an ally?****LEARNING GOALS**

To learn about and reflect on the ways that educators can be allies.

**ALLY**

Educators across Ontario are working with students, their families and colleagues to address inequities found in the communities in which they live and work.

As educators, we can challenge racism and other forms of discrimination by acting as allies. Allies work together with marginalized communities for justice and equity. Allies support the self-determination and voices of equity-seeking communities and help ensure that they have opportunities to organize, think and act for themselves. They not only show up and offer support, but they also stay around for the long-term.

**REFLECTION — BEING AN ALLY**

Reflect on ways that you can begin your work as an ally:

- I will become more aware of who I am and what skills and abilities I have that can contribute to community empowerment.

- I will recognize the impact of race.
- I will find and join equity-seeking community organizations, such as my local Equity and Social Justice committee
- I will remember that Aboriginal and racialized communities are not monolithic.
- I will commit to ongoing learning by reading, discussing and listening.
- I will find mentors, role models and support systems.
- I will share my ideas and work with others!

"NEVER DOUBT THAT A SMALL GROUP OF THOUGHTFUL, COMMITTED CITIZENS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD; INDEED, IT'S THE ONLY THING THAT EVER HAS."

— MARGARET MEAD

## RE THINK: What?

### LEARNING GOALS

To understand ways in which privilege plays a role in my classroom.

### PRIVILEGE

Not every student has the same access to opportunities and social supports. Poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia and mental and physical abilities can act as barriers to student success.

Research has shown that the effects of exclusion and bullying directly impact student achievement and engagement. All members of a school community have the right to feel safe and valued. [2, 22, 26]

### REFLECTION – DO STUDENTS FEEL ENGAGED IN MY CLASSROOM?

- Who do I call upon during class discussions?
- Who holds positions of leadership in the classroom? Did I choose the positions? Who did I not choose?
- Do I have high expectations for all of my students?

- Do I believe that all students can succeed if they work hard enough?
- How well do I know the cultural backgrounds of the students I teach?
- Who feels excluded/included in classroom activities? How do I know?
- Do I respond to students in equitable ways?
- Which students are referred to the office for discipline and suspension?

### WHITE PRIVILEGE

Nothing in the classroom or school is race-neutral. Everything we do either disrupts or perpetuates racism. The students in our schools who historically have the highest drop-out rates, low achievement scores, poor attendance and behavioural problems are Aboriginal and racialized people. [23, 24, 31]

In Ontario, the goal for Inclusive Education is that: “every student is supported and inspired to succeed in a culture of high expectations for learning.” [22]

### REFLECTION

- How often do I discuss “big ideas” and issues that focus on equity and social justice with my students?
- How comfortable am I discussing

issues of racism, power and privilege with my students?

“No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.”

— NELSON MANDELA

“STUDENTS WHO FEEL CONNECTED TO SCHOOL — TO TEACHERS, OTHER STUDENTS AND SCHOOL — DO BETTER ACADEMICALLY.”

— DANIEL GOLEMAN [10]

## RE@CONNECT: So what?

### LEARNING GOAL

To create learning experiences and opportunities to explore issues related to power and privilege in my classroom.

### MY TEACHING PRACTICE AND EQUITY

One of the goals of Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP) is that students need to develop a critical consciousness that allows them to critique the cultural norms, values and institutions that produce and maintain inequality.

### REFLECTION

- Do I use curriculum resources and materials in the classroom that are free from bias? Do we challenge and deconstruct bias when we encounter it in our classroom?
- Do my students see themselves and their families represented in the curriculum?
- Does my teaching encourage students to think critically and explore multiple perspectives?
- Do I encourage students to work collaboratively?

- How often do I allow students to make choices in their learning?
- Do students feel empowered to make change and take action?

### CALL TO ACTION – EQUITY WITHIN MY TEACHING

- I will use the goals of CRRP to meet the needs of all of my students.
- I will use inquiry-based and experiential learning to engage my students throughout the curriculum.
- I will provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate understanding of concepts.

“Determination and perseverance move the world.”

- MARVA COLLINS

## RE♡IMAGINE: Now what?

### LEARNING GOAL

To transform my teaching practice to become a pedagogy of hope.

### PEDAGOGY OF HOPE

Educators can use our power to become positive agents of change. Together, we can create new ways of thinking about curriculum and schooling to ensure that all students are successful.

### REFLECTION

- How can I transform my current teaching practices to empower my students?
- How can I acknowledge the institutional systems of oppression without overwhelming my students?
- How can I challenge systemic inequality while working within the system?

### CALL TO ACTION AS AN ALLY

- I will actively engage in courageous conversations with my students and colleagues.
- I will explicitly teach lessons about power and privilege.

- I will encourage my students to think critically and to develop “cultural consciousness.”
- I will share my learning with my colleagues.

“Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.”

— HARRIET TUBMAN



## RE THINK: What?

### LEARNING GOAL

To recognize that White Privilege shapes how schools are organized, what and how we teach and our interactions with colleagues, students and families.

### PRIVILEGE

Our schools are not meeting the needs of all of our students. “Children of colour experience disproportionate suspension and expulsion rates, higher levels of failure on achievement tests, unequal placements in special and gifted education ...” [3. See also 7, 11, 17]

### REFLECTION

- Does the school community recognize a variety of religious and cultural days of significance?
- Does the diversity of the staff and administration reflect that of the students?
- Who are the students enrolled in behaviour or special education classes?
- Who are the students enrolled in gifted or French immersion classes?
- Does my school include equity in its School Improvement Plan?

- Are there spaces in my school where staff feel invited to engage in courageous conversations about equity and inclusion?

### WHITE PRIVILEGE

Silence and denial help to strengthen and perpetuate misconceptions. It is critical for all educators to speak out, acknowledge and name inequity because that is how we can work towards making change.

“The reality that the vast majority of educators do not intentionally commit acts of racism does not negate the fact that anybody can contribute to institutional racism unless efforts are taken to avoid doing so.” [3]

### CALL TO ACTION

- I will recognize the part that I play in my school community.
- I will strive to understand my students so that I can effectively teach them.
- I will invite families into my classroom to share their expertise.

“CHANGE WILL NOT COME IF WE WAIT FOR SOME OTHER PERSON OR SOME OTHER TIME. WE ARE THE ONES WE’VE BEEN WAITING FOR. WE ARE THE CHANGE THAT WE SEEK.”

— BARACK OBAMA

## RE @CONNECT: So what?

### LEARNING GOAL

To make conscious choices to ensure that we aren't misusing power or privilege and perpetuating the cycle.

### NAVIGATING AND KNOWING

We all need to learn about the “norms” of the dominant White culture that we live in, before we can begin to challenge and change them. Aboriginal and racialized students need to learn how to negotiate between the two or more cultures that they live in. Everyone needs to recognize the role that institutions, such as schools, play in maintaining and supporting the dominant White culture.

“If teachers don't question the culture and values being promoted in the classroom, they socialize their students to accept the uneven power relations of our society along lines of race, class, gender and ability.” [27, p.4]

### REFLECTION

- Is the school environment welcoming to all families?
- How can I begin to speak out about racism, power and privilege in the school?

### CALL TO ACTION

- I will reflect on my teaching practice and share my insights with someone I trust.
- I will help create a school environment where students demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride and positive social identities.
- I will help create a school environment where students are empowered to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions. [9]

“Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.”

- MAYA ANGELOU

## RE♥IMAGINE: Now what?

### LEARNING GOAL

To transform school and learning environments.

### ANTI-COLONIALISM

We need to re-imagine our colonial ideas of what education, curriculum and learning look like. We need to integrate the issues of Aboriginal peoples throughout the curriculum.

### REFLECTION

How has my understanding of White Privilege impacted my life as a student? As an educator?

### CALL TO ACTION

- I will access resources that will support my learning.
- I will attend a professional development workshop, such as “Re-Thinking White Privilege.”
- I will join an equity-focused committee within my school or my local.
- I will help organize school-wide initiatives or assemblies to engage multiple perspectives (e.g. African Heritage Month,

National Aboriginal Day or the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination).

“Hold fast to your dreams, for without them life is a broken winged bird that cannot fly.”

— LANGSTON HUGHES

## RE⚡THINK: What is privilege? What is White privilege?

### LEARNING GOAL

To understand my identities, the community and my position therein.

### IDENTITY

I have an identity. It may or may not mirror the community in which I work.

### PRIVILEGE

Location has a lot to do with identifying personal privilege.

When we live outside of our teaching community, we must make an extra effort to understand the community in which we are working. Even those who live within their school community may make assumptions about community norms according to their own experiences.

### REFLECTION

- Where do I fit within my school community?
- Did I grow up in it? How are the circumstances of my youth the same or different from that of the students in my school today?
- How does my standard of living

compare with my students?

- Who are the students in my classroom? What different identities make up our school community?
- What kind of activities do my students participate in outside of school hours?
- How do people get around in my school community (e.g. walking, driving, transit)?
- Where do members of the community gather?

### CALL TO ACTION

- I will be intentional about the way I use language with my students to ensure they feel included.
- I will engage my students in conversations about their lives outside of school.
- I will provide forums for open discussion and ensure students' voices are honoured.

"WHAT IS MOST COURAGEOUS ABOUT INTERRACIAL CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RACE IS MUSTERING THE STRENGTH TO FACILITATE THEM. OPENING UP THESE DIALOGUES WHEN IT APPEARS THAT CERTAIN THINGS ARE MUCH BETTER LEFT UNSAID OR UNSPOKEN IS FRIGHTENING. WE WANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT FEAR AND ENCOURAGE EDUCATORS TO FIND THE COURAGE TO RISK MOVING BEYOND IT."

— GLENN E. SINGLETON & CYNDIE HAYS [28]

## RE @CONNECT: So what?

### LEARNING GOALS

To understand my school community in relation to those who live there.

To strengthen and make connections between my local community, my school community and my classroom community.

### MY TEACHING PRACTICE AND EQUITY

Ask lots of questions: of students, families, other educators.

There are many ways that educators can learn about students and their families. Participating in a community walk can help educators form meaningful partnerships with community members. Insights gained from these partnerships can help us create responsive and reflective classrooms, where student and community voices are nurtured.

One way to engage in a community walk is to work with parents, students and other community stakeholders to organize a route, develop guided discussions and debrief for school staff. The purpose of a community walk is to observe and gain insight into the lives of students to inform teaching practice.

### GUIDED QUESTIONS

When organizing the community walk, it is important to create questions that will guide the conversation. These questions should be created with community members, students and staff.

Suggested questions could include:

- Where does my community live (e.g., dwellings, numbers per household, proximity to school, etc.)?
- How does my community get around (e.g., driving, transit, walking, etc.)?
- Where does my community bank (e.g., traditional bank, pawnbroker, ATM, payday loan companies, etc.)?
- Where does my community worship (e.g., church, synagogue, temple, home, gurdwara, mosque, not at all, etc.)?

- Where does my community play (e.g., outdoor park, recreation centre, backyards, community spaces, schoolyard, etc.)?
- Where does my community express themselves (e.g., murals, dance centres, theatres, etc.)?
- Where does my community access health care (e.g., doctors' offices, walk-in clinics, hospitals, community care centres, dentists' offices, alternative health practitioners, etc.)? [28]

### REFLECTION: POST-WALK DEBRIEF

After the community walk, share your observations with the group. When sharing, reflect on what you saw and the ways that these insights can support teaching and learning. For example:

- What did we see in the community? What didn't we see in the community? Why?
- Were there things that we missed?
- Where can we find out more information about the community?

- How can we make explicit connections and bring our learning back into the classroom?

### CALL TO ACTION

- I will incorporate local landmarks into classroom examples.
- I will integrate my learning about the school community into my unit and lesson planning.
- I will encourage my students to ask questions about whether their needs are being met within the community.
- I will invite community agencies to share their knowledge with my students and families.

**“The strength of collective decision making and political responsibility is not only a question of recognizing other people’s ability. It is also recognizing one’s own limitations.”**

— ARUNA ROY

## RE♥IMAGINE: Now what?

### LEARNING GOAL

To recognize the importance of building relationships between myself, my students, their families, and members of the local community.

### TAKE ACTION!

The community walk is an opportunity for educators, students and community members to work together in ways that shape teaching practice and student learning.

For example, following the walk, the school community may wish to:

- strengthen partnerships;
- advocate for changes ; and
- honour the dynamic and diverse identities found within the community.

### REFLECTION

The following questions can help you think of ways to further build relationships between schools, families and communities:

- How can I support my students to discuss issues that affect their community?

- How can I encourage and support student involvement in community advocacy?
- How often are community voices included in the classroom and curriculum? Are there ways I can invite those voices into the classroom?
- Are opportunities provided for students to learn about and access information regarding community services, supports and advocacy?

### CALL TO ACTION

- I will advocate with community members to meet the needs of my students within the school community.
- I will continue to ensure the presence of community members in my classroom.
- I will continue to support students in understanding local issues of equity.

- I will ground my curriculum in community social justice and advocacy issues.

“How do we create a harmonious society out of so many kinds of people? The key is tolerance — the one value that is indispensable in creating community.”

— BARBARA JORDAN

“IT’S ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE FOR PEOPLE TO CHANGE ALONE. WE NEED TO JOIN WITH OTHERS WHO WILL PUSH US IN OUR THINKING AND CHALLENGE US TO DO THINGS WE DIDN’T BELIEVE OURSELVES CAPABLE OF.”

— FRANCES MOORE LAPPÉ

# MYTHS AND FACTS

## **MYTH #1:**

“I AM NOT RACIST. I DO NOT SEE RACE. EVERY CHILD IS THE SAME. WE ALL NEED LOVE.”

Failing to acknowledge racial and cultural diversity is to silence and erase the important diverse experiences of all of our students in a global community. Children have different needs depending on their backgrounds and many other factors. It's okay to acknowledge our differences. It's critical to recognize, understand and value how we are different. It's not okay to judge one's experience as superior to another.

## **MYTH #2:**

“I DON'T NEED TO TEACH ABOUT ANTI-RACISM. ALL OF MY STUDENTS ARE WHITE.”

Making assumptions that all of your students are White fails to recognize the diversity of White cultural experiences. Many White people have experienced discrimination throughout history, and these examples of prejudice can help us understand and make connections to how power and privilege impact everyone. It is also important to recognize that some people do not feel comfortable self-identifying as Aboriginal or racialized because of their prior experiences.

## **MYTH #3:**

“CHILDREN AREN'T READY FOR DISCUSSIONS ABOUT POWER, PRIVILEGE AND OPPRESSION. TALKING ABOUT RACISM AND WHITE PRIVILEGE IS NOT APPROPRIATE FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS.”

We know that children develop an understanding of race and power at a very young age. We learn about who we are and how we fit into the dominant White culture from our families, schools, friends, media, toys and books. Silence prevents children from being informed and from being actively involved in challenging misconceptions and racial stereotypes. [3]

## **MYTH #4:**

“TALKING ABOUT WHITE PRIVILEGE WILL UPSET THE STUDENTS. I DON'T WANT TO MAKE THEM FEEL GUILTY. AFTER ALL, IT WASN'T MY STUDENTS WHO DROVE ABORIGINAL PEOPLES FROM THEIR LANDS OR ENSLAVED AFRICANS.”

When we avoid or deny the complicated history of racism, we fail to acknowledge how our White students benefit every day from their skin privilege. The impact of colonization and slavery in the past helped to create a system that continues to privilege White people in the present. By encouraging our students to question the culture and values that are being supported by the dominant White culture, we are teaching our students to be critical thinkers and active members of a democratic society.

## **MYTH #5:**

“I AM NOT PRIVILEGED. MY FAMILY STRUGGLED WHEN I WAS YOUNGER. I STILL STRUGGLE TO MAKE ENDS MEET.”

We can be privileged and oppressed at the same time. It is important to recognize the advantages that certain experiences give us because of the bodies and opportunities that we are born with. Acknowledging privilege does not deny our challenges and struggles. It is important to recognize the impact that sex, class, ability and sexual orientation have on power and White privilege.

# GLOSSARY

## ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

The term Aboriginal peoples, as outlined in section 35(2) of the *Constitution Act*, 1982, states: “In this Act, ‘Aboriginal peoples of Canada’ includes the Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada.” Other terms used to encompass these diverse groups include First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI), Indigenous, Native and First Peoples. For the purpose of this resource Aboriginal and Aboriginal peoples will be used to respectfully acknowledge these original inhabitants of North America.

## COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

Educator Glenn E. Singleton outlines Four Agreements to guide educators, students and community stakeholders when discussing race:

- Stay Engaged;
- Expect to Experience Discomfort;
- Speak your Truth; and
- Expect and Accept a Lack of Closure.

[28, 29]

## CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE AND RELEVANT PEDAGOGY (CRRP)

Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy seeks to empower

students intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically. Educators who ascribe to this pedagogy foster student voice by:

### Holding high expectations

Educators, students, families and community stakeholders work together to create a culture of high expectations in the classroom by engaging in high-yield teaching strategies, consistent assessment and caring relationships.

### Acquiring Cultural competence

Educators use students’ cultures and connections to communities as a vehicle for learning.

### Nurturing Critical consciousness

Educators provide opportunities for students to critique the cultural norms, values and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities. [16]

## THE ONTARIO HUMAN RIGHTS CODE 1962 (OHRC)

The Ontario Human Rights Code 1962 prohibits discrimination against people based on a protected ground in a protected social area.

Protected grounds are:

- Age;
- Ancestry, colour, race;
- Citizenship;
- Ethnic origin;
- Place of origin;
- Creed;
- Disability;
- Family status;
- Marital status (including single status);
- Gender identity, gender expression;
- Receipt of public assistance (in housing only);
- Record of offences (in employment only); and
- Sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding).

Protected social areas are:

- Accommodation (housing);
- Contracts;
- Employment;
- Goods, services and facilities; and
- Membership in unions, trade or professional associations.

## OPPRESSION

How one group is dominated by another, more powerful, individual or group through physical,

psychological, social or economic threats or force and frequently by an ideology of dominance.

## PRIVILEGE

“Privilege exists when one group has something of value that is denied to others simply because of the groups they belong to, rather than because of anything they’ve done or failed to do. Access to privilege doesn’t determine one’s outcomes, but it is definitely an asset that makes it more likely that whatever talent, ability, and aspirations a person with privilege has will result in something positive for them.” Peggy McIntosh [34]

## RACIALIZED PEOPLES

Recognizing that race is a social construct, the Ontario Human Rights Commission describes people as “racialized person” or “racialized group” instead of the more outdated and inaccurate terms “racial minority,” “visible minority,” “person of colour” or “non-White.” [21]

## WHITE PRIVILEGE

White privilege is about the concrete benefits of access to resources and social rewards and the power to shape the norms and values of society that whites receive, unconsciously or consciously, by virtue of their skin color in a racist society. [1]

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