Creating the Conditions to Address Racism in School

Melissa Pointer
Disclaimer

• I am not an expert
• I may make mistakes today
• I will do my best to reference sources as I go. I do have a list of resources if interested.
• The work I will share is not linear
• The outcome will depend on where you are on this learning continuum and the learning stance you are in today.
## My Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRL</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session Outcomes

Participants will learn:

• content and strategies which can be used to aid in dismantling systems of racism and injustice in schools
• how to create a culture where no one will tolerate any child being marginalized, undervalued, or underserved
• how to create urgency for those without personal and emotional connections to children of color.
Community Agreements

• Stay Engaged
• Monitor your airtime
• Experience Discomfort
• Speak Your Truth
• Intent and Impact
• Call In Versus Call Out
• Expect and Accept Non-Closure
Why Do You Do This Work?
Why Do You Do This Work?
Why Do You Do This Work?
Why Do You Do This Work?
The Five Conditions

1. A Healthy School Culture
2. A Sense of Urgency
3. Clarity and Direction
4. A Culture of Adult Learning
5. A Willingness to Change Practice
One thing you can’t tell about me by looking at me is...
I have seen issues of race/racism show up in my district, school or classroom when...

When is the last time you talked about race and how did you feel?

Tell the story of your earliest memory of learning an explicitly/implicitly racist lesson about People of Color and/or White Superiority.
Healthy School Culture
Healthy School Culture

Teach/Facilitate Social Emotional Learning for All:
- Brain Science (i.e. Amygdala Hijack)
- RULER
  - “Name it to Tame It”
  - Strategies for Regulation
  - Staff Charter
- Community Agreements
A Healthy School Culture

- How we feel directly influences how we act. Our emotions are invisible and controlling. Whether we’re aware of them or not, they significantly influence our choices and behaviors.

- When dealing with those we perceive as “not us” thinking frequently takes a backseat to feeling... and this is why emotional literacy skills are so important to issues of diversity and difference.

- Shakil Choudhury
A Sense of Urgency
2

A Sense of Urgency

- Disproportionality in discipline
  - Analyze the difference in language
- Disproportionality in academics
- School Climate Survey Responses from Students and Parents of Color
- Former Student and Parent Panels
Clarity & Direction
Clarity & Direction

- Common Definition of Racism
  - Institutional
  - Interpersonal
  - Internalized
  - Internalized Oppression
### Institutional Racism

- system of social structures that provides, or denies access, safety, resources and power
- produces and reproduces race-based inequities
- perpetuates a cycle of racial inequity
- is promoted overtly or subtly by institutions.
• Table groups generate examples in each category

• Reflect on your lists and consider which behaviors, practices, protocols and procedures exist in your own building and need to be addressed.
• 6 month olds can non-verbally categorize people by race. Katz & Kofkin
• At 30 months preference for same-race playmate
• 36 months preference for white playmates regardless of their racial background
• 4-5 years associate positive attributes with light skin and negative attributes with dark skin.

Aboud, Bigler & Liben Hirschfield, Katz
Establish a clear vision of Anti-Racist work as a priority.
- You have to know to your core WHY you are doing this work
- Be prepared for pushback
Critical Consciousness Continuum

**Pre-Tolerating**
Educator is quick to deflect causes of inequities on external factors outside his or her control such as poverty, how students are raised, or the idea that ‘education is not valued at home.’

**Tolerating**
Educator reaches a surface level of cultural awareness and is ‘colorblind’ to his/her students’ identities.

**Acknowledging**
Educator is aware of his/her own cultural mediating lens and acknowledges power, privilege, and vulnerability as implicit parts of the existing social order.

**Understanding**
Educator sees his/her own complicit role in perpetuating the existing social order, but does not yet act to change it because of lack of agency or fear of relinquishing status.

**Validating**
Educator becomes a change agent by confronting power and privilege, creating a classroom community where students feel they belong because their identities are affirmed.

**Transforming**
At this stage the educator effects transformational change in partnership with other equity conscious individuals, serving as a community committed to social justice. Educator is a transformational agent for social change by actively shifting the power structure, elevating the assets, strengths, and passions of all students, privileging none over another.
Clarity & Direction

• School mission statement- is it aligned with your equity vision?

• School improvement goals around Equity/Anti-Racist work and Social Emotional Learning for Students
• Stand up and find a partner.

• Brainstorm the type of pushback you anticipate getting as you begin this work.

• Collaborate on a go-to response you could utilize when facing 1 specific type of pushback you may face.
A Culture of Adult Learning
A Culture of Adult Learning

- Direct Instruction on Anti-Racist Content:
  - Socialization and Whiteness
  - White Fragility
  - Study Trauma and the Impact on Brain Development
  - Study Implicit Bias, Microaggressions and their impact
Direct Instruction on Anti-Racist Content:

- the history and Science behind the idea of Race
Direct Instruction on Anti-Racist Content:

- the Educational Debt and Legacy of Slavery (i.e. mass incarceration)
1. With a partner, select one system of oppression from the Legacy document to read and read it.
2. Discuss:
   - What is your reaction to the data provided?
   - What connections can you make between the data and the outcomes we are getting nationally for kids of color?
   - How can you incorporate learning related to this content within your existing PD plans?
   - Practice an elevator speech justifying why learning about this content is necessary.
Because groups do not start on an even playing field, what they need to achieve their human potential is very different.  -Shakil Choudhury
A Willingness to Change Practice
A Willingness to Change Practice

- PD on Culturally Responsive Teaching:
  - Intentionally embed into content PD in your building over several years
Our Next Steps

- Classroom Instruction K-5 to Dismantle Racism
  - Melanin → Race as a social construct
  - Identity → Privilege
  - Intent versus impact
  - Real black history
Closing Considerations

• Listen to and gather input from your staff of color BUT do NOT expect them to teach you
• Engage key stakeholders in the learning opportunities
• Don’t forget about support staff/Paras
• Study facilitating difficult conversations
• Self care is imperative
• Dig deep and find your compelling reason to fight
Closing Considerations

What do you want to be remembered for? What do you want your legacy to be?