PPER BOOK CLUB PRE-MEETUP #2 WORKSHEET

Date: Wednesday, July 29, 2020   Time: 2pm PT   [Zoom link](#)

This worksheet is designed to help guide you through the reading on *White Fragility* chapters 4, 5, and 6 and provide thought provoking prompts to help you prepare for book club discussion and personal growth!

Adapted from: [Discussion Guide for Educators from Beacon Press](#)

Chapter 4 - *How does race shape the lives of white people?*

Pre-Reading

Read the following quote. Journal your thoughts or discuss.

> "But my silence is not benign because it protects and maintains the racial hierarchy and my place within it." (p. 58)

Summary

As a reminder, racial identity shapes a person's perspectives, experiences, and responses. In this chapter, the author delves into eight foundational aspects of white fragility. The author explains that because of their racial identification, white people in the United States will generally feel a sense of belonging, be free from the burden of race, have freedom of movement, and will be considered just people. People of color typically do not have the same experience. In addition, white people are most likely to choose racial segregation and position themselves as racially innocent. Those two choices, along with an obliviousness to the country's racial history, can lead white people to romanticize ideas about the good old days. Finally, *white solidarity*, which is an unspoken agreement among white people to protect white advantage and not cause another white person to feel racial discomfort, is key in maintaining white supremacy.

Vocab

White solidarity: Behavior that prioritizes white comfort over truth-telling, and allows racism to go undisturbed.[1]

White racial innocence: Belief reinforcing the thought as white being innocent of race. This belief denies that racism is a relational problem between Whites and Blacks, off-loads racial issues to people of color, reinforces unequal power relations through privilege, and ignores the historical dimensions of race relations.

Reflection Questions
1. How does racial belonging play out in school? Do students of color feel they belong? How do you know?

2. How is the burden of race a reality for students of color? What are some examples of how they would feel burdened by race?

3. What are some connections between "deeply held white associations of black people with crime" (p. 63) and the racial disparities in school disciplinary practices?

4. The author writes, "Rather than change these conditions so that public education is equal for all, we allow other people's children to endure conditions that would be unacceptable for our own" (p. 67). How does racial inequality in schools serve white people?

5. Review the patterns that are considered the foundation of white fragility on p. 68. Which of these patterns is most significant to you in your life right now? Explain.

Chapter 5 - *The Good/Bad binary*

Pre-Reading

Read the following quote. Journal your thoughts or discuss.

> "If, as a white person, I conceptualize racism as a binary and I place myself on the not racist side, what further action is required of me? No action is required, because I am not a racist. Therefore, racism is not my problem; it doesn't concern me and there is nothing further I need to do." (p. 73)

Summary

Following the civil rights movement era, many people believed that only intentionally malicious acts of extreme prejudice were classified as racist and that only bad people committed those acts. Thus, according to the author, the most effective adaptation of racism—the good/bad binary—became a cultural norm. The good/bad binary made it effectively impossible for the average white person to understand— much less interrupt—racism. The chapter ends by looking at some of the most popular claims within the good/bad binary and providing counter narratives to the claims.

Vocab

Binary: A paradigm in which racism is placed on a scale of good or bad. The good/bad binary obscures the structural nature of racism by allowing people to off load the issue of racism onto others by placing themselves on the positive side of the scale.

Reflection Questions

1. How does the author's explanation of what it means to be racist challenge mainstream ideas?

2. As an [your job title], how does the good/bad binary impact your willingness to look at your own racism with other colleagues or confront racist practices in [your institution]?

3. Review the list of color-blind and color-celebrate claims on pp. 77–78. Which of the claims are you familiar with? Which ones have you used or taught? Would you consider using them or teaching them after reading this chapter? Why or why not?

Chapter 6 - *Anti-Blackness*

Pre-Reading

Read the following quote. Journal your thoughts or discuss.

> "Creating a separate and inferior black race simultaneously created the 'superior' white race: one concept could not exist without the other. In this sense, whites need black people; blackness is essential to the creation of white identity." (p. 91)

Summary

White supremacy impacts all people of color, however, black people represent the ultimate racial "other," leading to a uniquely anti-black sentiment integral to white identity. In this chapter, the author explains that anti-blackness is rooted in misinformation, fables, perversions, projections, and lies about African Americans. As a result, white racial socialization causes many conflicting feelings toward black people, including benevolence, resentment, superiority, hatred, and, most fundamentally, deep guilt about past and current systematic transgressions against black people.

Vocab

Anti-blackness: A two-part formation that both voids Blackness of value, while systematically marginalizing Black people and their issues. The first form of anti-Blackness is overt racism. Beneath this anti-Black racism is the covert structural and systemic racism which categorically predetermines the socioeconomic status of Blacks in this country. The structure is held in place by anti-Black policies, institutions, and ideologies. The second form of anti-Blackness is the unethical disregard for anti-Black institutions and policies. This disregard is the product of class, race, and/or gender privilege certain individuals experience due to anti-Black institutions and policies. This form of anti-Blackness is protected by the first form of overt racism.

Reflection Questions
1. How does anti-blackness show up in schools?

2. What does addressing anti-blackness look like for you as an educator?

3. What resources do you need to combat anti-black sentiments among colleagues and students?

If you'd like to review previous chapters, please see the recap worksheet below.

PPER BOOK CLUB MEETUP #1 RECAP WORKSHEET

Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2020   Time: 2pm

This worksheet is designed to serve as a reminder of the main points from *White Fragility* chapters 1, 2, and 3. Feel free to save this worksheet for your own reference to look back on some key points from these chapters!

Adapted from: [Discussion Guide for Educators from Beacon Press](#)

Chapter 1 - *The challenge of talking to white people about racism*

Summary

This chapter explains that two major challenges of talking to white people about racism are a limited understanding of socialization and a simplistic understanding of racism. White people have been socialized to see that race matters, but not their own race. Specifically, the Western ideologies of individualism and objectivity make it difficult for white people to explore the collective aspects of white experience. Thus, collectively white people do not see themselves in racial terms. Naming race, however, is a critical component of cross-racial skill building and is necessary in order to engage critically with the topic of race. Also, to increase the racial stamina that counters white fragility, white people must reflect on the whole of their identities and the impact of being members of their racial group.

Vocab

Individualism: the social outlook putting preference on one's own individuality, freedom, and qualities; strong belief in the individual power rather than community and conformity

Chapter 2 - *Racism and white supremacy*

Summary

Chapter 2 outlines key information about racism and white supremacy in the United States. The author emphasizes that race is socially constructed; however, the belief that race and differences associated with it are biological is deep-seated. Race is an evolving social idea that was created to legitimize racial inequality and protect white advantage. Historically and contemporarily, being perceived as white carries legal, political, economic, and social rights and privileges that are denied to others. White supremacy is the overarching political, economic, and social system of domination that describes the culture we live in and that positions whiteness as ideal. Naming white supremacy makes the system visible and shifts the locus of change onto white people, where it belongs. Challenging complicity with and investment in racism is life-long work for white people.

Vocab

<u>White supremacy:</u> the hierarchical point of view that white people have the superior powers to dominate other races automatically putting them in higher positions of power in society

<u>White privilege:</u> the unconscious, unquestioned, and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits, and voices bestowed on people solely because they are white.

Chapter 3 - *Racism after the Civil Rights movement*

Summary

A simplistic understanding of racism leads people to believe that the civil rights movement and the desegregation of public facilities generally ended racist practices. However, racism is highly adaptable and modern norms, policies, and practices have resulted in racial outcomes similar to those in the past. Color-blind ideology, although initially well-intentioned, makes it difficult to address unconscious racist beliefs and has served to deny the reality of racism—thus holding it in place. Finally, cultural norms

insist that white people hide racism from people of color and deny it around other white people, which also makes it impossible to confront and address racism.

Vocab

<u>Color blind racism</u>: ideology promoting the thought that if we did not notice one another's race, we would learn to believe we are all the same, and thus there would be no space for racism. It can be seen through careful examples that it's original intention is not the way it is being practiced today, rather hiding away the reality of racism in our daily lives.