

Unit 3.1: Racism

Worksheet C

Privilege walk lesson – for teachers

Instructions: Present students with a series of statements, adapted from Peggy McIntosh's 1988 essay titled 'White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack'. After the statements – and subsequent movement of the students – enter into a discussion about race and privilege with them.

Purpose: To critically think about race and the impact of our actions and words; to reflect about students' own experiences in relationship with race; and to understand the experiences of their peers (and others) when discussing race.

Timing: Ideally, this lesson is conducted as the opening activity before the unit on racism begins. However, you may decide it fits best as an ending or culminating activity.

Step 1: Ask students to stand in a straight line in the middle of the classroom or in the hallway. Move all the tables if necessary, as they will need to take steps forward and backward.

Step 2: Make a series of statements (see below). Students move forward if the statement is true for them or backward if the statement is false. They remain still if they don't know or if it's not applicable. Students are to remain silent the entire time.

Step 3: Reflect. Consider the possibilities below.

Statements

- 1 I am a part of the majority racial group in my school.
- 2 Most of the people who work at the school in positions of power look like people of my race.
- 3 I can make mistakes and not have people use it to point out flaws in my racial group.
- 4 I can attain top marks academically or succeed in other areas without being called a credit to my race.
- 5 I can look at the mainstream media and find people of my race in ways I want to see them presented.
- 6 When I go shopping, I am rarely followed or given extra attention.
- 7 I am comfortable calling the police if something bad happens.
- 8 If I want to speak to the manager at a store or other business, that person will look like a person of my race.
- 9 I can find a range of stories about people of my racial group in the media.
- 10 I can find beauty products for people of my race (make-up that matches my skin tone).
- 11 My family or members of my extended family have never bought skin-whitening creams.
- 12 My family employs a person of colour to work in or around the house.
- 13 The police have never asked about my racial identity.

Reflection activities

- 1** After the last question is read, ask students to sit down, look around and spend ten minutes quietly reflecting on what they see, notice and observe about where people are sitting.
- 2** Once the quiet reflection is over, bring everyone into a circle. Discuss what they saw, noticed and observed. Also ask students to discuss how they felt.
- 3** Ask students about questions that are lingering, that they are still thinking about. Ask them to write and/or discuss why that is the case.
- 4** Finally, make sure the reflection ends in an open-ended discussion that is exploratory about race, privilege, personal experiences and perhaps even class.